

Religion, Migration, and Conflicts in Polarized Societies

Religion, migration et conflits dans les sociétés polarisées

38th BIENNIAL ISSR CONFERENCE

30 June – 4 July 2025

Vytautas Magnus University
Kaunas, Lithuania



VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

Vytautas Kavolis
Transdisciplinary Research Institute

SISR / ISSR

Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions
International Society for the Sociology of Religion

Vytautas Magnus University

Religion, Migration and Conflicts in Polarized Societies

38th Biennial ISSR Conference

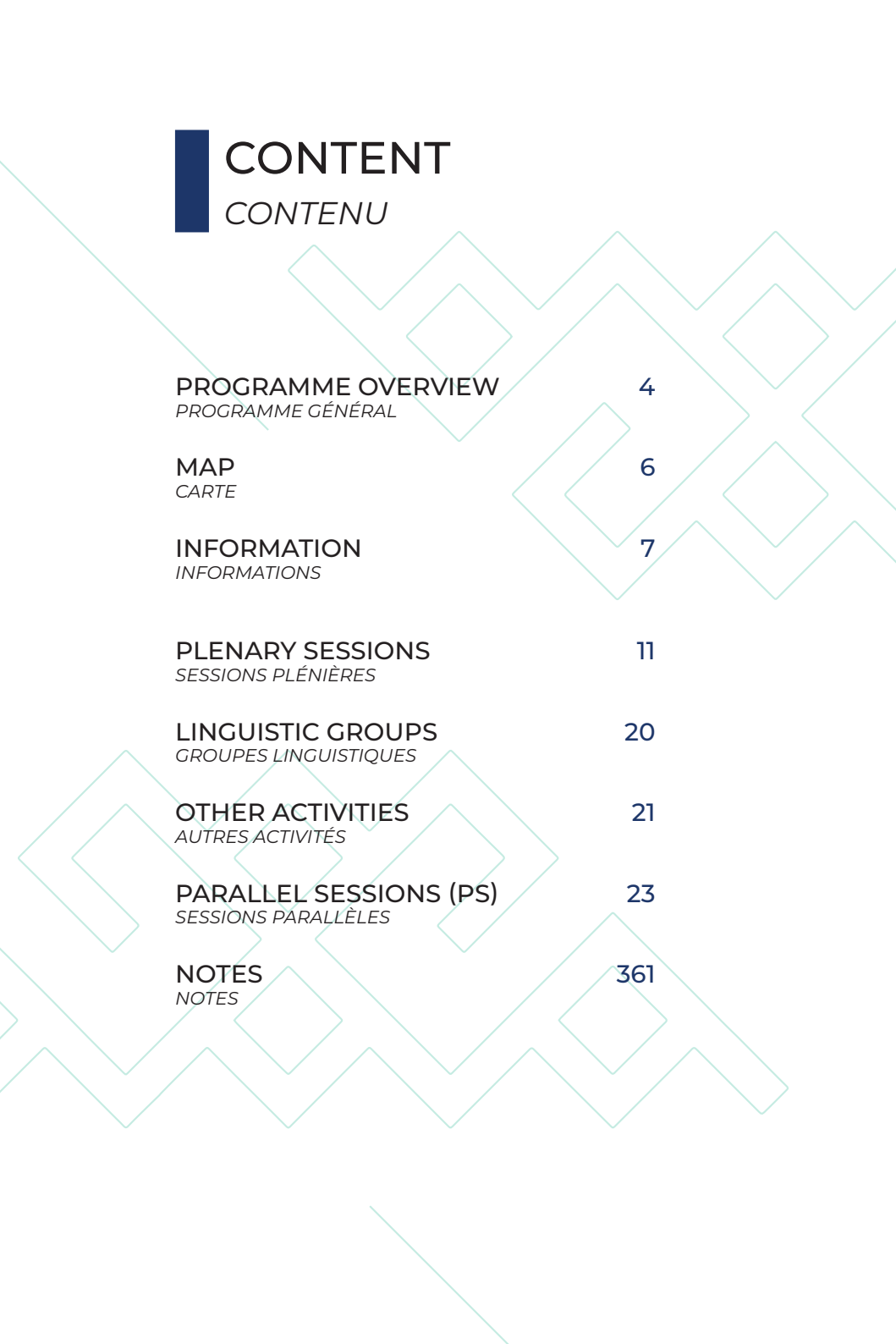


Kaunas, 2025

Bibliographic information is available on the Lithuanian Integral Library Information System (LIBIS) portal *ibiblioteka.lt*.

ISBN 978-609-467-659-8 (Print)
ISBN 978-609-467-660-4 (Online)
<https://doi.org/10.7220/9786094676604>

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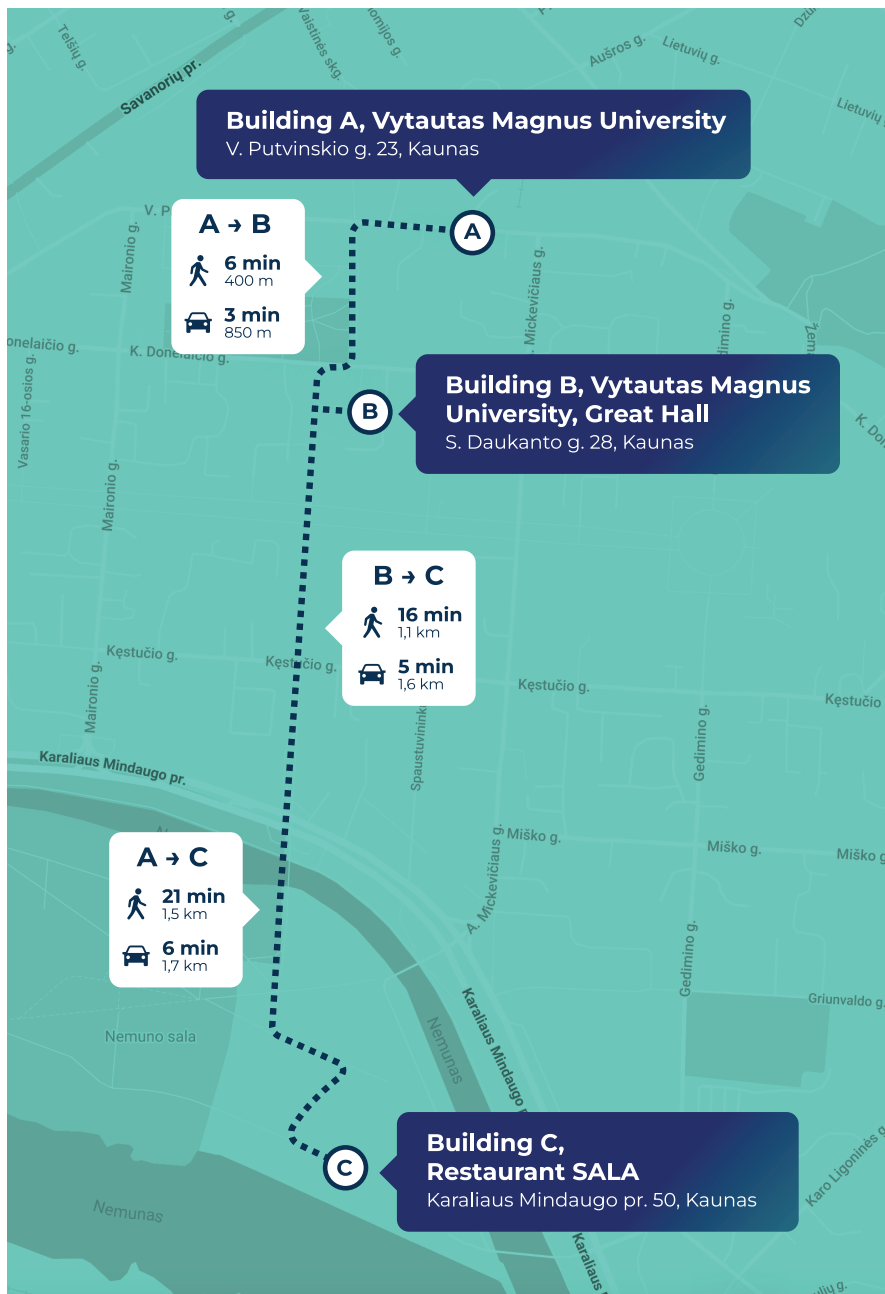
PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

PROGRAMME GÉNÉRAL

Time <i>Heure</i>	Monday, June 30 <i>Lundi 30 juin</i>	Tuesday, July 1 <i>Mardi 1 juillet</i>
9:30–11:00	COREnet Core Group meeting (Building A)	Plenary session 1 (Building B)
11:30–12:00	Coffee break	
12:00–13:30	SISR-ISSR Council meeting 1 (Building A)	COREnet Working Groups meeting (Building A) Parallel sessions 1 (Building A)
13:30–15:00	Lunch break	
15:00–16:30	SISR-ISSR Council meeting 2 (Building A)	COREnet Working Groups meeting (Building A) Parallel sessions 2 (Building A)
16:30–17:00	Coffee break	
17:00–18:30	Opening Ceremony (Building B)	Parallel sessions 3 (Building A)
19:00–21:00	Welcome Reception (Building B)	

Wednesday, July 2 <i>Mercredi 2 juillet</i>	Thursday, July 3 <i>Jeudi 3 juillet</i>	Friday, July 4 <i>Vendredi 4 juillet</i>
Plenary session 2 (Building B)	Parallel sessions 5 (Building A)	Parallel sessions 7 (Building A)
Coffee break		
Parallel sessions 4 (Building A)	Parallel sessions 6 (Building A)	Parallel sessions 8 (Building A)
Lunch break		
Linguistic groups (Building A)	COREnet plenary session 3 (Building B)	SISR-ISSR Council meeting 3 (Building A)
Coffee break		
Guided walking tours in Kaunas (Building A)	General Assembly (Building B)	
	Gala Dinner (Building C)	

15 JANUARY 2005



INFORMATION

INFORMATIONS

Conference venues

Lieux de LA conférence

Building A

Bâtiment A

Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23,
Kaunas, 44212



Building B

Bâtiment B

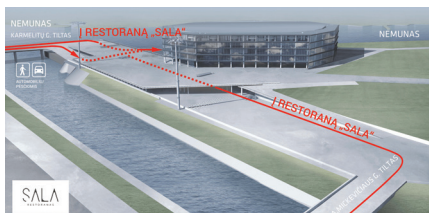
Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall,
S. Daukanto g. 28,
Kaunas, 44246



Building C

Bâtiment C

Restaurant SALA,
Karaliaus Mindaugo pr. 50,
Kaunas, 44307



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Remerciements

About COST

This event is based upon work from COST Action “Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity” (COREnet) CA20107, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

Website: corenetcost.eu

COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is a funding agency for research and innovation networks. Our Actions help connect research initiatives across Europe and enable scientists to grow their ideas by sharing them with their peers. This boosts their research, career, and innovation.

Website: cost.eu



À propos de COST

Cet événement s'appuie sur les travaux de l'action COST « Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity » (COREnet) CA20107 soutenue par COST (Coopération européenne en science et technologie).

COST (Coopération européenne dans le domaine de la science et de la technologie) est une agence de financement pour les réseaux de recherche et d'innovation. Nos actions contribuent à mettre en relation des initiatives de recherche à travers l'Europe et permettent aux chercheurs et chercheuses de développer leurs idées en les partageant avec leurs pairs. Cela stimule leur recherche, leur carrière et l'innovation.

About Vytautas Magnus University

V. Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute

This event is one of the project's "Strengthening of R&D activities of the Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Institute of Social and Humanities Sciences (SOCMTEP)" activities. The project is financed by the Lithuanian Science Council and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, contract no. S-A-UEI-23-13 (12/27/2023). Funding program – "University Excellence Initiative" (No. V-940).

Website: ki.vdu.lt



À propos de l'université Vytautas Magnus Institut de recherche transdisciplinaire V. Kavolis

Cet événement s'inscrit dans le cadre du projet « Renforcement des activités de R&D de l'Institut transdisciplinaire des sciences sociales et humaines Vytautas Kavolis (SOCMTEP) ». Le projet est financé par le Conseil scientifique lituanien et le ministère de l'Éducation, des Sciences et des Sports de la République de Lituanie, contrat n° S-A-UEI-23-13 (27/12/2023). Programme de financement – « Initiative pour l'excellence universitaire » (n° V-940).

LOCAL INFORMATION

Informations locales

WIFI

WIFI

Conference WIFI

SSID: vdu-guest

User name: vdu-guest

Password: 9Un8eUPoP9C6tNb

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

NUMÉROS D'URGENCE

Local police, Ambulance, Fire station

Police locale, Ambulance,

Caserne de pompiers

112

PLENARY SESSIONS

SESSIONS PLÉNIÈRES

Opening Ceremony

Cérémonie d'ouverture

The 38th SISR/ISSR Regional Panel Session

Le 38ème panel régional SISR/ISSR

Monday, June 30 | 17:00–18:45

In English (translation to French available)

Plenary 1

Plénière 1

Sociologie de la religion et des conflits: une feuille de route pour les temps de crise

Sociology of Religion and Conflict: A Roadmap for Times of Crisis

Tuesday, July 1 | 9:30–11:00

In French (translation to English available)

Plenary 2

Plénière 2

Religion and Political Polarization in Europe: Actors, Claims, Venues

Religion et polarisation politique en Europe : acteurs, revendications, lieux de rencontre

Wednesday, July 2 | 9:30–11:00

In English (translation to French available)

Plenary 3

Plénière 3

From Diversification to Re-Homogenization of Religious Diversity?

De la diversification à la ré-homogénéisation de la diversité religieuse ?

Thursday, July 3 | 15:00–16:30

In English (translation to French available)

Opening Ceremony

Cérémonie d'ouverture

The 38th SISR/ISSR Regional Panel Session

Le 38ème panel régional SISR/ISSR

Monday, June 30th | 17:00–18:45

Room / *Salle*

Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246
(Building B)

Moderator / *Modérateur*

Titus Hjelm | University of Helsinki

Changing Religiosity in the Baltic Region

L'évolution de la religiosité dans la région de la Baltique

Rūta Žiliukaitė | Civil Society Institute

According to the European Values Study and other quantitative longitudinal international surveys, the countries of the Baltic region (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) show a wide variation in the level of institutional religiosity at individual level, ranging from Poland, where institutional religiosity is one of the highest in Europe, to Estonia, where institutional religiosity of the population is among the lowest in Europe. These countries have undergone significant changes over the last 30 years, which have been analyzed, at least by groups of European values scholars, primarily through the theories of multiple modernities and secularization, concluding that these countries are experiencing ongoing secularization processes.

On the other hand, there is a growing number of publications that explore non-institutional forms of religiosity and spirituality that are scarcely and barely captured in survey-based research. The findings of these studies suggest that what we observe in the Baltic States is not secularisation but changing religiosity and growing religious diversity. In this discussion, we invite you to discuss how we should evaluate the religious changes taking place in the Baltic States: is it secularization, is it secularization or is it changing forms of religiosity?

Selon l'European Values Study et d'autres enquêtes quantitatives longitudinales internationales, les pays de la région baltique (Pologne, Lituanie, Lettonie et Estonie) présentent une grande variété, tant au niveau de la religiosité institutionnelle qu'au niveau individuel. Cette diversité va de la Pologne, où la religiosité institutionnelle est l'une des plus élevées d'Europe, à l'Estonie, où la religiosité institutionnelle de la population est parmi les plus faibles d'Europe. Ces pays ont connu des changements importants au cours des 30 dernières années, qui ont été analysés par des groupes de chercheurs spécialisés dans les valeurs européennes, principalement à travers les théories des modernités multiples et de la sécularisation, concluant que ces pays connaissent des processus de sécularisation en cours.

D'autre part, un nombre croissant de publications explorent les formes non institutionnelles de religiosité et de spiritualité qui sont rarement et à peine prises en compte dans les recherches basées sur des enquêtes. Les conclusions de ces études suggèrent que ce que nous observons dans les États baltes n'est pas une sécularisation, mais une religiosité en mutation et une diversité religieuse croissante. Dans le cadre de cette discussion, nous vous invitons à débattre de la manière dont nous devrions évaluer les changements religieux qui se produisent dans les États baltes : s'agit-il d'une sécularisation ou d'une mutation des formes de religiosité ?

Religion in the Public Life of Lithuania: The Return and Its Features

La religion dans la vie publique en Lituanie : le retour et ses caractéristiques

Milda Ališauskienė | Vytautas Magnus University, COST Action COREnet Chair

The return of religion in the public life of contemporary society is not a new theme within the sociology of religion; it has challenged the sociological mind over the last thirty years. For some scholars, the return of religion to the public sphere was evidence of a triumphant desecularization process (Berger), its persistence (Taylor), and/or deprivatization (Casanova). For others, this return challenged the secularism of the public sphere (Asad) and created a space for debating a "post-secular" society where religious and secular coexist (Habermas). This paper examines the return of religion in Lithuania's public life since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the declaration of independence. It provides an overview of the role religion played in Lithuanian society during the Soviet period, as well as the legacy and current role in contemporary Lithuania. Based on existing historical, statistical, and sociological data, the paper will address the following questions: which religion and how it has returned to the public life of Lithuania, and what are the features of this social process?

Le retour de la religion dans la vie publique de la société contemporaine n'est pas un thème nouveau en sociologie des religions ; il interpelle les sociologues depuis une trentaine d'années. Pour certains chercheurs et chercheuses, le retour de la religion dans la sphère publique est la preuve d'un processus triomphant de désécularisation (Berger), de sa persistance (Taylor) et/ou de sa déprivatisation (Casanova). Pour d'autres, ce retour a remis en question la laïcité de la sphère publique (Asad) et a créé un espace de

débat sur une société « post-séculière » où le religieux et le séculier coexistent (Habermas). Cette présentation examine le retour de la religion dans la vie publique lituanienne depuis la dissolution de l'Union soviétique et la déclaration d'indépendance. Il donne un aperçu du rôle joué par la religion dans la société lituanienne pendant la période soviétique, ainsi que de son héritage et de son rôle actuel dans la Lituanie contemporaine. Sur la base des données historiques, statistiques et sociologiques existantes, cet article abordera les questions suivantes : quelle religion est revenue dans la vie publique lituanienne et comment, et quelles sont les caractéristiques de ce processus social ?

Discussants / Discutants

Dorota Hall | Polish Academy of Sciences

Atko Rimmel | University of Tartu

Plenary 1

Plénière 1

Sociologie de la religion et des conflits: une feuille de route pour les temps de crise

Sociology of Religion and Conflict: A Roadmap for Times of Crisis

Tuesday, July 1 | 9:30–11:00

Room / Salle

Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246 (Building B)

Véronique Altglas | Queen's University Belfast

Moderator / Modérateur

Irene Becci | Université de Lausanne, SISR-ISSR President

Cette communication propose une réflexion approfondie sur les défis théoriques, méthodologiques et épistémologiques posés par l'étude des conflits impliquant la religion, en s'appuyant sur le cas emblématique de l'Irlande du Nord. L'Irlande du Nord, un terrain saturé d'analyses, reste pourtant un objet d'étude particulièrement fertile – et controversé. En effet, malgré l'abondance de publications, aucun consensus ne s'est imposé sur les causes profondes du conflit. La sociologie de la religion, en particulier, a longtemps interprété ce conflit comme étant intrinsèquement religieux. Cette lecture soulève des questions fondamentales : en quoi la religion peut-elle être un facteur dans la reproduction d'un conflit durable ? En d'autres termes, que fait la religion, et ce dans un contexte de violence politique ? Pour répondre à ces interrogations, il est nécessaire de repenser les cadres théoriques existants, mais aussi de questionner les méthodologies employées : quelles données mobiliser et donc quelle stratégie de recherche utiliser ? Enfin, d'un point de vue épistémologique, comment travailler sur la religion quand celle-ci est elle-même objet de controverses ? En s'appuyant sur un ouvrage récemment publié, *Religion and Conflict in Northern Ireland. What Does Religion Do?* (Palgrave, 2022), issu non d'un intérêt exclusif pour l'Irlande du Nord, mais d'une volonté plus large de penser une sociologie de la sociologie de la religion, cette communication propose une lecture critique des

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

approches existantes. Elle vise surtout à dégager une feuille de route pour les recherches futures, plus sensibles aux enjeux que soulève l'étude de la religion dans les conflits contemporains.

*This paper offers an in-depth reflection on the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological challenges posed by the study of conflicts involving religion, drawing on the emblematic case of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland, a subject that has been analyzed extensively, remains a particularly fertile—and controversial—area of study. Despite the abundance of publications, no consensus has emerged on the root causes of the conflict. The sociology of religion, in particular, has long interpreted this conflict as inherently religious. This interpretation raises fundamental questions: how can religion be a factor in the reproduction of a long-lasting conflict? In other words, what role does religion play in a context of political violence? To answer these questions, it is necessary to rethink existing theoretical frameworks, but also to question the methodologies used: what data should be mobilized and, therefore, what research strategy should be used? Finally, from an epistemological point of view, how can we work on religion when religion itself is the subject of controversy? Drawing on a recently published book, *Religion and Conflict in Northern Ireland. What Does Religion Do?* (Palgrave, 2022), which stems not from an exclusive interest in Northern Ireland but from a broader desire to develop a sociology of the sociology of religion, this paper offers a critical reading of existing approaches. Above all, it aims to outline a roadmap for future research that is more sensitive to the issues raised by the study of religion in contemporary conflicts.*

Plenary 2

Plénière 2

Religion and Political Polarization in Europe: Actors, Claims, Venues

Religion et polarisation politique en Europe : acteurs, revendications, lieux de rencontre

Wednesday, July 2 | 9:30–11:00

Room / Salle

Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246 (Building B)

Kristina Stoeckl | LUISS – Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali

Moderator / Modérateur

Irene Becci | Université de Lausanne, SISR-ISSR President

In recent decades, reactionary Christian groups across Europe, Russia, and the United States have formed transnational alliances, learning from each other and coordinating strategies to expand their social influence and political power. These connections have contributed to a new kind of political polarization in Europe – one driven not by traditional secular-religious or confessional divides, but by intra-religious ideological conflicts. This lecture will trace the key actors involved, analyze their claims, and map the most significant platforms where they operate, shedding light on how religion drives political polarization in twenty-first century Europe.

Au cours des dernières décennies, des groupes chrétiens réactionnaires d'Europe, de Russie et des États-Unis ont formé des alliances transnationales, se renforçant les uns des autres et coordonnant leurs stratégies afin d'étendre leur influence sociale et leur pouvoir politique. Ces liens ont contribué à une nouvelle forme de polarisation politique en Europe, qui n'est pas due aux clivages traditionnels entre laïcs et religieux ou entre confessions, mais à des conflits idéologiques intra-religieux. Cette présentation retracera les principaux acteurs impliqués, analysera leurs revendications et dressera la carte des plateformes les plus importantes où ils opèrent, mettant en lumière la manière dont la religion alimente la polarisation politique dans l'Europe du XXI^e siècle.

Plenary 3

Plénière 3

From Diversification to Re-Homogenization of Religious Diversity?

De la diversification à la ré-homogénéisation de la diversité religieuse?

Thursday, July 3 | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall, S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246 (Building B)

Tuomas Martikainen | Turku University

Moderator / Modérateur

Annette Leis-Peters | VID University, COST Action COREnet Vice Chair

While migration across borders is an age-old phenomenon, the post-Cold War era has witnessed an intensive period of globalization of international migration. Numerous new religious minorities have emerged as a result and some areas have become religiously highly diverse, so called super-diverse majority-minority cities. Academic research has followed this development and various perspectives have emerged to conceptualize the situation. Discourses have gradually shifted from multiculturalism/world religions to diaspora/pluralism/diversity to transnationalism/super-diversity. While much of the current discussion on ethno-religious diversity emphasizes critical, de-constructive perspectives, such as postcolonialism. This paper will focus on how immigrant religions will become restructured as part of a new, diversified religious field, and thereby a process of re-homogenization is taking place. However, this re-homogenization takes place in an increasingly secularized, neoliberalized and politically contested situation, so that its outcome will be different to that of previous organization of religion in any particular national context.

Si les migrations transnationales sont un phénomène ancien, l'ère de la post-guerre froide a connu une période intense de mondialisation des mobilités internationales. De nouvelles minorités religieuses se sont ainsi rendues visibles et certaines régions sont devenues très diversifiées sur le plan religieux, donnant lieu à des villes dites « super-diverses », où les minorités sont, dans son ensemble, majoritaires. La recherche s'est intéressée à cette évolution et différentes perspectives ont émergé pour conceptualiser cette situation. Progressivement, le discours est passé du multiculturalisme/des religions mondiales à la diaspora/au pluralisme/à la diversité, puis au transnationalisme/à la super diversité. Alors que la plupart des débats actuels sur la diversité ethno-religieuse mettent l'accent sur des perspectives critiques et déconstructivistes, telles que le postcolonialisme, cette présentation se focalisera sur la manière dont les religions immigrées vont se restructurer dans le cadre d'un nouveau champ religieux diversifié, entraînant ainsi un processus de réhomogénéisation. Cependant, cette réhomogénéisation s'inscrit dans un contexte de plus en plus sécularisé, néolibéral et politiquement contesté, de sorte que son résultat sera différent de celui de l'organisation religieuse antérieure dans un contexte national particulier.

LINGUISTIC GROUPS

GROUPES LINGUISTIQUES

Group / Groupe	Room / Salle
G01 Germany	101 (1st floor)
G02 BeNeLux	103 (1st floor)
G03 Iberic Peninsula, Mexico and South America	312 (3rd floor)
G04 United Kingdom	102 (1st floor)
G05 France	106 (1st floor)
G06 Switzerland	104 (1st floor)
G07 Central and Eastern Europe	310 (3rd floor)
G08 East Asia and Japan	414 (4th floor)
G09 Canada	313 (3rd floor)
G10 Italy	110 (1st floor)
G11 Australasia	002 (0 floor)
G12 Nordic Countries	220 (2nd floor)
G13 USA	311 (3rd floor)
G14 Africa and Middle/South Asia	415 (4th floor)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

AUTRES ACTIVITÉS

COST Action COREnet Core Group meeting

Réunion du groupe central COREnet de l'action COST

Mon. June 30 | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle – 110, Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

COST Action COREnet Working Groups meeting

Réunion des groupes de travail COREnet de l'action COST

Mon. June 30 | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle – 102 (WG1), 103 (WG2), 104 (WG3), 106 (WG4), 110 (WG5),
Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

ISSR Council Meeting 1

Réunion du Conseil 1

Mon. June 30 | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle – 101, Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

ISSR Council Meeting 2

Réunion du Conseil 1

Mon. June 30 | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle – 101, Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

COST Action COREnet Joint Working Groups meeting

Réunion des groupes de travail COREnet de l'action COST

Mon. June 30 | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle – 103, Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Welcome Reception

Réception de bienvenue

Mon. June 30 | 19:00–21:00

Room / Salle – Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall,
S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246 (Building B)

Guided walking tours in Kaunas

Visites guidées à pied à Kaunas

Wed. July 2 | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle – Vytautas Magnus University, Entrance,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

ISSR General Assembly

Assemblée générale de l'ISSR

Thu. July 3 | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle – Vytautas Magnus University, Great Hall,
S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, 44246 (Building B)

Gala dinner

Dîner de gala

Thu. July 3 | 19:00–21:00

Room / Salle – Restaurant SALA,
Karaliaus Mindaugo pr. 50, Kaunas, 44307 (Building C)

ISSR Council Meeting 3

Réunion du Conseil 1

Fri. July 4 | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle – 101, Vytautas Magnus University,
V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)



PARALLEL SESSIONS (PS)

SESSIONS PARALLÈLES



Parallel Sessions 1

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
1.1	Navigating Emotional Politics: Religious Communities and Their Migration Experiences (1) <i>Naviguer dans la politique émotionnelle : les communautés religieuses et leurs expériences migratoires (1)</i>	110
1.2	Ecology and Religious Ethic <i>Écologie et éthique religieuse</i>	102
1.3	Yoga and Contemporary Spiritualities. Intersecting Health, Religious Exoticism and Benevolent Orientalism <i>Yoga et spiritualités contemporaines. L'intersection de la santé, de l'exotisme religieux et de l'orientalisme bienveillant</i>	310
1.4	Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (1) <i>Religiosité : analyse des enquêtes quantitatives nationales et internationales (1)</i>	312
1.5	Spirituality in Australia: Wellness, Wellbeing and Risks <i>La spiritualité en Australie : bien-être, bien-être et risques</i>	313
1.6	Gender and Gendered Issues Within Christianity <i>Les questions de genre sexospécifiques dans le christianisme</i>	311
1.7	Discursive Sociology of Religion <i>Sociologie discursive de la religion</i>	103
1.8	Religions, Media and Marketing <i>Religions, médias et marketing</i>	220
1.9	Religious Transmission Across Generations: Challenges, Continuities and Changes (1) <i>La transmission religieuse à travers les générations : défis, continuités et changements (1)</i>	414

PS	TITLE	ROOM
1.10	Theorising Religious Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia, and Secularization (1) <i>Théoriser le patrimoine religieux : nation, Nostalgie et Sécularisation (1)</i>	002
1.11	Author Meets Critics: Global Secularity – A Sourcebook <i>La laïcité dans le monde – Un manuel de référence</i>	106

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PS 1.1

Navigating Emotional Politics: Religious Communities and Their Migration Experiences (1)

Naviguer dans la politique émotionnelle : les communautés religieuses et leurs expériences migratoires (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session

Gilda Seddighi | NORCE

Deniz Coşan Eke | University of Vienna

Chair / Discutant

Deniz Coşan Eke | University of Vienna

Promoting Tolerance Toward the Diversity of Muslim Migrants in Spain

Laura Maxim | Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi

Georgian Female Migrations and Christian Orthodoxy in Italy: Socio-Emotional Landscapes, Multi-local Religiosity, Strategies of Engagement

Davide N. Carnevale | University of Ferrara

Religion in the Face of Adversity – Faith as a Resilience Factor for Unaccompanied Migrant Children Involved in Child Labour

Violeta Marković | University of Belgrade

Promoting Tolerance Toward the Diversity of Muslim Migrants in Spain

Laura Maxim | Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

During the last thirty years, various studies have examined the social, economic and political situation of Muslim migrants in the European Union states. However, a gap persists concerning the role of Muslim migrants' umbrella organizations as representatives of the Muslim migrant community. Since the beginning of their migration, Muslim migrants have formed numerous civic organizations of diverse types in Spain. Most of them adopted a defensive stance in advocating for the rights established at the European and Spanish national level to exist as distinct cultural groups. On the other hand, Spain's multicultural policies have been critiqued for not sufficiently addressing the needs of its Muslim migrant population. Scholars argue that while Spain officially supports multiculturalism, there is an underlying pressure for Muslim migrants to assimilate into Spanish cultural norms, which can lead to tensions and a sense of exclusion. Considering all these, the purpose of the present paper is to investigate the promotion of tolerance toward the diversity of Muslim migrants in Spain, focusing on the social, cultural and political factors that shape public attitudes and integration processes. More particularly, by combining approaches from organizational sociology and migration research, this article aims to generate an empirically founded knowledge of Muslim migrant organizations and how they reacted to various Spanish policies of acculturation. The findings of the paper highlight the need for a shift in discourse toward a more inclusive and tolerant national identity in Spain, where Muslim migrants can contribute to and enrich the cultural fabric of the country.

This paper was co-authored by Professor Mihai-Bogdan Petrișor from the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași.

Georgian Female Migrations and Christian Orthodoxy in Italy: Socio-Emotional Landscapes, Multi-local Religiosity, Strategies of Engagement

Davide N. Carnevale | University of Ferrara

This presentation is primarily based on a research carried out in Bari, a key destination for Georgian female migrations, and aimed to trace their social and religious biographies and to reveal how their migration experiences shape their spaces of everyday life, including transformations in their forms of belonging and participation within Christian Orthodox groups. We will examine their socio-economic ties and transnational forms of belonging, focusing on how they narrate their personal experiences, their multi-local engagement and strategies of empowerment, and their changes in religiosity and religious participation. The local case we investigated reveals women's definition of a renewed socio-emotional geography in migration contexts, in which their direct involvement in building transnational ties and local connections influences the organization of religious groups and enhances their personal resilience. This research stems from a collaborative project linked to the Corenet COST action; it involved fieldwork and interviews with women of Georgian origin and Orthodox religious leaders in Italy and Georgia. The study aimed to enhance the understanding of the intersectional dynamics of migration, gender, and religious diversity, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities faced by female migrants in navigating a new cultural context and redefining their positionality within their religious affiliation.

Religion in the Face of Adversity – Faith as a Resilience Factor for Unaccompanied Migrant Children Involved in Child Labour

Violeta Marković | University of Belgrade

In the context of migration, especially irregular and forced, the risks of children being exposed to child labour are high. A particularly at-risk group is unaccompanied children as they are traveling alone, without the support of the closest people, which forces them to rely on smugglers and people they meet on the way. Since unaccompanied children are routinely involved in hazardous child labour on their journey (Markovic, 2024), risks to their physical and mental well-being are huge, while protective factors are lacking. Resilience is defined as the ability of individuals to recover or cope satisfactorily with adverse circumstances involving the human capacity to adapt to tragedy, trauma, difficulty, and significant stressors. Spirituality is highlighted as one of the basic characteristics that predict resilience with several others such as optimism and purpose (Vieira, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Manning, 2013).

In order to determine the resilience factors of unaccompanied children involved in child labour on their journey through the Balkan route, qualitative research was conducted. 44 unaccompanied children in transit participated in focus groups and interviews in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to determine resilience factors, a constructivist conceptualisation of resilience was adopted (Ungar, 2004, 2007, Ungar et al., 2008). Faith and spirituality were analysed as one of the factors helping children to resolve seven universal tensions in circumstances of many adversities they encounter while working.

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PS 1.2

Ecology and Religious Ethic*Écologie et éthique religieuse*

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Christophe Monnot** | Université de Strasbourg**Irene Becci** | Université de Lausanne**Jens Koehrsen** | University of Basel**Chair / Discutant****Jens Koehrsen** | University of Basel**Islamic Entrepreneurship and Ecological Commitment: The Case of French Muslims Entrepreneurs****Bochra Kammarti** | EHESS, President AFSR**Islamic Environmental Ethics: The Role of Faith-Based Initiatives in Promoting Ecological Awareness and Environment****Skender Brucaj** | Bedër University**Religious Institutions and Education as Catalysts for Climate Action in Albania****Genti Kruja** | Bedër University

Islamic Entrepreneurship and Ecological Commitment: The Case of French Muslims Entrepreneurs

Bochra Kammarti | EHESS, President AFSR

Based on interviews conducted as part of my doctoral work on the sociogenesis of Islamic finance in Europe and a post-doctoral research project on the practice of Islam in the professional field, this paper proposes to study the case of Muslim financial professionals and entrepreneurs in France who practice Islamic norms, values, ethics in the frame of their professional and commercial activities. On so doing, they induce a shift from the practice of Islam in worship (ibadāt) – an individual and intimate practice of Islam – to the practice of Islam in the professional field (mu'âmalât), oriented towards the social world and in relationship with others.

This paper proposes 1) to observe the multiple constraints and ethical dilemmas they face, to discuss the reasons behind their professional conversions 2) to understand how they articulate Islamic prescriptions, secular ethics as ecology and the environment in which they carry out their economic activity. Islamic piety and religious discipline are important leitmotifs in professional conversions to Islamic markets and entrepreneurship, but not the only ones. Indeed, the people interviewed refer to secular ethical language, such as the preservation of future generations, ecology, social justice, sustainable development, bio, etc., to explain their professional orientations. They often experience moral/ethical dilemmas in the course of their job and find in the sharîa (Koran and Sunna) pragmatic answers to their ethical quests. This paper proposes to study how these economic actors grasp and respond to public problems such as ecology in the frame of their economic activity, through religious referent.

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Islamic Environmental Ethics: The Role of Faith-Based Initiatives in Promoting Ecological Awareness and Environment

Skender Brucaj | Bedër University

This paper examines the influence of Islamic environmental ethics on shaping contemporary ecological awareness and fostering more sustainable environmental practices. Islamic environmental ethics, informed by Qur'anic principles and Hadith teachings, is based on the concepts of stewardship (Khalifah), trust (Amana), balance (Mizah), and unity of creation (Tawhid), thus providing a deep framework through which contemporary ecological challenges can be confronted. This paper explores how faith-based initiatives translate into ethical principles in practical action within a community to address ecological awareness and environmental sustainability. The paper will focus on how religious values and spiritual practices are being harnessed for ecological responsibility by faith-based and interfaith organizations that can bring positive transformation. The paper further highlights the inclusiveness of interfaith efforts toward improving global environmental movements and shows how Muslim-led initiatives bridge faith-based and secular ecological movements. Through case studies of successful engagements and collaborations, this study aims to empirically illustrate the capacity of Islamic environmental ethics to effect transformative change in society by promoting environmental sustainability objectives.

Religious Institutions and Education as Catalysts for Climate Action in Albania

Genti Kruja | Bedër University

This paper explores the role of religious communities and their educational systems in addressing the climate crisis, with a particular focus on Albania. It examines how various religious traditions, including Islam Sunni, Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Islam Bektashi (Sufi order), and Evangelical Christianity, contribute to environmental preservation through spiritual teachings, community engagement, and educational initiatives. Drawing from religious principles of stewardship and eco-theological teachings, the paper highlights the significant environmental contributions made by religious institutions in Albania, such as tree planting, waste reduction, and ecological education.

The work further emphasizes the importance of interfaith cooperation in environmental conservation, illustrated through joint efforts by religious education like Erasmus + project, "Facing global challenges: Environmental and Peace Education in Interreligious Cooperation for Teacher Training". Additionally, the paper discusses the role of Bedër University in promoting Eco-Theology through its academic programs, as well as the potential for further collaboration among religious institutions and universities to foster environmental awareness and sustainable practices in Albania. The findings suggest that religious communities, by integrating environmental ethics into their teachings and practices, can play a crucial role in mitigating climate change and promoting a more sustainable future.

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Yoga and Contemporary Spiritualities. Intersecting Health, Religious Exoticism and Benevolent Orientalism

Yoga et spiritualités contemporaines. À la croisée de la santé, de l'exotisme religieux et de l'orientalisme bienveillant

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / *Salle*

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Stefania Palmisano and **Matteo Di Placido** | University of Turin

Technique de soi, technique de soin: quand la pratique de transe devient thérapeutique

Aurélie Giovine | Université catholique de Louvain

Scientology – A Liberal Religious Movement to Put the Individual in Control in Order to Improve Society

Peter Birkelund Andersen | University of Copenhagen

Personal Development, Alternative Spirituality and Conflicts in the Workplace

Zuzana Bártová | University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

Technique de soi, technique de soin: quand la pratique de transe devient thérapeutique

Aurélié Giovine | Université Catholique de Louvain

Depuis quelques années, les pratiques de transe à des fins thérapeutiques émergent sur la scène du bien-être dans nos sociétés contemporaines. Héritées de traditions issues d'autres aires culturelles (chamanisme mongol, umbanda et candomblé), elles sont technicisées et modelées pour répondre aux logiques de soin d'une population contemporaine.

Sur base d'une ethnographie menée auprès de collectifs de « transeurs », il s'agira dans un premier temps, d'analyser la manière dont ces pratiques se sont construites et les relations qu'elles entretiennent avec les traditions dont elles proviennent. Cette communication questionnera le processus de technicisation de ces « outils » de soin, notamment les éléments extraits et/ou rejetés des traditions originelles pour correspondre aux attentes du public occidental. Un focus sera aussi mis sur les revendications émiques associées à ces pratiques, notamment la question de leur adaptabilité au mode de vie des transeurs et de leur dimension pragmatique (rapidité d'exécution et de résultat, utilisation pour répondre à des besoins du quotidien, renforcement de l'empowerment et du potentiel individuel...).

Dans un deuxième temps, les ambivalences discursives autour d'une spiritualité possible seront interrogées : si ces pratiques sont présentées par les équipes encadrantes comme volontairement détachées de tout contexte religieux (revendiquant l'universalité de la pratique de transe et donc sa disponibilité pour tout un chacun), les pratiquants narrent régulièrement leur besoin d'une approche spirituelle dans leur accompagnement de soin. Un point sera donc proposer sur la place accordée aux dimensions spirituelles dans ces pratiques, la manière dont sont considérées les expériences dites extraordinaires au sein des collectifs (notamment la rencontre avec des « entités ») et l'approche qui en est faite dans une société laïque et sécularisée (interprétation possible, adaptation du discours, positionnement public...).

Enfin, une réflexion sur les relations entre santé et spiritualité sera posée à travers la manière dont ces techniques cherchent à s'inscrire dans le champ thérapeutique, par l'adoption d'un discours psychologisant faisant de ces pratiques des « techniques de soi » (Foucault) ou en s'appuyant sur les recherches en neurosciences pour valider et légitimer leur utilisation (référence aux dernières découvertes sur l'activité cérébrale, participation à des protocoles de recherches en neurosciences sur les pratiques de transe, volonté de scientificité de la pratique, utilisation de vocabulaire spécifique...).

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Scientology – A Liberal Religious Movement to Put the Individual in Control in Order to Improve Society

Peter Birkelund Andersen | University of Copenhagen

Scientology promotes itself as offering the individual tools to handle life, and 50 per cent of the scientologists in Denmark stress this as one of several tools for joining. This individualistic position is seemingly in opposition to the fact that 35 percent have joined to become better to help other people. Both positions become understandable from the teachings forwarded by L. Ron Hubbard in his Dianetics book from 1950 and the later clearly religious additions in the orientally inspired Church of Scientology. Both systems are based on utilitarian equations balancing the optimal gain of the individual with the optimal gain of the surroundings and critical to the individual utilitarianism (Bellah et al 1985) so common in the US. The paper investigates the members of Scientology in Denmark and the social work they carry out – always aiming at the improvement of individuals – from a survey of 328 core members of Scientology in Denmark collected in 2018.

Personal Development, Alternative Spirituality and Conflicts in the Workplace

Zuzana Bártová | University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice

Personal development is central to contemporary management practices (Bártová 2024; Birknerová et al. 2022; Brunel 2008; Rievajová, Stané, and Stanek 2016; Salman 2021; Stevens 2011; 2012). Workers are expected to develop themselves and improve their well-being via different activities and sources such as relaxation techniques, yoga exercises, meditation practices, various therapeutic modalities (lithotherapy, aromatherapy), coaching methodologies, and psychological consultations. These practices and sources are also present in the workplace in former socialist countries of Central-Eastern Europe such as Slovakia (Bártová 2024). The paper proposes to focus on their association with alternative spirituality and lived religion and to discuss their impact on conflicts in the working environment. On the one hand, they can be deployed to resolve different personal issues and interpersonal conflicts. In this way, the paper will show how they are disconnected from the reflection on broader organisational and systemic problems. On the other hand, they can be a source of conflicts at work. The paper will thus focus on how personal development practices and discourses, connected to alternative spirituality and lived religion, participate in these conflicts.

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PS 1.4

Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (1)

Religiosité: analyse d'enquêtes quantitatives internationales et nationales (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Jörg Stolz | University of Lausanne

David Voas | University College London

A Reactionary Reversal? Religion and Attitudes to Gender Equality in the 2023 European Social Survey

Ingrid Storm | MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society

Is There a Southern European Variant of Secular Transition Model? Evidence from a Harmonized Dataset about Religious Change in Europe (1973–2023)

Ferruccio Biolcati Rinaldi | University of Milan

The End of Decline; the Start of Revival? A Critique

David Voas | University College London

A Reactionary Reversal? Religion and Attitudes to Gender Equality in the 2023 European Social Survey

Ingrid Storm | MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society

Despite an association between religion and traditional attitudes to gender, women have largely remained more religious than men. However, data from a number of recent surveys indicate a reversal of this gender gap among the youngest cohorts in western countries. This development could be due to a strengthening of the perceived association between religion and political conservatism and traditional gender roles.

The European Social Survey, round 11 (2023), includes a module on gender which is designed to capture misogynistic attitudes, perceptions of discrimination and inequality. In this paper I will examine the association of these variables with measures of religious identity and practice among men and women in different countries, and what, if anything, has changed in the youngest cohorts.

Support for gender equality has fallen in many European countries in recent years, and in public debates and on social media, populist voices are contesting policies designed to protect against gender-based discrimination and violence. An increased association between religiosity and reactions against gender-equality, could be a symptom of a general value polarisation and may boost the perception of (non-)religious identification as an expression on political affiliation.

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Is There a Southern European Variant of Secular Transition Model? Evidence from a Harmonized Dataset about Religious Change in Europe (1973–2023)

Ferruccio Biolcati Rinaldi | University of Milan

The theory of secular transition proposed by David Voas constitutes a research agenda open to various developments. One of the most debated issues concerns the universality of the secular transition model, specifically whether the transition process is the same in all countries experiencing secularization dynamics, or whether there may be potential variants of a prevailing model. This possibility has been explored particularly in Eastern European countries, given the unique interplay between politics and religion in these nations from World War II to the present day.

Preliminary analyses also focus attention on Southern European countries, which could represent a specific variant of the secular transition model. In Italy, as well as in Portugal and Spain, the transition process appears to be slower compared to what has been observed in other European and Western countries. This hypothesis is being thoroughly tested. If confirmed, the possible explanatory factors for this variant will be investigated, ranging from the religious specificities of the national context to the social structures and networks that may influence the spread of secularity as an innovation.

The analyses are based on the CARPE dataset (Church Attendance and Religious change Pooled European dataset), which harmonizes variables related to religious affiliation and participation in religious services from major international longitudinal and comparative surveys (ESS, EVS, WVS, as well as Eurobarometer and ISSP). Currently, the CARPE dataset contains data for 45 countries, covering the period 1970–2016, and derives from 1,665 national surveys. This translates into a sample of approximately 1.8 million individual observations. For these analyses, the dataset will be updated to include surveys from recent years.

This paper was co-authored by David Consolazio from the University of Milan.

The End of Decline; the Start of Revival? A Critique

David Voas | University College London

Some recent surveys have been taken to suggest that secularization has run its course in the United States, and a youth-led religious revival is underway in England. These findings have been greeted with enthusiasm – or at least a marked absence of scepticism – by commentators around the world. Headlines have included “Is the world ready for a religious comeback?” (New York Times, 19 October 2024), “Christianity’s decline in U.S. appears to have halted” (New York Times, 26 Feb. 2025), “Church attendance among Gen Z has quadrupled” (Independent, 20 April 2025), “‘A revival is happening’: Church hails resurgence among young in UK” (Guardian, 26 April 2025).

Such claims seem dubious on close examination. The evidence for revival frequently derives from opt-in surveys rather than random (probability) sampling. There is a tendency to highlight some results and others. Much is made of apparent increases among emerging adults, many of whom are still in transition to independence. Young people are in any case a hard-to-reach population for whom samples are often unreliable.

There are lessons here for sociologists. Religion produces a strong bias towards wishful thinking. Journalists are excited when conventional wisdom is challenged. Anecdotes are piled up as supporting ‘evidence’. We need to place more trust in surveys based on probability sampling and less in data collected from opt-in online panels; we also need to challenge the inclination to interpret local or small-scale phenomena as representative of wider shifts.

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PS 1.5

Spirituality in Australia: Wellness, Wellbeing and Risks*Spiritualité en Australie : bien-être, santé et risques*

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session**Anna Halafoff** | Deakin University**Chair / Discutant****Paul Bramadat** | University of Victoria**Menopause Complexity: Holistic Spirituality, Wellness and Risks****Anna Halafoff** | Deakin University**Mapping Spiritual Diversity: A Latent Class Analysis of Australian Adults****Andrew Singleton** | Deakin University**Spiritual Complexity in Australia: Intertwining Indigenous, Christian and Holistic Spiritualities Through Nature-Connection****Cristina Rocha** | Western Sydney University**Rosie Shorter** | Deakin University

Menopause Complexity: Holistic Spirituality, Wellness and Risks

Anna Halafoff | Deakin University

Menopause and perimenopause are currently attracting significant public attention in Australia and other so-called Western societies. Women are speaking out about the challenges they are facing during this life change, which has previously been largely considered a “taboo” subject.

They are also reclaiming menopause as a period of increased wisdom, healing and freedom, often drawing on Pagan holistic, spiritual frameworks, celebrating this empowering phase of womanhood. Concurrently, ‘menopause marketisation’ has become big business, not just for the pharmaceutical companies, but also the burgeoning \$6.3 trillion global wellness industry, which has moved from the margins to the mainstream. This has resulted in swathes of ‘menopause influencers’ and ‘menowashing’, which aggressively markets wellness products, often with disturbingly little scientific evidence of their benefits. There are also rising concerns regarding the spread of disinformation and ‘conspirituality’ in the wellness industry and among alternative communities – including vaccine and cancer treatment hesitancy – and of cultural appropriation of non-Western knowledges by wellness influencers for personal economic gain. This reveals a menopause complexity, as increased awareness of menopause is no doubt beneficial but where there are also potential risks.

Moreover, many frameworks for understanding menopause, and also reasons for making it a taboo subject, are related to holistic, spiritual and religious narratives of cycles of nature, rites of passage and/or problematic purity discourses. At the same time, a number of studies have documented that spiritual and religious frameworks that view menopause and ageing positively can improve women’s experiences of this transition. This further reveals both spiritual and menopause complexity.

This paper presents four brief case studies on menopause influencers, arising from the Spirituality in Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project: Model and founder of WelleCo, Elle Macpherson; actor and founder of Stripes Beauty, Naomi Watts; Gina Chick, winner of Alone Australia; and wellbeing and productivity advisor, Thea O’Connell (on whales). It explores themes of holistic spirituality, wellness, wellbeing and risks, focused on personal and planetary, multispecies dimensions.

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Mapping Spiritual Diversity: A Latent Class Analysis of Australian Adults

Andrew Singleton | Deakin University

The contemporary ‘spiritual turn’ in Australia, as in other parts of the world, is well recognised and challenges scholars to find new ways to study it. This paper presents a latent class analysis (LCA) of spirituality among Australian adults based on data from the nationally representative 2024 SWELL Survey (n=1,600). LCA is a powerful, person-centred method that identifies subgroups or ‘types’ within populations by analysing patterns of beliefs, practices and experiences. Our study conceptualises spirituality as multidimensional, encompassing identity, practices, beliefs and experiences. Using nine composite measures spanning nearly 30 survey items, we developed a five-type model of spirituality. The five types are ‘Deeply Spiritual’ (14% of the sample), a group embracing non-traditional practices, beliefs and commitments; ‘Blenders’ (21%), blending traditional and alternative spirituality; ‘Religious Adherents’ (22%), committed to orthodox religious traditions; ‘Unengaged’ (23%), disengaged from spirituality and religion; and ‘This-Worldly’ (19%), resolutely secular people. Building on an earlier study of teen spirituality (AGZ survey, 2017), these findings highlight the value of LCA in uncovering diverse, complex, and hidden spiritual patterns in the adult population. The analysis reveals that a large proportion of the Australian adult population is not secular in outlook but instead embraces many spiritual and religious possibilities. The paper concludes by exploring what this means for ideas about secularisation in Australia.

This paper was co-authored by Anna Halafoff from Deakin University.

Spiritual Complexity in Australia: Intertwining Indigenous, Christian and Holistic Spiritualities Through Nature-Connection

Cristina Rocha | Western Sydney University

Rosie Shorter | Deakin University

Across the lands now known as Australia there is increasing religious diversity and complex, contradictory spiritualities. Australians engage in spiritual practices both within and outside of traditional religious institutions, and these practices may be distinctly religious, holistic or Indigenous. There may also be overlaps among these categories. In this paper, we focus on the work of the Common Grace, a nondenominational Christian group, to demonstrate the ways in which spiritual complexity plays out in contemporary Australia.

We draw on interviews with staff at Common Grace, and textual analysis of available material about Common Grace. We argue that a connection with nature – or ‘creation care’ in Christian parlance – informs people’s desire for self and planetary wellbeing, and that it weaves together aspects of Indigenous, religious and holistic spiritualities at Common Grace. We contend that this is illustrative of spiritual complexity in Australia.

This paper was co-authored by Joshua Waters from Deakin University.

PS 1.6

Gender and Gendered Issues Within Christianity*Genre et questions liées au genre dans le christianisme*

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Kati Tervo-Niemelä** | University of Eastern Finland**Jenni Spännäri** | University of Eastern Finland**Anna Sofia Salonen** | University of Eastern Finland**Marjukka Laiho** | University of Eastern Finland**Chair / Discutant****Kati Tervo-Niemelä** | University of Eastern Finland**“I Am Constantly Unaffirmed in My Calling”: An Examination of the Supply-Side Factors Shaping Continued Gender Disparities in Congregational Leadership in the USA****Erin Johnston** | Duke University**Negotiating Faith and Feminism: Gender Issues and Religious Activism in Three Italian Catholic Associations****Martina Rolandi** | University of Turin/Milan**Beyond Suffering: Rafqa Al-Rayyis and the Gendered Frontiers of Sanctity****Borja W. Gonzalez Fernandez** | Necmettin Erbakan University**Evangelical Women: Past, Present and Future – Stories of Life, Histories of Gender****Elsa Pereira** | ISUP

“I am constantly unaffirmed in my calling”: An Examination of the Supply-Side Factors Shaping Continued Gender Disparities in Congregational Leadership in the USA

Erin Johnston | Duke University

Women remain significantly underrepresented in religious leadership positions in the US. In 2019, 14% of religious congregations were headed by women, a figure that has increased by only 3% since 1998. Most women who enter ministry meet a “stained glass ceiling” that disproportionately funnels them into secondary leadership positions. While existing research has focused on the formal and informal mechanisms that prevent women from entering and advancing in religious leadership, we take a life course perspective to focus on potential upstream or supply-side factors that may help explain persistent occupational sex segregation through career selection. To do so, we draw on survey ($n = 395$) and in-depth interview ($n = 110$) data from the Seminary-to-Early Ministry study: a longitudinal study following four cohorts of seminary students through seminary and into their earlier careers. Overall, we found that men are significantly more likely than women at matriculation to plan to enter congregational ministry and significantly more likely to plan to be the primary or senior leader of a congregation upon graduation. Analysis of interview data collected at matriculation reveals numerous factors that influence men’s and women’s career plans and pathways: social expectations and cultural messages starting as early as childhood, relationships and interactions with others, including the presence or absence of gender-matched role models, experiences of church hurt or abuse, differential opportunities to engage in ministry or leadership positions in youth or campus ministry, and work values and preferences. These factors coalesce to create gendered career imaginaries, shaping how men and women imagine themselves as religious leaders—or not. For many women, gendered career imaginaries and negative experiences in the church lead to hesitancy about entering congregational ministry, insecurity and uncertainty regarding their ability to lead, and, in many cases, to women opting out of senior leadership entirely. In sum, our findings show that gendered social and cultural forces sculpt an individual’s options, values, and preferences over the life course, contributing to continued gender inequality within religious leadership.

This paper was co-authored by Anna Holleman from Appalachian State University, and Bec Stargel and Kelsey Mischke from North Carolina State University.

Negotiating Faith and Feminism: Gender Issues and Religious Activism in Three Italian Catholic Associations

Martina Rolandi | University of Turin, University of Milan

Gender roles and meanings are rapidly changing in Italian society, and terms like feminism and patriarchy are increasingly discussed in public debate. This research explores how such changes relate to strong Catholic identities and practices. Indeed, a few contemporary debates, both academic and non-academic, about religion, secularization, and gender equality in the Western context present a linear and dichotomous narrative: religion is seen as irrational and backward, while the secular is associated with rationality and progress (Nyhaugen, 2018). As a result, gender inequalities are more readily linked to religion, while equality is attributed to the secular. Over the years, sociologists of religion have challenged this rigid perspective, strongly emphasizing the need to move beyond the binary contrast between oppressed religious women and “secularized,” emancipated, and feminist women (among others: Braidotti, 2008; Van Den Brant, 2014, 2015; Midden, 2012; Aune et al., 2008; Mahmood, 2005). The study examines how the women members of three Italian Catholic organizations (Scout movement, Donne per la Chiesa, and Alleanza Cattolica) negotiate gender roles and meanings to face the increasing popularity of gender issues. These groups present different postures on gender-related issues, which we have distinguished into correspondingly innovative, ambivalent, and conservative. Using a combination of participant observation and in-depth interviews, the research investigates the agency of religious women and how they come to terms with the positions of the Catholic hierarchy. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of gender negotiations within religious contexts and their broader implications for Catholic Church reform.

Beyond Suffering: Rafqa al-Rayyis and the Gendered Frontiers of Sanctity

Borja W. Gonzalez Fernandez | Necmettin Erbakan University

In 2001, Pope John Paul II canonized the Lebanese nun Rafqa al-Rayyis. The canonization, part of a broader pontifical effort to reach out to Lebanese Christians after their country's protracted civil war, emphasized the role of suffering in Rafqa's path to sanctity. According to the short biography issued by the Holy See, which framed her within the traditional confines of female religiosity, the new saint was portrayed as the passive subject of external forces, her sanctity being defined by her meek endurance of physical suffering.

This paper challenges such a sanitized interpretation of Rafqa's biography by restoring her agency not only as the active shaper of her own existence but also as a vehemently disruptive force within the Lebanese society of her time. Relying on her autobiographical account and the narratives of those who knew her personally, this presentation emphasizes how Rafqa appropriated the debilitating sickness that would eventually make her fame as something deliberately willed and an expression of her intimate bond with the divine.

Rather than examining Rafqa's life in isolation, this paper also argues that her existential microhistory can only be understood when set within the context of a certain 'mystical/devotional model' emerging at the dawn of modernity. Indeed, by mirroring the life examples of other devout and mystic figures, women like Rafqa were able not only to assert the legitimacy of their religious experiences and transform their own lives, but also to challenge and reshape the societies they were a part of.

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Evangelical Women: Past, Present and Future – Stories of Life, Histories of Gender

Elsa Pereira | ISUP

This paper results from the research I am conducting on the role of women in evangelical churches in Europe. My study adopts a qualitative and comparative approach across five countries: Portugal, Sweden, Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria. In 52 interviews conducted with evangelical leaders in these countries, 16 women were included. From these 16, I have chosen to present 5 life stories, one from each country. These narratives also unfold stories within the broader history of social, economic, political, religious, migratory and institutional dynamics of the five societies under study, while engaging with an increasingly globalized context.

The “choices” of these women highlight the proactive and entrepreneurial path of female agents within religious contexts, climbing the ladder of gender inequalities with both progress and setbacks. This ladder, and the accompanying advances and regressions, are not purely the result of religious theologies and rituals but stem from a combination of macro, meso, and microsocial factors, which we will describe. The weight of political and social culture, along with the social construction of gender roles, extends far beyond the religious circle itself. Religious communities are not hermetic or closed; rather, they are permeable to broader society. This permeability, as represented, constructed, and communicated in their gender-based dynamics and powers, is often internally unrecognized.

This social “blindness,” frequently reproduced by women themselves, has closed certain doors to the empowerment of women within Christian communities. On the other hand, there are women who have managed to leverage their vulnerabilities to open doors in what appear to be male-dominated religious spaces. These doors, opened by previous generations, are now being ignored or outright refused by many women, causing an apparent pushback in intergenerational achievements that must not be overlooked.

Understanding these often-overlooked dialectics between society, culture and religion can serve as an internal lever to unlock female agency while simultaneously deconstructing stereotypes about religious experiences for those observing from the outside.

Discursive Sociology of Religion

Sociologie discursive de la religion

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / *Salle*

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Tuomas Äystö | University of Helsinki

Preaching Spiritual Growth that Gives Listeners a Sense of Agency

François Alloui-Renon | Catholic University of Paris

Is This the Real Life? Is This Just... Religion? The Category of Religion in the Discursive Construction of the Secular Real

Matteo Bollini | Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

The Race-Religion Nexus: An Analytical Toolkit

Lars Laird Iversen | MF – Norwegian School of theology, religion and society

Secularism in the Making? Political Discourses on Church and State Relations in Poland

Katarzyna Zielińska | Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

Preaching Spiritual Growth that Gives Listeners a Sense of Agency

François Alloui-Renon | Catholic University of Paris

We have observed that the style and substance of the senior pastor's sermons are of paramount importance in the growth of charismatic churches. This paper shares findings from a year-long study of sermons delivered at France's two largest flourishing charismatic churches: Momentum in Bordeaux and MLK in Paris. By conducting both content and topical analyses, we will demonstrate how these messages promote an enterprising approach to expansion and progress, whether it be for the collective or the individual. These discourses address the leader's goals of expanding the congregation through spiritual means. They are delivered in simple religious language that gives listeners a sense of agency. This agency will help members develop themselves in their daily lives, contributing to the growth of the church. We will also explore the distinctions between the two churches, which equip members with the necessary tools for such development.

This paper was co-authored by Christophe Monnot, who is affiliated with both the University of Strasbourg and the University of Lausanne.

Is This the Real Life? Is This Just... Religion? The Category of Religion in the Discursive Construction of the Secular Real

Matteo Bollini | Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

Since Berger and Luckmann made the idea a staple of sociological parlance, sociologists have been studying how religion contributes to the social construction of reality. While this approach has focused mostly on what is typically considered “religious,” how the category of religion itself shapes our definitions of reality has been comparatively neglected. To follow this line of inquiry, I suggest taking the idea of studying religion in the social construction of reality in a more literal sense by asking: what is the role of the category of religion in the production of a specific construction of the real?

Building on a key premise of the Discursive Study of Religion (DSR), this paper treats “religion” as a floating signifier whose meanings are contingently stabilized by contextual norms and interests. The construction of a secular world picture is one area of concern, wherein “religion” has a critical role in the discursive (re)production of the conception of the secular real, apophatically defined as the neutral background in which we really live.

To illustrate this, I draw from a variety of settings, from academic debates to rhetorical uses of the notion in society at large, to show the work done by “religion,” especially when used in conjunction with ontologically charged terms such as “empirical reality,” “natural,” and “fictional.” This analysis reveals how the category of religion functions as a powerful discursive tool in constructing a secular ontology as reality sans phrase.

The Race-Religion Nexus: An Analytical Toolkit

Lars Laird Iversen | MF – Norwegian School of theology, religion and society

Monday

This presentation introduces a theoretical toolkit for analyzing the race-religion nexus, specifically the intersection of racism and religious discrimination in Islamophobia studies. Drawing on Stuart Hall’s discursive approach to difference, the toolkit distinguishes between markers of difference—material signs like skin tone, clothing, or accents—and discursive formations of difference, such as race or religion, that assign meaning to these markers.

Tuesday

The presentation demonstrates how race and religion are entwined over time, shaping experiences of discrimination. Using examples like the racialization of Muslims and the religification of racial markers, it critiques Eurocentric assumptions in Islamophobia scholarship and advocates for empirically grounded, context-sensitive analyses. The toolkit addresses recent critiques by enabling nuanced examinations of both racial and religious forms of prejudice while remaining adaptable to global contexts.

Wednesday

This work advances the study of Islamophobia and the broader race-religion nexus by offering a flexible, transparent framework for understanding intersecting discourses of difference. It also highlights implications for policymaking and activism, providing a robust method to analyze and counter contemporary forms of exclusion and marginalization.

Thursday

Friday

Secularism in the Making? Political Discourses on Church and State Relations in Poland

Katarzyna Zielińska | Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

Poland has long been regarded as a predominantly Catholic and deeply religious country, with the Roman Catholic Church holding significant social and political influence. However, over the last decade, there has been a noticeable transformation in Poland's religious landscape.

This change is reflected in the decreasing religiosity among the Polish population and evolving societal perceptions of the Roman Catholic Church's role in public and political life. Additionally, recent elections in Poland have highlighted the increasing politicization of the Church's involvement in society, resulting in an intensification of calls for a redefinition of its privileged role, a redefinition presented as an element of restoring the democratic order.

The paper aims to analyse the secularist discourses of the political parties currently in power, exploring how such discourses legitimise the need to redefine the Roman Catholic Church's political and public role in Poland and what new relations between state and Church they propose. The paper will contribute to the wider discussions on discursive approaches to studying the public presence of religion and socioreligious change.

Monday

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PS 1.8

Religions, Media and Marketing*Religions, médias et marketing*

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

220, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Carlo Nardella** | University of Milan**Trajectories of Catholic Sexual Abuse in Europe: A Historical Institutional Approach****Brian Conway** | Maynooth University**Marketization Processes in Pentecostal-Charismatic Megachurches: The Transformation of Social Forms of Religion in United States Christianity****Maren Freudenberg** | Ruhr University Bochum**Best Enemies: Religion and Marketing in Famiglia Cristiana's Advertising (2001–2021)****Elia A.G. Arfini** and **Carlo Nardella** | University of Milan**Pope Francis as an Influential Leader? Evidence and Implications****Riccardo Ladini** | University of Milan

Trajectories of Catholic Sexual Abuse in Europe: A Historical Institutional Approach

Brian Conway | Maynooth University

This paper investigates the role of the media as a factor influencing the trajectory of Catholic sexual abuse in three societies (Croatia, Italy and Ireland) representing different case studies of Catholic Europe. Drawing on the sociology of religion, media and social movement literatures, we develop an historical institutional theory to account for patterns in the trajectory of Catholic sex abuses in the 1970–2024 time period. This analytical framework draws attention to the role of historical institutional factors in a society as potentially relevant for understanding social problems. More specifically, we examine (among other factors) how the mass media contributed to the outbreak of cases through its willingness to report negative religion-related stories. We test this theory using in-depth country case studies combining historical and interpretative modes of investigation. We find support for the theory in explaining variation across the cases under study. For example, investigative journalism was central to the outbreak of sexual scandals and religious de-legitimation in the Irish case in the 1990s and in the Italian case, though later than in Ireland. By contrast, the relative lack of a critical approach by the media in Croatia may have served to undermine knowledge of the phenomenon among the general population and thus to dampen its reputation costs for the church. More broadly, this paper suggests that students of religion-media interactions would do well to pay more attention to the media as a potential influence in understanding trajectories of Catholic sex abuse cross-nationally and to challenging the ministry of religious leaders in today's society.

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Marketization Processes in Pentecostal-Charismatic Megachurches: The Transformation of Social Forms of Religion in United States Christianity

Maren Freudenberg | Ruhr University Bochum

Megachurches – congregations with 2,000 or more weekly attendees – have proliferated rapidly since the 1980s and fundamentally shape the American religious landscape. The paper examines the transformation of the social forms of religion in the U.S. by focusing on processes of marketization in Pentecostal-Charismatic megachurches. It suggests that megachurches are comprised of a range of social forms, including large-scale worship as an event, small group gatherings as a site of communitization, and the religious organization as setting long-term goals and securing overall efficiency. Crucially for Pentecostal-Charismatic megachurches, the market exchange as another social form is the primary site of marketization processes that become evident both structurally and semantically. Structural marketization includes megachurches operating as economic agents, e.g. by selling products (such as resources and merchandise) to finance the organization. Semantic marketization refers to the incorporation of market logics into theological doctrine, most prominently in the form of prosperity theologies. Also known as the Health and Wealth Gospel, prosperity teachings promise emotional and physical health and material wealth in exchange for temporal and monetary investments in a congregation. The paper argues that this conviction – that donating time and money results in divine rewards of good health and material wealth – suggests not only that prosperity-oriented understandings of salvation are increasingly located in the immanent instead of the transcendent realm, but also that secular market logics are being absorbed into the religious sphere on both structural and semantic levels.

Best Enemies: Religion and Marketing in Famiglia Cristiana's Advertising (2001–2021)

Elia A.G. Arfini and Carlo Nardella | University of Milan

Marketing has emerged as one of the primary arenas where religion attains public visibility. In Italy, signs of a growing convergence between religion and marketing have been increasingly evident since the turn of the twenty-first century, making their relationship more complex and multifaceted. This paper examines the various forms this relationship can assume by analyzing a broad sample of advertisements published over the past twenty years in Famiglia Cristiana, Italy's leading Catholic magazine and one of its most widely circulated periodicals. Employing content analysis, the study categorizes the sampled advertisements according to how religious and commercial elements intertwine – sometimes harmoniously and sometimes contentiously – throughout the magazine's recent history. The findings reveal a spectrum of interactional patterns between religion and marketing, spanning mutually beneficial collaboration (e.g., ads for sacred texts and religious merchandise), peaceful coexistence (e.g., ads for pilgrimages or commercial messages that respectfully use religious references), and open conflict (e.g., ads featuring sexual content or emphasizing luxury and hedonistic values). These results also illustrate how such patterns have shifted over time, providing insight into the evolving interplay between religion and marketing in contemporary Italy.

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Pope Francis as an Influential Leader? Evidence and Implications

Riccardo Ladini | University of Milan

Monday

Pope Francis has been very active in the public debate on several social and political issues, gaining a role that extends beyond the realms of religiosity and morality. Overall, he has been perceived by the media and the general public as a leftist figure and even a modernizer. Given that the Pope expresses his position on various issues, with resonance in the media, public opinion, and political debates, it is noteworthy to consider whether, and to what extent, Pope Francis influences public opinion, especially in Catholic countries. Nonetheless, little is known about this outside the US context and beyond the climate issue.

Tuesday

Recent experimental survey research on the Italian case has contributed to the analysis of the Francis effect on public opinion by testing whether the papal endorsement of an anti-poverty measure during the COVID-19 pandemic affected people's support for it. The results highlighted the presence of the Francis effect among the Italian public, especially among those who trust the Pope and those with a leftist political orientation.

Wednesday

This presentation aims to present the findings of current research on the Francis effect on public opinion and discuss their implications. In particular, it will explore the implications of Pope Francis' role as an influential leader for political communication strategies, within the framework of culturalized religion. Since the Pope has been shown to influence public opinion on issues related to left-wing stances—even beyond the climate change issue—left-wing political leaders could benefit from exploiting the Pope's endorsement of policies they support in their political communication. However, the same could apply to right-wing politicians concerning issues related to right-wing stances.

Thursday

Friday

Religious Transmission Across Generations: Challenges, Continuities and Changes (1)

La transmission religieuse à travers les générations : Défis, continuités et changements (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

414, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Roberta Ricucci and **Christel Gärtner** | University of Hamburg

The Decline of Religious Transmission and Its Impacts on Historical and Cultural Religious Literacy: A Québec Case Study

Élisabeth Sirois | University of Ottawa

(Non)Religious Transmission Across Generations in Finland: Children's Worldview Construction and Existential Resilience

Arniika Kuusisto | University of Helsinki

Cage or Nest? The Role of Ethnic Catholic Communities in the Inclusion Process of "New Italians"

Francesca Farruggia and Alessandro Ricci | University of Rome "La Sapienza"

The Decline of Religious Transmission and Its Impacts on Historical and Cultural Religious Literacy: A Quebec Case Study

Élisabeth Sirois | University of Ottawa

In recent years, Quebec has been one of North America's fastest-growing societies in terms of its nonreligious population, rising from 12% to 27% between 2011 and 2021; conversely, the rates of adherence to Catholicism, the historically and culturally dominant religious tradition, are rapidly declining, having fallen from 74% to 53% over the same period.

Since the deconfessionalization of the school system in 2000, the introduction of the Ethics and religious culture (ERC) course in 2008 and its replacement, in 2023, by a course addressing citizenship issues, the place of the religious question in the school curriculum has greatly evolved. Some public and media discourse reveals gaps surrounding religious literacy in terms of history and culture. Public schools, which once ensured the transmission of certain elements of religious culture and history, have significantly reduced the space reserved for these topics in their general training courses in light of the recent debates surrounding the place of religion in the public sphere.

This paper examines the impact of a loss of religious literacy among young Quebecers in the light of the decline in religious transmission, but more specifically among a "transitional" generation, i.e. one that has experienced both confessional and secular religious education. What impact can we expect on religious culture, but also on Quebec culture as a whole? Are we witnessing the end of cultural Catholicism, the triumph of political secularism (laïcité), or both ?

(Non)Religious Transmission Across Generations in Finland: Children’s Worldview Construction and Existential Resilience

Arniika Kuusisto | University of Helsinki

Religious socialization has diminished in Finland, where religious landscape has altered both due to migration and superdiversity and secularization. Where worldview construction was previously often guided by religious narratives of the historically strongly Evangelical Lutheran society, the changes in religious socialization have meant that children presently find their meanings increasingly elsewhere, with increasingly hybrid worldviews (Helve 2016) drawing from multiple, religious and non-religious sources. This paper examines young children’s worldviews (religious/non-religious/hybrid), values, and existential resilience—here understood as “resilience provided by one’s meaningful view of the world and one’s place in it” (Segersvärd et al, in press, 2), an element contributing to individual well-being. Meaningful personal worldview has been seen to include a perception of coherence, significance, and direction (Segersvärd et al, in press).

The data were gathered through a multi-method design, where children (N=45) first generated audiovisual autoethnographical data with tablet computers on what is important and valuable in life for them, and were then interviewed about these. The findings illustrate examples of the hybrid nature and plasticity of young children’s worldview across time (continuous learning and development along individual life trajectories) and place / space (across social contexts such as home and ECEC), as well as the nature of play as a liminal third space where shared enchantment is enacted, with elements drawn from a multitude of sources (e.g. Disney films, Minecraft, and fairytale magic, besides religion and national cultural heritage). Furthermore, the results highlight both individual and relational elements related to resourcing children’s existential resilience.

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Cage or Nest? The Role of Ethnic Catholic Communities in the Inclusion Process of “New Italians”

Francesca Farruggia and Alessandro Ricci | University of Rome “La Sapienza”

In the last thirty years Italy has become a country of immigration, with a percentage of foreign citizens in the country increasing from 1% in 1990 to 8.7% in 2023. Around 29% of them belong to the “young” demographic class (14-34 years), making this new category of citizens, the “new Italians”, the fundamental player in the integration processes.

Their lifepaths are extremely heterogeneous and require the construction of inclusion tracks respectful of their different life experiences and cultural codes of origin. As the literature on the issue abundantly displays, young adults with migratory backgrounds find themselves caught between the culture of their parents and the hosting society. This condition generates stressful situations for the second generations, mostly in those cases when material values passed down within families do not find an expression in post materialistic hosting societies. Thus, rarely their identities can be defined as “complete” while more often they appear “suspended” or “broken”.

The ethnic Catholic communities have always been a privileged point of reference for migrants in the country of arrival, thanks to the offer of material and symbolic support. While this function is effectively fulfilled for the first generation of migrants, it is less obvious for the second generation, which also experiences different cultural tensions in respect to their parents. Is the religious institution role perceived as restrictive and inadequate by the “new Italians”? On the contrary, can the “national” Catholic community become a meeting point with peers who share the same experience? Can it be a place of growth towards the construction of a solid identity able to synthesize elements from both cultures in which they are immersed?

To answer these questions, we have conducted, on behalf of the Diocese of Rome, a study that deepens the understanding of the role of religious communities in the lives of young adults with migratory backgrounds. The topic, often overlooked, provides instead useful insights into their processes of integration. Our research has been conducted within these communities in the City of Rome through interviews with key informants (16 among priests and activists in the field) and focus groups with second-generation youths (96 of 12 different nationalities). Our results show that religious communities help the new gener-

ations to achieve a balance between cultures essential for a positive inclusion path providing tools needed for their survival in a context in which they feel rarely accepted, when not openly reject.

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PS 1.10

Theorising Religious Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia, and Secularisation (1)

Théoriser le patrimoine religieux : Nation, nostalgie et sécularisation (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Marian Burchardt | Leipzig University

Cultural Heritage or Religious Symbol? The Debate on Mountain Crosses in Italian Public Spaces

Giovanna Rech | University of Padova

Values as Floating Signifiers? The Discourse on (Christian) Values and Heritage in EU Christian Party Programs

Marie Jäckel | University of Zurich

German Evangelical Church in Slovenia Between Conversion and Migration

Gašper Mithans | Science and Research Centre Koper

Cultural Heritage or Religious Symbol? The Debate on Mountain Crosses in Italian Public Spaces

Giovanna Rech | University of Padova

This contribution will discuss the mobilization against the presence and erection of crosses on the peaks of Italian mountains. At stake, is the debate on the role of religious symbols in public spaces, with various legal cases up to the European Court of Human Rights. In the social sphere, the reflection has always been controversial and divisive, involving actors, scholars, and intellectuals, both nationally and internationally. Debates revolve around the universal value of this symbol and the claim for secularism and sacredness that extends to open spaces such as mountains and their peaks.

The issue concerns the process of legitimization and delegitimization of Christian symbols that have colonized Italian mountains, focusing on the cross at the top of mountains as a “cultural object” and as a religious symbol that has eventually become “passive”.

Using both natural documents and netnographic materials (press, blogs, social media dedicated to mountains) and ethnographic materials, this presentation will focus on:

- a) the role of these particular religious symbols in a context such as the mountains;
- b) the values that manifest in the social sphere through collective action: the mobilization of opinion is analyzed as a “discursive opportunity” offered by the media with respect to collective action as such.

My thesis concerns the clear manifestation of two parallel processes: first, the culturalization of the Catholic religion in Italy and, second, the heritagization of the mountain.

Values as Floating Signifiers? The Discourse on (Christian) Values and Heritage in EU Christian Party Programs

Marie Jäckel | University of Zurich

This paper examines the discourse on “values” within party manifestos and reports of Christian parties or organizations in the EU, focusing on the European People’s Party (EPP), the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), and the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union (COMECE). Through a detailed content analysis, the paper identifies recurring themes, including migration, family- and bio-politics, and historical references that connect values to European heritage and tradition. These findings reveal a reliance on vague or flexible references to “values,” allowing each entity to engage in meaning-making that aligns with its unique perspective on contemporary issues. Additionally, it highlights the interconnectedness of values with the discourse around tradition, heritage and (imagined) history. Using Ernesto Laclau’s Theory of the Floating Signifier as a theoretical framework, the paper argues that “values” and “Christian values” function as floating signifiers within these discourses. This theoretical approach suggests that “values” serve both as unifying symbols of European “identity” and as interpretative tools through which each actor constructs context-specific meanings. By highlighting the adaptability of “values” and its connection to “Christian roots” within European political discourse, this paper shows how symbolic terms such as values and heritage are mobilized in political and cultural narratives to shape visions of Europe’s past, present, and future.

German Evangelical Church in Slovenia Between Conversion and Migration

Gašper Mithans | Science and Research Centre Koper

The German Evangelical parishes – the church of the German Lutheran minority – were founded on the territory of present-day Slovenia primarily by immigrants from German-speaking regions. The Lutheran community largely dependent on converts, who made up a significant proportion of its members. Although most members of the German minority were Roman Catholics, Lutheranism became closely associated with Germans, while Roman Catholicism was linked to Slovenians. This division deepened national tensions, particularly after the “Los-von-Rom Bewegung” and the border demarcation following the end of World War I. The German minority consolidated within (German) Lutheran parishes, accompanied by another wave of conversions. However, heavy emigration due to discrimination and oppression – similar to what the Slovenian minority faced in Austria – led to a decline in the German Lutheran population in Slovenia from 3,670 in 1918 to 2,466 in 1939 (Zajšek, 2010; Wild, 1980).

The German Lutheran community played a prominent role in advocating for minority rights but increasingly came under the influence of Nazism. Following the occupation of Yugoslavia, most of the German minority collaborated with German authorities. This collaboration became a pretext for the post-war Yugoslav authorities to deport them. By the war’s end, majority of the German minority in Slovenia, some 15–16,000 persons, had fled with the German army. Between September 1945 and early 1946, up to 9,500 were deported, and at least 529 were killed extrajudicially or died in concentration camps (Tominšek Čehulić, 2012). Many survivors resettled in Austria as refugees or deportees.

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Author Meets Critics: Global Secularity – A Sourcebook

La laïcité dans le monde – Un recueil de documents

Tuesday, July 1st | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle
106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session
Christoph Kleine | Leipzig University
Monika Wohlrab-Sahr | Leipzig University
Johannes Duschka | Leipzig University
Nurit Stadler | Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants
Lori Beaman | University of Ottawa
Shlomo Fischer | Hebrew University of Jerusalem

This is an author-meets-critics session to discuss the 7-volume sourcebook **Global Secularity** (De Gruyter 2024-2025, Open Access), which is the result of an interdisciplinary and international cooperation within the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences “Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities” at Leipzig University.

*Il s’agit d’une session de rencontre entre auteurs et critiques pour discuter de l’ouvrage de référence en sept volumes **Global Secularity** (De Gruyter, 2024–2025, accès libre), qui est le résultat d’une coopération interdisciplinaire et internationale menée au sein du Centre d’études avancées en sciences humaines et sociales « Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities » à l’université de Leipzig.*



PARALLEL SESSIONS (PS)

SESSIONS PARALLÈLES



Parallel Sessions 2

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30
Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
2.1	Ecology and Churches <i>Écologie et églises</i>	310
2.2	Navigating Emotional Politics: Religious Communities and Their Migration Experiences (2) <i>Naviguer dans la politique émotionnelle : les communautés religieuses et leurs expériences migratoires (2)</i>	102
2.3	Climate Change Migration. Future Perspectives <i>Migrations liées au changement climatique. Perspectives d'avenir</i>	110
2.4	Working Group: Faith-Based Work and Beyond with Migrants and Refugees at Grassroot Level in Europe. Insights From Practice-related Research <i>Le travail confessionnel et au-delà avec les migrants et les réfugiés au niveau local en Europe. Aperçu de la recherche liée à la pratique</i>	104
2.5	Locating Nonreligion <i>Localisation de la non-religion</i>	311
2.6	Author Meets Critics: A Sociology of Religious Freedom <i>Une sociologie de la liberté religieuse</i>	103
2.7	Changing the Symbolic Order of Public Spaces with Religious Buildings and Rites: Immigration and Its Repercussions in the Fields of Religion, Culture and Collective Identity <i>Modifier l'ordre symbolique des espaces publics par des édifices et des rites religieux : l'immigration et ses répercussions dans les domaines de la religion, de la culture et de l'identité collective</i>	312
2.8	Conservative-Liberal Polarization in Media Discourse <i>Polarisation conservatrice-libérale dans le discours médiatique</i>	313

PS	TITLE	ROOM
2.9	Politicizing Migration and Religion (1) <i>Politiser la migration et la religion (1)</i>	414
2.10	Author Meets Critics: Religion and Gender Equality around the Baltic Sea <i>Religion et égalité des sexes autour de la mer Baltique</i>	106
2.11	Religious Transmission Across Generations: Challenges, Continuities and Changes (2) <i>La transmission religieuse à travers les générations : défis, continuités et changements (2)</i>	002

PS 2.1

Ecology and Churches*Écologie et Églises*

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateur(s) de la session**Christophe Monnot** | Université de Strasbourg**Irene Becci** | Université de Lausanne**Jens Koehrsen** | University of Basel**Chair / Discutant****Irene Becci** | Université de Lausanne**Ecological Mobilisation: When the Mayor and the Pastor Join Forces****Christophe Monnot** | Université de Strasbourg, Université de Lausanne**Do Religious Congregations Influence the Environmental Behaviour and Attitudes of their Members? Empirical Evidence from Switzerland****Anastas Odermatt** and **Maja Kofod Jensen** | University of Basel**Is there Greening of Religions? The Case of Switzerland****Jens Koehrsen** | University of Oslo

Ecological Mobilisation: When the Mayor and the Pastor Join Forces

Christophe Monnot | Université de Strasbourg, Université de Lausanne

On the morning of 20 September 2017, the pastor of Kolbsheim sounded the tocsin to warn residents of the arrival of construction machines to prepare the ground for the construction of a new 24km motorway bypass around the city of Strasbourg (GCO).

The residents, led by the mayor, who are opposed to the construction of the motorway, had decided to use this sign to mobilise and block the path of the vehicles. This event was just one in a series of local protests against the construction of the motorway. The fact that a mayor and a pastor were leading this struggle is an unusual aspect. What does this unusual alliance tell us? From the interviews I conducted with the various actors, it became clear that the pastor played a key role in this struggle because she was involved as a pastor-citizen, combining ecological and human commitment within a religious framework, without denying either. She complemented the mayor, who took the political struggle to the various institutional and administrative levels.

In the search for a “coalition,” the mayor joined forces with the pastor, who, through her ecclesiastical role, helped to blur boundaries and unite a wide range of causes in opposition to the motorway project. In this way, their actions focused on the needs of the local population, transcended conventional divisions and appeared apolitical in the local arena.

Monday

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Do Religious Congregations Influence the Environmental Behaviour and Attitudes of their Members? Empirical Evidence from Switzerland

Anastas Odermatt and Maja Kofod Jensen | University of Basel

In empirical studies of the “greening of religion” the predominant focus has been on the relationship between theological beliefs and environmental attitudes or behaviors. However, there has been minimal consideration of the social context, including the level of greening at the organizational level.

This paper seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which the greening of congregations is connected to their members’ greening behaviours and attitudes. We present some initial findings from a survey of members within congregations in Switzerland, which was conducted in the spring of 2025. The congregations included Roman Catholic, Protestant Reformed, Evangelical Free Church, and Muslim communities.

A series of survey questions were posed to the members, enquiring about their environmental behaviour and attitudes, as well as socio-demographic and religious-specific items. The results at the member level are nested within the respective congregational data from the National Congregation Study 2 (NCS 2) (Stolz, Köhrsen, Senn et al., 2024), which includes the level of greening at the congregational level. By employing multi-level modelling techniques to analyse the nested data, we estimate the intercorrelation between congregational greening and the environmental behaviour and attitudes of individual members.

This paper presents fresh data and initial findings of the quantitative component of the SNSF-funded project, entitled “What are the greening dynamics of religion? A multi-level analysis of religious environmental engagement in Switzerland”.

Is there Greening of Religions? The Case of Switzerland

Jens Koehrsen | University of Oslo

Scholars have suggested that religions increasingly become environmentally aware and engaged. Yet, quantitative research on individuals tends to show no clear evidence for a “greening.” This study explores the “greening of religions” by focusing on congregations in Switzerland. Being central meeting places, congregations can become brokers for “greening” processes. Here, members can learn about new environmental perspectives and activities of their faith. At the same time, members may encourage their religious leaders to assume certain environmental positions, thereby influencing the congregation. Thus, congregations are essential for the “greening of religions”.

This mixed-methods paper studies whether there is evidence for religious “greening” processes among congregations in Switzerland and how these “greening” processes evolve. It addresses these questions via a quantitative survey of 1395 congregations from different faith traditions and qualitative in-depth interviews with representatives from congregations and religious umbrella organizations.

The survey shows that over a third of the studied congregations perceive a process towards more environmental awareness within their congregation. This is a substantial share of the Swiss religious landscape, thereby challenging critical voices about the “greening.” Yet, insights from the in-depth interviews reveal that the processes involve tensions and negotiations. By pointing to the tensions and drawbacks of ongoing greening processes in Swiss congregations, the paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of religious greening processes.

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PS 2.2

Navigating Emotional Politics: Religious Communities and Their Migration Experiences (2)

Naviguer dans la politique émotionnelle : les communautés religieuses et leurs expériences migratoires (2)

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Gilda Seddighi | NORCE

Deniz Coşan Eke | University of Vienna

Chair / *Discutant*

Gilda Seddighi | NORCE

Diasporic Liminality: Identity Paradoxes and Belonging Dilemmas

Berihun Wagaw | University of Basel

Guided by Faith: the Multifaceted Role of Religion in the Life of Migrants

Valentina Pereira Arena | Universidad Católica del Uruguay

Religion, Secularism, and the Emotional Framing of Syrian Refugee Repatriation in Turkey

Rabia Karakaya Polat | Işık University

Diasporic Liminality: Identity Paradoxes and Belonging Dilemmas

Berihun Wagaw | University of Basel

The paper provides an overview on contemporary scholarly debates on defining a concept of diasporic identity and belonging and diaspora institutions – including religious communities.

The following questions are addressed throughout the paper:

How identities of diaspora are formed, transformed, shaped, contested and negotiated? In search of and claim for belonging, how do diasporic communities relate to the spaces of homeland, host society and transnational networks? What kind of agency diasporic communities perform and experience positionality in construction of their intersectional identities such as ethnic, national, racial, religious, etc.? What is the role of religion in the process of identity and belonging negotiations?

Moreover, this paper discuss the meanings, experiences and perceptions of identity and belonging from threefold perspectives: first, how the diasporic communities perceive themselves; second, how they are perceived by their country of origin, and third, how they are perceived by the host country/country of residence. As top-down approaches tend to frame and study diaspora primarily as potentially influential transnational political actors who mobilize social, political, cultural and economic forces and transfer knowledge and capital to their “imaginary” country of origin.

Furthermore, the paper will offer a case study of Ethiopian diaspora community in Switzerland. In the context of migration, the Ethiopian diaspora struggles with complex emotional and identity dynamics characterised by transnational ties and the liminal state of belonging. This paper explores how religious and cultural communities within the Ethiopian diaspora in Switzerland manage emotional politics and affective geographies in the construction and negotiation of their identities – focusing on the role of religious spaces as affective anchors in which diasporic individuals negotiate their identity and belonging. By examining the interplay of liminality, transnationalism and emotional politics, this paper sheds light on the evolving nature of identity and belonging within diasporic communities.

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Guided by Faith: the Multifaceted Role of Religion in the Life of Migrants

Valentina Pereira Arena | Universidad Católica del Uruguay

This paper explores the interplay between religion and migration through the experiences of Peruvian migrants in Argentina and Uruguay. Drawing from in-depth interviews, the findings reveal the essential role of religion throughout the migratory journey. In the pre-migration stage, participants described religion as an emotional refuge, a source of motivation, and a framework for decision-making through transcendent intercession. Upon arrival, religious practices fostered connections to cultural roots and facilitated social adaptation in host societies. Furthermore, religion provided emotional support during the challenges of migration, offering a means to reinterpret experiences as part of a divine plan. This presentation underscores the necessity of integrating religion into migration research and policies, highlighting its role in sustaining cultural identity, creating transnational ties, and fostering resilience among migrants. These findings contribute to understanding how religion shapes and is reshaped by migratory processes.

Religion, Secularism, and the Emotional Framing of Syrian Refugee Repatriation in Turkey

Rabia Karakaya Polat | Işık University

This paper examines the emotional and political dimensions of Turkey's refugee policy, focusing on debates about the return of Syrian refugees following the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024. The fall of the Assad regime has also intensified repatriation debates across Europe. Countries such as Germany and Sweden have begun to reassess their stance on Syrian refugees, with some suspending asylum applications pending the situation in Syria.

Through a discourse analysis of speeches by political party leaders, the study explores how the ruling party evokes emotions such as compassion, religious solidarity, and historical pride to frame its stance as a moral imperative tied to Turkey's Islamic identity and regional leadership aspirations. In contrast, opposition parties appeal to fear, resentment, and economic pragmatism, often invoking secularist ideals to challenge the government's narrative. These competing discourses highlight the intersection of religion and secularism in shaping public perceptions of Syrian refugees and broader policy debates. While opposition parties were very quick to call for repatriation, the government signals a broader agenda in Syria appealing to emotions of neo-Ottomanist nostalgia and pride based on the positioning of Turkey as the protector of Muslims.

By focusing on political discourse, this paper reveals how emotional narratives are strategically mobilized to serve ideological goals, contributing to our understanding of the interplay between emotion, religion, and politics in refugee policies.

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PS 2.3

Climate Change Migration. Future Perspectives*Migration liée au changement climatique. Perspectives d'avenir*

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Alessandro Indelicato** | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**Climate on the Move: Exploring Public Perceptions and Religious Influences on Climate-Driven Migration****Alessandro Indelicato** | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**Experiences of Lithuanian Migrant Workers in the Icelandic Housing Market: The Impact of Nature-based Tourism****Goda Cicėnaitė** | University of Iceland**Analysing Climate Change Migration and the Level of Agreement on Climate Change Effects in the U.S.A.****Juan Carlos Martín** | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria**National Policy Responses to Climate-Induced Migration: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh and Somalia****Sinem Abka** | Dokuz Eylül University

Climate on the Move: Exploring Public Perceptions and Religious Influences on Climate-Driven Migration

Alessandro Indelicato | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Climate change is having a profound impact on our lives, going beyond environmental concerns to drive transformative societal changes. Although often imperceptible in the short term, its effects can be seen in statistical trends, such as the rise in global temperature of around one degree over the past 150 years. The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, including hurricanes and prolonged droughts, have increased sharply, with the number of natural disasters doubling in the last two decades.

These phenomena have triggered population movements, highlighting the interplay between climate and mobility. Climate-induced migration can be broadly categorised into three processes: voluntary or semi-voluntary migration, forced displacement and planned resettlement. Despite its growing importance, this type of migration is often sidelined in public discourse and omitted from many climate policy agendas.

The increasing frequency of climate-related disasters and the resulting migration patterns raise critical questions about societal attitudes towards these new migrants. For example, would granting formal 'climate refugee' status foster greater acceptance among local populations? While existing research has focused heavily on individual socio-economic predictors of attitudes towards migrants, the specific dynamics surrounding climate migrants remain underexplored.

Religion plays a central role in shaping societal responses to migration, particularly in mitigating prejudice against out religious or culturally distinct groups. In the context of climate-induced migration, this intersection warrants further attention. Using fuzzy hybrid TOPSIS, this paper seeks to unravel the nuanced public perceptions of climate migrants and explore the role of religion in shaping these attitudes. Bridging migration studies with ecology, sociology, political science and religious studies, the paper adopts an interdisciplinary framework to deepen understanding of the complex relationships between migration and climate change.

This paper was co-authored by Juan Carlos Martín from Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

Experiences of Lithuanian Migrant Workers in the Icelandic Housing Market: The Impact of Nature-based Tourism

Goda Cicėnaitė | University of Iceland

Iceland's housing landscape has undergone persistent transformation due to the impact of transnational tourism and gentrification. Fifteen years ago, in a bid to lead the country toward economic recovery from the financial meltdown, Icelandic policymakers and commercial parties launched an effective marketing strategy to promote Iceland as a nature tourism destination.

As a result, the increased transnational tourism in Iceland has accelerated demand for short-term housing, resulting in a growing number of hotels, guest-houses, and numerous forms of Airbnb accommodations.

Consequently, long-term housing options for local residents and temporary accommodation options for short-term migrant workers became scarcer, placing many renters in a precarious position. Building on qualitative data, this study analyses the current housing market experiences of Lithuanian migrant workers in Iceland, identifying housing-related challenges and opportunities brought about by transnational nature-based tourism and discussing the intersectionality of housing strategies and regulations.

Analysing Climate Change Migration and the Level of Agreement on Climate Change Effects in the U.S.A.

Juan Carlos Martín | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

The current study will analyse two scales, namely climate change effects (CCE) and the level of agreement Americans have when discussing climate change effects with friends, family and house of worship members, and co-workers or classmates (CCE-LA).

A Fuzzy Hybrid Analysis and a Fuzzy-Clustering ECO Extended Apostle model will be used to analyse the dataset obtained from a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center. A total of 10,156 respondents participated in the survey, administered to a nationally representative panel.

The latent variable of climate change effects was measured using four items based on the likelihood of four events happening within the next 30 years. These events are: (1) Lower quality of life; (2) More extreme weather events, such as tornadoes, flooding and droughts; (3) An increase in refugees and displaced people; and (4) Food and water shortages. The latent variable of the level of agreement on climate change effects when American talk was also measured using four items: (1) friends; (2) family; (3) people at your house of worship; and (4) co-workers or classmates.

The fuzzy hybrid approach will provide a synthetic indicator for each latent variable at an aggregate or individual level. The fuzzy-clustering ECO extended apostle model will distinguish four categories that will be further analysed: unconcerned-disagrees, concerned-disagrees, unconcerned-agrees and concerned-agrees.

This paper was co-authored by Alessandro Indelicato from Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

National Policy Responses to Climate-Induced Migration: A Comparative Study of Bangladesh and Somalia

Sinem Abka | Dokuz Eylül University

The United Nations (UN) launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Combating climate change and its consequences is among these goals.

The growing number of displaced people due to natural disasters has been one of the serious consequences of climate change. Integrating climate change mitigation into national policies, and strengthening adaptive capacity are the two leading strategies for states to address climate-related migration. Bangladesh is a highly vulnerable country exposed to climate change-induced disasters in South Asia such as floods, cyclones and coastal erosion.

These disasters have led to internal and external displacement of many Bangladeshi. Like Bangladesh, Somalia, an eastern African country, has increasingly been subject to desertification and droughts as a consequence of climate change which has caused human movement. For this reason, in 2021, The Bangladeshi government introduced a Perspective Plan for 2041 including elements of mitigation and adaptation to climate change. On the other hand, Somalia presented a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Framework in 2022 outlining the country's strategy, priorities, and actions for adapting to climate change.

Accordingly, this study seeks to analyze mitigation and adaptation strategies embraced by Bangladeshi and Somalian states to manage climate-induced migration. Methodologically, the primary sources such as national action plans and other related documents issued by both countries will be used to address the climate crisis and climate-induced migration. A comparative analysis of the national strategies of these two countries along with international support for these plans will be presented.

This paper was co-authored by İrem Aşkar Karakır from Dokuz Eylül University Working Group

Working Group

Faith-based Work and Beyond with Migrants and Refugees at Grassroot Level in Europe. Insights From Practice-Related Research

Le travail confessionnel et au-delà avec les migrants et les réfugiés au niveau local en Europe. Aperçu de la recherche liée à la pratique

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

104, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Kees de Groot | Tilburg University

Annette Leis-Peters | VID Specialized University

Diaconia Going Liquid? Faith-Based Initiatives for Migrants in Secularizing Welfare Societies

Kees de Groot | Tilburg University

The 'Humanitarian Corridors' Initiative of the Community of Sant'Egidio and Its Relationality in Refugee Integration

Olena Komisarenko | Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas – Angelicum

Professional Practice in a Politically Infected Field. Perspective from Faith-Based Actors in Migration Services in Norway

Annette Leis-Peters | VID Specialized University

Diaconia Going Liquid? Faith-Based Initiatives for Migrants in Secularizing Welfare Societies

Kees de Groot | Tilburg University

In the World Values Studies (Inglehart 2021), Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands are among the countries that stand out for a high degree of secularization and relatively strong welfare societies. Historically, Protestant and – in the case of the Netherlands – also Catholic, faith-based organizations played a major role in the development of these welfare societies. Nowadays, faith-based organizations are still important actors in supporting (religiously diverse) migrants from, both from Central and Eastern Europe (EU-migrants) and beyond. What are the issues these ‘diaconal’ organizations face, considering the deinstitutionalization of religion, the transition of welfare states, and increasing migration from less secularized countries? Current approaches of social work are often caught up in a binary perspective on religious and non-religious organizations. This paper presents an approach to research faith- and values-based support by using a modified secularization theory that focusses on processes on the institutional level and asks about both the discontinuities and continuities between more and less secularized faith-based initiatives, focusing on the characteristics of their practices, including the implied practice theory.

This paper was co-authored by Annette Leis-Peters from VID Specialized University and Linnea Lundgren from Marie Cederschiöld Högskola.

The ‘Humanitarian Corridors’ Initiative of the Community of Sant’Egidio and Its Relationality in Refugee Integration

Olena Komisarenko | Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas – Angelicum

This study examines the engagement of the Community of Sant’Egidio with migrants and refugees in Europe, highlighting its faith-driven humanitarian and integration activities focusing on the “Humanitarian Corridors” initiative. Since its foundation in Rome in 1968, the Community has evolved into a global network committed to alleviating human suffering and fostering social cohesion, driven by its core values of prayer, poverty, and peace. Special in its approach is its attention to the poorest and developing vulnerability criterias in defining beneficiaries who will come to new host countries through humanitarian corridors initiative.

Sant’Egidio’s initiative bridges gaps left by systemic failures in state and international responses. By involving local churches, associations, and individuals in the reception process, the Community establishes welcoming spaces that enable refugees to rebuild their lives in supportive environments. The protocols of the “Humanitarian Corridors” clearly extend to officially prioritising vulnerable groups, such as survivors of torture and human trafficking etc, through criteria that reflect recognition of their relational difficulties and the need for tailored support systems.

The Community of Sant’Egidio exemplifies how faith-based organisations can serve as relational mediators, crafting holistic solutions to the challenges of migration while contributing to the broader discourse on social justice and integration.

Professional Practice in a Politically Infected Field. Perspective From Faith-Based Actors in Migration Services in Norway

Annette Leis-Peters | VID Specialized University

Creating practice-oriented knowledge in the field of migration and religious diversity is one of the main objectives of the COST action COREnet. COREnet uses several approaches to arrange and explore encounters between migrants, local populations, (professional) practitioners, media and policy makers in various European countries. One of them is a series of “reflective cafés” with practitioners from migration services that was conducted in four European cities (Oslo, Rome, Tilburg and Zagreb). The paper presents a preliminary analysis of empirical material from two reflective cafés in Oslo with 12 practitioners from three faith-based organisations. The cafés were organised as focus group interviews during which the participants discussed the character of their everyday work in the different migration services, (professional) values that are at stake in these activities, (ethical) dilemmas that they experience and the question if religion and/or worldviews are relevant for the daily work. The preliminary findings of the analysis contribute the research debates about migration services as a practice field, the growing religious diversity in Europe, the effects of changing migration policies on local communities in Europe and the (potential) role of faith-based actors in migration services on grassroots level.

This paper was co-authored by Mateus Schweyher from VID Specialized University.

Locating Nonreligion

Localisation de la non-religion

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / *Salle*

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Peter Beyer | University of Ottawa

Relationships with the Human and Non-Human World in Community Gardens

Douglas Ezzy | University of Tasmania

Trekking, Love for Nature, and New Ways of Thinking About Awe

Kati Tervo-Niemelä | University of Eastern Finland

Locating Nonreligion in the Legal Debates Over Same-Sex Marriage and Reproductive Rights

Juan Marco Vaggione | National University of Córdoba

Paula Montero | University of São Paulo

Renata Nagamine | Brazilian Center of Analysis and Planning

Non-Religion in Norwegian Refugee Receiving Institutions

Inger Furseth | University of Oslo

Relationships with the Human and Non-Human World in Community Gardens

Douglas Ezzy | University of Tasmania

This paper explores the connections some community gardeners feel to people, places, plants, and animals. Places, plants, and animals are a vital part of the relationships within which humans make sense of themselves. This requires a view of social relations that move beyond the human. Beaman and Strumos (forthcoming) argue that anthropocentrism has led social scientists to adopt a narrow, speciesist conception of the social. In this paper we seek to call attention to these distorted understandings of what it is to be human and demonstrate an alternative approach that recasts the social as inclusive of nonhumans. We employ the term 'terrestrial' drawing on Bruno Latour's (2018, 2021) use of 'terrestrial' to designate beings who live in the relatively thin layer of earth called the Critical Zone.

This zone includes the underground aquifers from which we drink, and the soil and vegetation that we require for sustenance. For Latour, the language of 'terrestrial' draws us back down to earth. It draws our gaze away from grand ideas of modernization or the universe, and towards the soil beneath us, for it is here, argues Latour, we must reorient ourselves and our politics. In the experiences, practices, and understandings of community gardeners we seek evidence of 'lived nonreligion' (Salonen), of an ethics of care for terrestrials that emerges out of practices, a more-than-human community, and a distinctive interpretative understanding.

Trekking, Love for Nature, and New Ways of Thinking About Awe

Kati Tervo-Niemelä | University of Eastern Finland

This paper explores new ways of understanding awe among individuals who actively engage with nature through activities such as trekking, hiking, and other outdoor pursuits. What kinds of meaningful experiences do people have in nature, and how might these experiences shape their worldview? Can hiking and trekking prompt changes in how individuals perceive the world around them?

Through examining these nature-based experiences, this paper also explores how they may offer new perspectives on religion and nonreligion. Do these experiences in nature provide fresh insights into the role of (non)religion in people's lives, challenging traditional understandings?

The study draws on data from the "Trekking" subproject of the Non-religion in a Complex Future (NCF) research project. The data includes surveys and interviews with individuals active in hiking, trekking, and other nature activities, as well as a representative dataset of 8,080 respondents from eight countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Norway, the UK, and the USA.

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Locating Nonreligion in the Legal Debates Over Same-Sex Marriage and Reproductive Rights

Juan Marco Vaggione | National University of Córdoba

Paula Montero | University of São Paulo

Renata Nagamine | Brazilian Center of Analysis and Planning

In recent decades, questions about who makes up a family, the role of biology in defining sex, and the origins of human life have been the source of deep social, moral, and legal controversies.

This presentation focuses on the debates around same-sex marriage and abortion in seven countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the United States) and uses these debates to examine the demarcations and zones of transition between the religious and the nonreligious narratives.

Specifically, in a context of moral and religious diversification resulting from, among other things, the decentering of Christianity, the presentation analyzes the narratives and languages emerging in these debates. Rather than prioritizing the description of the values or worldviews of non-religious individuals and/or groups, the proposal is to understand “non-religion” as a product of discursive disputes and the narration of alternative imaginaries about marriage configurations.

Non-Religion in Norwegian Refugee Receiving Institutions

Inger Furseth | University of Oslo

This paper presents findings from a research project that examines religion and nonreligion in Norwegian refugee receiving institutions. Forced migration is growing across the world and, simultaneously, there is an increase of people who identify as having no religion.

We ask: To what extent is religion used to shape and obscure nonreligion and nonreligious identities in refugee receiving institutions? Data consist of interviews with administrative staff at different levels in five Norwegian refugee receiving institutions in 2022–2024. The findings suggest an ambiguous role of nonreligion. The general policy in these institutions is to be neutral when it comes to religious and nonreligious life-stances. Yet, there is peer pressure among residents to attend religious services, taboos regarding nonreligion, and loss of social status for nonreligious residents. This project is part of the Nonreligion in a Complex Future project.

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PS 2.6

Author Meets Critics: A Sociology of Religious Freedom

Une sociologie de la liberté religieuse

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener / Organisateur de la session

Brian Conway | Maynooth University

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants

Avi Astor | Autonomous University of Barcelona

Jörg Stoltz | University of Lausanne

Lori Beaman | University of Ottawa

Monika Wohlrab-Sahr | Leipzig University

Respondents / Répondants

Olga Breskaya | University of Padova

Giuseppe Giordan | University of Padova

James T. Richardson | University of Reno

This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **A Sociology of Religious Freedom**, co-authored by Olga Breskaya, Giuseppe Giordan and James T. Richardson.

*Il s'agit d'une séance de rencontre entre l'auteur et des critiques pour son livre **A Sociology of Religious Freedom**, coécrit par Olga Breskaya, Giuseppe Giordan et James T. Richardson.*

Changing the Symbolic Order of Public Spaces with Religious Buildings and Rites: Immigration and Its Repercussions in the Fields of Religion, Culture and Collective Identity

Modifier l'ordre symbolique des espaces publics par des édifices et des rites religieux : l'immigration et ses répercussions dans les domaines de la religion, de la culture et de l'identité collective

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / *Salle*

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Ullrich Kleinhempel | University of the Free State

Nader Vahabi | University of Toulouse

Africanising the Western Cape: Ritual Transformations of a 'White' Secular Landscape into a Spiritual African 'Life-world', as Symbolic De-colonisation and 'Territorialisation'

Ullrich R. Kleinhempel | University of the Free State

Faith, Gender, and Migration: Exploring the Intersection of Religion, Gender, and Conflict in Ghana's Polarized Society

Grace Sintim Adasi | University of Ghana

The Role of Sangat and Sevā in the Maintenance of a Gurdvārā in a Diasporic Context: A Case Study on the Sikh Community of Bologna

Tamara Musconi | University of Padova

Africanising the Western Cape: Ritual Transformations of a 'White' Secular Landscape into a Spiritual African 'Life-world', as Symbolic De-colonisation and 'Territorialisation'

Ullrich R. Kleinhempel | University of the Free State

The Cape Town region of South Africa is culturally predominantly 'European', populated mostly by whites and culturally assimilated descendants of the Khoi-San. Recent massive internal migrations by blacks from other parts of the country, and immigration, as from Zimbabwe, have changed the demographics.

The 'symbolic order' of the land remained however, defined by Western European Calvinism and Secularism. Public spaces serve for recreation sports, traffic, as nature reserves, etc. In this field, African Indigenous (syncretistic) Churches, and African traditionalists, have begun to take symbolic possession of these sites by worship on hilltops, in public parks in Khoi-San caves, or by nightly rituals at the seaside. This raises considerable irritation in the 'European' community.

The presence of these worshippers, and their traces, indicates that the black religious communities are symbolically taking possession of the land, making it their own, de-alienating themselves, and redefining the meaning of the landscape. This is theoretically interesting, in view of the concept of 'life-world', which is defined by Husserl, Gadamer, and Habermas, as a symbolically meaningful environment that connects the individual with it, and shapes its identity, and sense of belonging.

The acts by which this 'secular' landscape is integrated into an African religious 'cosmos', and transformed into it, has political and psychological implications. They redefine the land and make it 'home' in post-colonial appropriation, by religious and cultural means. This paper illustrates and explores these processes.

Faith, Gender, and Migration: Exploring the Intersection of Religion, Gender, and Conflict in Ghana's Polarized Society

Grace Sintim Adasi | University of Ghana

The existing body of literature offers limited insight on the interplay of religion, gender, migration, and conflict in Ghana where socio-political transformation and religious pluralism are the dominant features of everyday life. This study antedates on the intersection of these dimensions within individuals lived experiences in places afflicted by such polarization along the principal lines based on ethnic and religious divisions. The analysis is based on intersectionality theory which highlights how multiple aspects of identity and systems of oppression intersect to shape the experiences and outcomes of individuals.

As Ghana becomes more religiously diverse, however home to prominent sects of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous belief systems such phenomena are becoming akin to competitive circumstances in local bidding wars. But tensions sometimes flare, especially in multi-ethnic communities where religious identity tends to mix with gender, migration status and social divisions. Gender norms and religious affiliations further exacerbate gender inequalities in these crisis or disaster situations faced by migrant communities often displaced due to economic hardship, environmental changes or political instability trapped in precarious living situations. Gender influences migration trends and experiences and women often face even greater economic, security, and religious access challenges.

Women migrants whom tripartite often see as both vulnerable and resilient navigate these intersections of faith and gender differently than do their male counterparts. This paper demonstrates how religious teachings and gender are made use of in ways that can exacerbate or mitigate effects of migration and conflict in depersonalizing migrants and help them better cope through displacement respectively. Moreover, this work uncovers how conflict dynamics of polarized constituencies of ethnic and religious types influence migrants' intersectional experiences. In Ghana, both religion and gender serve as indicators of identity as well as instruments of social and political power, and they affect migration decisions, patterns of integration and means of conflict resolution. The study reveals the complexity of how faith, gender, migration, and conflict interact to shape social dynamics in Ghana via qualitative interviewing and case studies.

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The Role of Sangat and Sevā in the Maintenance of a Gurdvārā in a Diasporic Context: A Case Study on the Sikh Community of Bologna

Tamara Musconi | University of Padova

The aim of this paper is showing how two key concepts in Sikhism, sangat and sevā, appear crucial in the organization and maintenance of the gurdvārās, as well as in their foundation. “Sangat” indicates the company of devotees that gather regularly in the gurdvārā. Participation in the religious life of the sangat is strongly encouraged by Sikh doctrine, as the company of other believers is inspiring and fundamental to the spiritual growth of the individual. Furthermore, it is usually within the sangat, and so inside the gurdvārā, that many devotees put into practice sevā, the “selfless service” offered to the community, meant to reduce the ego and cultivate compassion. The practice of sevā can involve the donation of money and the engaging in mental (as teaching activities) and physical work, as the preparation and serving of langar (the free communitarian meal offered to any visitor).

After a brief description of the concepts of sangat and sevā, I will show how the functioning and the maintenance of gurdvārās is directly dependent on the active commitment of community members and the practical involvement of the sevādārs (those who do sevā) in day-to-day activities and organisation. This will be done through the presentation of a case study, that is the result of an ethnographic research conducted at the Gurdwara Dasmesh Darbar in Bologna (Italy). The fieldwork, started in autumn 2022, has now been going on for two years and has employed participant observation and interviews to explore the practices and the daily life of the community. Here I will outline the main characteristics of the Sikh community in Bologna from a religious and organisational point of view. Although the presence of a committee, this gurdvārā, as many other small Sikh temples, is characterized by an almost horizontal organisation, based on voluntary commitment and initiative.

Interestingly, Italy, with over 60 gurdvārās (CESNUR, 2024) and about 86.000 followers (ISMU, 2023), hosts the 6th largest Sikh diasporic community in the world (Singh, Shani, 2022). So, through the presentation of this case study I will also highlight the dimensions of gurdvārās in a diasporic context as the main places of expression of Sikh religious and social life as well as their role as «arenas of transnational transmissions» (Jacobsen, 2012) of Sikh and Punjabi culture.

Conservative-Liberal Polarization in Media Discourse

Polarisation conservatrice-libérale dans le discours médiatique

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session

Terézia Rončáková and **Beáta Dorková** | Catholic University
in Ružomberok

How Conservative and Liberal Journalists Write about “the Other”

Terézia Rončáková | Catholic University in Ružomberok

Linguistic Image of Christian Values in Slovak Media Discourse

Katarína Dudová | Catholic University in Ružomberok

Pope Francis’ Communication on LGBT Issues in Media Coverage

Beáta Dorková | Catholic University in Ružomberok

How Conservative and Liberal Journalists Write about “the Other”

Terézia Rončáková | Catholic University in Ružomberok

The paper is based on an extensive content analysis of opinion articles in Slovak conservative and liberal media. The author examines framing, argumentation, attribution and expressiveness in these texts. In this paper, she will focus on some of her findings about “labelling” the other side, about common argumentative bases, but with opposite vectors, about the perception of “the other” and about attributing moral qualities and motivations to the opponents. In her interpretations, she will focus on the search for the essence of differences and disagreements and on the (im)possibilities of dialogue.

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Linguistic Image of Christian Values in Slovak Media Discourse

Katarína Dudová | Catholic University in Ružomberok

Although the church tradition does not offer any list of Christian values, there are attitudes and ways of acting in society that grow out of a long, generally accepted experience of living according to the Gospel. Such Christian values take on a completely different (often distorted) image in the context of political struggles, slogans and speeches of specific politicians in the media discourse. The aim of the paper is to find out, through the methodology of cognitive ethnolinguistics, what image politicians create in Slovak media expressions about some Christian values.

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Pope Francis' Communication on LGBT Issues in Media Coverage

Beáta Dorková | Catholic University in Ružomberok

This paper focuses on an analysis of the Vatican's official communication regarding the sensitive topic of LGBT issues and provides an in-depth examination of the media attention these topics have received during the pontificate of Pope Francis. LGBT issues represent a highly sensitive social area, where the manner of communication plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and discourse. Pope Francis has repeatedly been the subject of media attention in this context during his pontificate. Several of his statements and positions have been labeled as controversial, sparking intense public discussions. Media interpretations or misinterpretations of his words have often significantly influenced how the public perceives his views and the Vatican's stance on LGBT issues.

The analysis includes a review of selected Italian media outlets that have covered this topic and the methodological preparation of a content analysis required for further research. The goal is to compare the official thoughts and statements of Pope Francis with their media interpretations, aiming to better understand this communication process and its societal implications.

Politicizing Migration and Religion (1)

Politisation, migration et religion (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

414, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Paulina Polko | WSB University

Analysing Supranational Migration Policy Discourse

Khushal Naik | Åbo Akademi

Les discriminations religieuses dans la dynamique de la discrimination systémique : résultats de deux enquêtes auprès des jeunes de Québec

Hachem Benissa | Université de Bordeaux

Jean-Philippe Perreault | Université Laval

Syrian Migrants and the Reproduction of Arab-Muslim Perception in the Secular-Islamist Polarisation in Turkey

Pınar Çağlayan | Uşak University

Analysing Supranational Migration Policy Discourse

Khushal Naik | Åbo Akademi

The politicization of migration is by no means a new phenomenon. However, during the past ten years, a series of significant “moments” have occurred in the world (e.g. “Arab Spring”, Brexit, election of Donald Trump, COVID-19 pandemic, Russian invasion of Ukraine, etc.), effectively elevating migration once more to become a source of polarization in the political sphere of many nations around the world. Uniquely, on the supranational level of the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU), migration has been a topic of numerous discourses, often conflicting with the realities of research data and the narratives of migrants themselves. Building on the works of previous scholars within the discursive study of religions, I seek to approach discursive studies from a slightly unique perspective of what I term the “supra-macro” (supranational policy) of the AU and EU. Applying a Faircloughdian perspective to critical discourse analysis, this paper approaches discourse through a three-dimensional framework of analysing text, discursive practice, and social practice. Focusing specifically on official policies and policy discourse, and their practical implications, I explore questions along the central theme of: how is migration, viz-à-viz discourses on religion, utilised, understood, construed and/or constructed in supranational contexts?

Les discriminations religieuses dans la dynamique de la discrimination systémique : résultats de deux enquêtes auprès des jeunes de Québec

Hachem Benissa | Université de Bordeaux

Jean-Philippe Perreault | Université Laval

Alors que la religion constitue un angle mort des discriminations (Doytcheva, 2018) et que les débats publics et politiques tendent à l'instrumentaliser, il apparaît plus que jamais essentiel d'en comprendre les mécanismes. Quelles formes prennent les discriminations fondées sur la religion ? Quels en sont les effets sur l'accès à l'emploi, au logement, à la santé et à l'éducation supérieure ? En quoi les discriminations religieuses se distinguent-elles des discriminations raciales et ethniques ? Dans quelle mesure sont-elles liées, ou non, à des formes de discrimination systémique ? Quelles conséquences ces discriminations ont-elles sur les parcours spirituels et religieux des individus ? Enfin, quelles stratégies de reconnaissance ou d'invisibilisation génèrent-elles ?

Dans le cadre de cette communication, nous souhaitons présenter les principaux résultats de deux recherches menées auprès des jeunes (18–35 ans) de la ville de Québec (Canada). Ces résultats proviennent d'une thèse de doctorat (Benissa, 2023) et d'un projet de recherche intitulé « Convergences », qui constitue le volet canadien du projet UNDETERRED (Horizon Europe). Ce dernier vise à comprendre des inégalités raciales, ethniques et religieuses vécues par les jeunes dans quatre sphères de leur vie : l'emploi, l'enseignement supérieur, les services de santé et le logement. En raison de son contexte social, culturel et juridique spécifique, la ville de Québec constitue un cas d'étude particulièrement pertinent pour explorer les mécanismes de discrimination, notamment dans leurs formes non intentionnelles.

Syrian Migrants and the Reproduction of Arab-Muslim Perception in the Secular-Islamist Polarisation in Turkey

Pınar Çağlayan | Uşak University

Since 2011, Turkey has taken in millions of Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria. However, this reception has led to significant sociological, political and cultural changes and debates not only among Syrian refugees but also among Turkish citizens. One of the most striking of these debates is the transformation of the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment in Turkish society into an ideological polarisation between the political groups in Turkey towards Arab-Muslim identity. The origins of this polarisation should be sought in the characteristics of two different mindsets, namely the secular nationalist front, which is the founding ideology of the Republic of Turkey, and the Islamist Ummahist front, which is the opposite. The aim of this study is to show that the Arab-Muslim perception towards Syrian refugees in society leads to the reproduction of the existing perceptions in the above-mentioned ways of thinking and to the deepening of the polarisation in question. The study first discusses the Arab-Muslim perception of the secular-nationalist ideology and the Islamist-Muslim ideology in Turkey through the texts of the relevant ideologues, and then attempts to show how the public debates on Syrian refugees are conducted within the framework of the aforementioned perception by the representatives of both ways of thinking and how the existing perceptions are reproduced. Data on the topic will be collected from statements of the representatives of both ideologies in the political, cultural and social spheres and the data obtained will be analysed using the technique of discourse analysis.

Author Meets Critics: Religion and Gender Equality around the Baltic Sea

Religion et égalité des sexes autour de la mer Baltique

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / *Salle*

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener / *Organisateur de la session*

Anna Szwed | Jagiellonian University

Respondent / *Répondante*

Milda Ališauskienė | Vytautas Magnus University

Critics / Discussants / *Critiques / Discutants*

Gintarė Pocė | Vytautas Magnus University

Morta Vidūnaitė | Vytautas Magnus University

This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **Religion and Gender Equality around the Baltic Sea**, edited by Milda Ališauskienė, Eglė Aleknaitė and Marianne Bjelland Kartzow.

*Il s'agit d'une séance de rencontre entre l'auteur et des critiques du livre **Religion and Gender Equality around the Baltic Sea**, édité par Milda Ališauskienė, Eglė Aleknaitė et Marianne Bjelland Kartzow.*

PS 2.11

Religious Transmission Across Generations: Challenges, Continuities and Changes (2)

La transmission religieuse à travers les générations : défis, continuités et changements (2)

Tuesday, July 1st | 15:00–16:30

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Roberta Ricucci and **Christel Gärtner** | University of Hamburg

Passing on Christian Religiosity in East Germany. Family Enabling Conditions and Paths of Transmission

Hagen Findeis | Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

Guardians of the Faith in a Secularizing Country. The Transmission of Religious Tradition in Slovakia

Miroslav Tižik | Institute for Sociology, Slovak Academy of Sciences

Social Experience of an Apocalyptic Film. Cultural Learning of Non-Religious Attitudes among Finnish Pupils in Religious Education, Confirmation School and Film

Nina Maskulin | University of Helsinki

Passing on Christian Religiosity in East Germany. Family Enabling Conditions and Paths of Transmission

Hagen Findeis | Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg

The paper focuses on the transmission of Christian religiosity in East German three-generation families under largely secular social conditions. In addition to the specific religious imprints of the families, their socio-structural anchoring (economic situation, level of education, spatial mobility), their milieu affiliation and, associated with this, their habitually shaped styles and shared convictions – the inward orientation of the family – play a formative role. Understanding the family's inward orientation is central to determining the extent of its independence and the family's socialization power. At the same time, this inward orientation is not independent of the external social orientation of a family, which is characterized by a series of functional demands on the family members, each of which involves opportunities and risks for them.

The reconstruction of the family's inward and outward social orientation is primarily concerned with the question of how this relation of interdependence influences the ability of families to pass on their habitual styles as well as normative and worldview preferences. Secondly, and central to my contribution, is the question of how corresponding patterns of interpretation are passed on or changed across family generations. Different ways of passing on religiosity between the different family generations are reconstructed. These range from the passing on of decreasing or increased religiosity in the youngest generation of 14- to late 20-year-old grandchildren, through various forms of questioning, to the complete abandonment of traditions and inheritance logics that were once cultivated within the family.

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Guardians of the Faith in a Secularizing Country. The Transmission of Religious Tradition in Slovakia

Miroslav Tižik | Institute for Sociology, Slovak Academy of Sciences

Slovakia is one of the countries of the European Union with one of the slowest rates of secularization. In addition to measuring forms of religiosity, the Generations and Beliefs survey conducted in the fall of 2024 focused on the role of various individuals in the family and wider social environment that have influenced the current Slovak population in what beliefs they currently hold. The paper will focus on analysing the results of this survey and identifying the key actors in the reproduction of religious tradition in a predominantly Catholic country with a numerically significant group of people with no religious affiliation.

Social Experience of an Apocalyptic Film. Cultural Learning of Non-Religious Attitudes among Finnish Pupils in Religious Education, Confirmation School and Film

Nina Maskulin | University of Helsinki

Where do children and young culturally learn of beliefs and norms in the time of crisis? In this paper, I argue that by looking more closely children and young as actors and thus, subjects of their knowledge, scholars of religion may widen their understanding on the problem of religious transmission. In my doctoral study, I interviewed pupils at school and at Confirmation School after a screening of a popular disaster film '2012' (Emmerich 2009). It adapts Judaeo-Christian narrative of Deluge and uses contentious representations of knowledge, global warming, democracy, media, scientific knowledge, religion, inequality and altruism in the plot. The analysis of qualitative attitude approach interviews (N=25) constructs social experience of the cinematic crisis. The pupils' attitudes towards the controversial issues in the film is an invitation to act together and sharing space globally. Moreover, they cease to refer either national or religious categories. Instead, pupils frame their premise to action by democracy, equality and human rights. I will discuss on the cultural learning of attitudes in the framework of generational problem of the world views by Margaret Mead (1970) and need to "identify with future generations", proposed in planetary youth research by Sofia Laine (2023) and approaching religion and non-religion with "recognition of similarity" introduced by Lori Beaman (2017).

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Parallel Sessions 3

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
3.1	Culture, Spirituality and Ecology <i>Culture, spiritualité et écologie</i>	102
3.2	Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (2) <i>Religiosité : analyse des enquêtes quantitatives nationales et internationales (2)</i>	103
3.3	Religion, International Migration and Diversity (1) <i>Religion, migration internationale et diversité (1)</i>	106
3.4	Men, Meaning and Masculinities: Religion in the Lives of Men <i>Hommes, sens et masculinités : la religion dans la vie des hommes</i>	110
3.5	Places of Change: Adapting Religious Buildings to New Uses <i>Les lieux du changement: adapter les édifices religieux à de nouvelles utilisations</i>	002
3.6	Return of Religion? Migrations and Public Discourses Around Europe <i>Le retour de la religion ? Migrations et discours publics en Europe</i>	310
3.7	Religious Education in a Time of Crisis <i>L'enseignement religieux en temps de crise</i>	312
3.8	Young Adults and Spirituality in Polarised Societies <i>Jeunes adultes et spiritualité dans des sociétés polarisées</i>	104
3.9	Socioreligious Change in (Post)Modern Societies: Theory and Research <i>Le changement socioreligieux dans les sociétés (post)modernes: théorie et recherche</i>	311

PS	TITLE	ROOM
3.10	Religious Freedom: Structural Conditions and Everyday Practices <i>Liberté religieuse : conditions structurelles et pratiques quotidiennes</i>	313

PS 3.1

Culture, Spirituality and Ecology

Culture, spiritualité et écologie

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle
102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session
Christophe Monnot | Université de Strasbourg
Irene Becci | Université de Lausanne
Jens Koehrsen | University of Basel

Chair / Discutant
Christophe Monnot | Université de Strasbourg

The Emergence and Conceptual Evolution of Ecology and Environment in Social Sciences of Religion Journals

Olivier Servais and Caroline Sappia | Université catholique de Louvain

The Abject and Ecological Enchantment: Disgust, Discomfort and the Cultivation of Meaning in Urban Environmental Initiatives

Rosemary Hancock | The University of Notre Dame Australia

Disciplinary Constellations and Mythical Contestations on a Celtic Mount

Irene Becci | Université de Lausanne

The Emergence and Conceptual Evolution of Ecology and Environment in Social Sciences of Religion Journals

Olivier Servais and Caroline Sappia | Université catholique de Louvain

The intersection of religion, spirituality, and ecology has gained growing prominence in the social sciences of religion. This study examines the emergence and conceptual evolution of ecological themes within prominent anglophone and francophone journals, including *Sociology of Religion*, *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *JSSR*, *Religiologiques*, *Social Compass*, and *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*.

By employing a comparative framework, we analyze the cultural anchoring of these journals and their influence on the treatment of ecological themes. Key objectives include: (1) identifying the phases of emergence and integration of ecology, (2) examining the cultural factors shaping its treatment, and (3) mapping conceptual frameworks and methodologies.

Initial findings highlight temporal and cultural specificities. This study underscores the plurality of approaches to ecology and religion and highlights the epistemological challenges of synthesizing diverse perspectives. It contributes to understanding eco-religious discourse's role in addressing contemporary environmental crises.

This paper is co-authored with Thibault Fontanari from Université catholique de Louvain.

The Abject and Ecological Enchantment: Disgust, Discomfort and the Cultivation of Meaning in Urban Environmental Initiatives

Rosemary Hancock | The University of Notre Dame Australia

Much existing research on the significance of environmental politics on the one hand, and nature on the other, for spiritual and/or nonreligious meaning-making has emphasised the positive aesthetic and affective value of both experiences of nature and of being-in-community with others in political action. However, scholars such as Jane Bennett and Franklin Ginn have argued that negative aesthetic and affective experiences – in nature, and in political action – also deserve attention.

This paper is based on a 12-month ethnography with community gardens and bush regeneration groups in inner Sydney, Australia. It explores the role of disgust and discomfort in the cultivation of meaning and environmental commitments, focusing upon the gardening and micropolitical practices undertaken in decidedly unpleasant, non-aesthetic urban spaces. The groups are religiously diverse – with some participants who are affiliated with a range of conventional religious groups, some who identify with a variety of spiritual beliefs, and many who are either atheists or show no interest in religion.

I argue that through careful, ongoing engagements with nature – including the abject experiences recounted in this paper – the participants cultivate a political culture that both transcends their religious diversity and nurtures the development of environmental subjectivities amongst the gardeners. The paper explores the importance of less-than-enchanted relationships for ethics: considering whether attending to, or even caring for, un-aesthetic or unwanted non-human nature could be a path towards an expansive inclusivity.

Disciplinary Constellations and Mythical Contestations on a Celtic Mount

Irene Becci | Université de Lausanne

The early decades of the third millennium are marked by increasing political and economic polarization in European societies, as well as by intensified debates concerning the urgent need for an ecologically sustainable way of life. However, there is significant controversy over the nature and scope of this change. The social sciences of religion can play a crucial role in these discussions by producing critical research that addresses the need to reposition human beings in relation to the natural and material world recognizing the limitations of purely anthropocentric approaches. This presentation draws on a case study in the Swiss context showing how more-than-humans are present in environmental activism. It will explore this spirituality as a “subtle” one spirituality (Becci, 2024) by examining how its content and focus shift in response to situations (Agier 2015). Rather than adhering to a fixed set of beliefs and rituals –labelled for instance as New Age or Neo Animism – this form of spirituality is fluid, adapting to a series of factors involved. The empirical focus will be one key episode: the occupation of a hill bisected by a quarry for roughly six months in 2022.

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PS 3.2

Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (2)*Religiosité : analyse des enquêtes quantitatives nationales et internationales (2)*

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Jörg Stolz** | University of Lausanne**David Voas** | University College London**Expanding How We Measure Religion and Spirituality Cross-nationally – Results from a 36-Country Survey****Jonathan Evans** | Pew Research Center**Advancing Decomposition Techniques to Study Within-Country Shifts in Socialization Contexts****Francesco Molteni** | University of Milan**The Contribution of Automatic Language Processing to Qualitative Sociological Analysis of Religion****Roberto Cipriani** | Roma Tre University**Religiosity and Gender Around the World, in One Dataset****Łukasz Kiszkiel** | University of Białystok

Expanding How We Measure Religion and Spirituality Cross-nationally – Results from a 36-Country Survey

Jonathan Evans | Pew Research Center

Surveys around the world have long measured religion through a Western lens. For example, asking questions about the importance of religion in a respondent's life or the frequency with which they attend religious services. These questions can work well to determine engagement with religion in traditionally Abrahamic societies.

However, studies using these measures often show less religiosity in some Eastern societies. But are the societies really less religious or are the measures missing underlying patterns of religion and spirituality that are more common in those traditions?

Using data from a new Pew Research Center survey in 36 countries (covering all six inhabited continents and representing a wide variety of religious traditions), we explore how countries compare on roughly a dozen newer measures of religion and spirituality – including what levels of spirituality are captured in Western societies when we use measures designed with a more Eastern outlook. We also look at how these new measures do or don't align with the survey industry's longstanding traditional measures of religiousness.

The survey included more than 90,000 respondents, with interviews conducted in dozens of languages.

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Advancing Decomposition Techniques to Study Within-Country Shifts in Socialization Contexts

Francesco Molteni | University of Milan

Many, if not all, sociological theories are theories of change, and secularization theory is no exception. While the general idea that modernization fosters secularization is widely accepted, empirical tests of this theory face challenge due to the complexity of the concepts and the difficulty of modelling longitudinal change. Researchers have primarily employed three strategies to empirically address these challenges: cross-sectional models, “panels of countries,” and decomposition techniques. Among these, decomposition techniques – though rarely applied in the field – are particularly advantageous. They allow for capturing effects of both enduring country-specific traits and their changes over time while simultaneously controlling for individual factors.

The underlying—and often implicit—assumption behind these models is that societal trends directly influence individuals’ values and behaviours over time. However, this perspective neglects the influence of formative years, during which cultural patterns such as religiosity are predominantly shaped and remain resistant to later changes. As a result, many models fail to detect significant within-country, between-periods changes in values and attitudes over time, as well as the impact of the evolving broader context.

To address this limitation, an updated version of the Fairbrother’s decomposition technique (2014) is proposed, nesting individuals within country-specific socialization cohorts, nested within countries. This refinement emphasizes the impact of contextual characteristics during formative years, enabling a more nuanced analysis of socialization contexts and their evolution.

By leveraging on the combined EVS and WVS dataset, applications of this model will be presented to explore the effects of Human Development Index (HDI) and tertiary education on changes in public service attendance worldwide. Additionally, its potential for studying other social phenomena will be discussed, along with its main limitations, offering broader implications for sociological research.

The Contribution of Automatic Language Processing to Qualitative Sociological Analysis of Religion

Roberto Cipriani | Roma Tre University

As part of a quantitative and qualitative survey on religiosity in Italy, the possibility of making use of computational linguistic analysis to analyze and interpret data obtained from 164 qualitative interviews administered throughout the country, according to a specially reasoned sampling, was tested.

In particular, a program called T2K (Text-to-Knowledge), developed at the Computational Linguistic Laboratory “Antonio Zampolli” of the National Research Council in Pisa, was used. A team of sociologists from the University of Roma Tre collaborated with the Pisa researchers by first providing a list of 219 “sensitizing concepts”, chosen from the contents of the interview transcripts, to guide the research, and then by giving indications on the investigation paths to follow.

In the end, the results were published in the volume by Giulia Venturi, Andrea Cimino, Felice Dell’Orletta, *La fede dichiarata. Un’analisi linguistico computazionale* (The Declared Faith. A linguistic-computational analysis), published by Franco Angeli in 2022. The article is the fruit of the reflections and discussions of all the researchers on the methodology of the investigation, the difficulties encountered, the problems that arose, and the solutions adopted.

To some extent, one can speak of a kind of research on research, to open new horizons and especially to foster more effective interdisciplinary collaboration.

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Religiosity and Gender Around the World, in One Dataset

Łukasz Kiszkiel | University of Białystok

Numerous studies have shown gender-based differences in religiosity across various societies worldwide. However, it has been challenging to establish a comprehensive, global understanding of these patterns due to the difficulty of accessing a rich, unified dataset with worldwide coverage. This limitation has hindered the ability to draw definitive conclusions. By utilizing the Dataset of Integrated Measures of Religiosity (DIM-R+), which combines the results of major international social surveys: European Social Survey (ESS), European Values Study (EVS), World Values Survey (WVS) and International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) we have been able to analyze gender-related patterns in religiosity from the 1980s in over 100 countries, taking into account the cohort effect. The data on differences will encompass four dimensions of religiosity: self-declared religiosity, prayer, attendance, and belonging. Additionally, we have compared our findings with the conclusions reported by Pew Research in 2016.

This paper was co-authored by Piotr Laskowski and Konrad Talmont-Kaminski
from the University of Białystok.

Religion, International Migration and Diversity (1)

Religion, migration internationale et diversité (1)

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / *Salle*

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Tuomas Martikainen | University of Turku

Interreligious Platforms and Public Policies in Finland: Charting Interfaith Networks in the Context of New Public Management

Marco Guglielmi | University of Padova

Religion and the Integration of Ukrainian Migrants in the Secular Czech Society

Daniel Rosa and **Victoria Haikal** | Charles University in Prague

The Founding of Muslim Cemeteries and Islamophobia in Contemporary Japan

Norihito Takashi | Toyo University

Hirofumi Okai | Kyoto Sangyo University

Engaged Buddhism Re-Visited: A Cross-National Experience of Buddhism in Regional Japan

Ryushun Kiyofuji | University of Kitakyushu

Interreligious Platforms and Public Policies in Finland: Charting Interfaith Networks in the Context of New Public Management

Marco Guglielmi | University of Padova

A growing body of research has focused on interfaith networks and local public authorities in European cities, particularly regarding the urban governance of religious diversity and immigrant minorities. Alongside this widespread trend, national interreligious platforms interacting with central public authorities have emerged especially in Northern European countries and United Kingdom.

Based on field research and data collected through in-depth interviews, this presentation explores the case of Finland and highlights how interreligious institutional paths are shaped by the historical model of church-state relations and the growing influence of neoliberal policies on the state's management of religious groups and immigrant minorities.

It examines the organizational features of two major national interfaith platforms, assessing their historical and organizational development as well as their connections with public authorities. The presentation also identifies four distinct patterns of action among interfaith platforms, each engaged in a different field of endeavor. In summary, the presentation analyzes the changing nature of state-religion relationships in Finland and the increasing institutionalization of interreligious networks within the framework of New Public Management.

On one hand, top-down interfaith initiatives related to the governance of religion and immigrant minorities by the Finnish state have promoted the domestication of religious organizations and the securitization of the religious field. On the other hand, interfaith platforms are gaining greater relevance as they pursue more regular (inter)religious brokerage with public authorities involving multiple policy areas at the national level.

Religion and the Integration of Ukrainian Migrants in the Secular Czech Society

Daniel Rosa and Victoria Haikal | Charles University in Prague

This research investigates the role of faith-based organizations functioning as NGOs in shaping the integration experiences of Ukrainian migrants in the Czech Republic. Furthermore, due to its extraordinary mass character in Czechia, the Ukrainian migration shaped most of the FBOs' experience with crisis help and formed their self-understanding of the Czech society. Through semi-structured interviews and observations, we aim to understand how these organizations respond to the challenges posed by international migration and contribute to the growing religious diversity in the region.

FBOs such as Caritas, Diakonie, and ADRA play a dual role: addressing migrants' immediate needs through material aid and housing while fostering long-term integration via community-building initiatives and skills development programs. Preliminary insights reveal that these institutions navigate the complex dynamics of religious diversity, balancing their faith-based origins with a largely secular operational approach to avoid friction points. This dual approach highlights how religious creativity and adaptation emerge in response to migration-driven diversity.

By examining these organizations as mediators of cultural and social integration, this research contributes to broader discussions on religion's evolving role in migration processes, from supporting transnational communities to promoting the integration of Ukrainian migrants in the Czech Republic. It seeks to shed light on how FBOs act as a bridge between the host society and newcomers, offering a platform for interaction and mutual support. These organizations are vital in promoting integration while responding to the localized challenges of managing a rapidly changing demographic and religious landscape.

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The Founding of Muslim Cemeteries and Islamophobia in Contemporary Japan

Norihito Takashi | Toyo University

Hirofumi Okai | Kyoto Sangyo University

Islam is a minority religion in Japanese society, but since the 1980s, the number of Muslims in Japan has been steadily increasing alongside the influx of new immigrants. As the first generation of Muslim migrants from the early waves grows older, the demand for elderly care and funeral rites is also rising. In Japan, where traditional Buddhist (Mahayana Buddhism) funeral rites and cremation are the norms, it is particularly challenging for Muslims to conduct funerals and bury their deceased.

With about 99.9% of the deceased being cremated, there are very few burial grounds available for interment. This presentation will first introduce cases of Muslim funerals and the acquisition of burial grounds, while also examining the conflicts with local residents who oppose the establishment of these burial sites. Additionally, in recent years, there has been a significant amount of Islamophobic and xenophobic criticism online, particularly on social media, regarding the acquisition of burial grounds for Muslims.

Unlike in Europe, Islamophobia has not been a serious issue in Japan until recently, but there are many strong opinions about burial grounds. We refer to this phenomenon as “burialphobia.” These cases highlight the unique context of Japanese society, where the differing views and religious practices concerning the treatment and burial of the deceased have exacerbated ethnocentrism and nationalism. In this presentation, we will also examine traditional Japanese concepts of purity and impurity, as well as the attachment to one’s “homeland”, which can be connected to the idea of national territory.

Engaged Buddhism Re-Visited: A Cross-National Experience of Buddhism in Regional Japan

Ryushun Kiyofuji | University of Kitakyushu

In recent years, Japan has been accepting many young foreign workers, especially Vietnamese, due to a labor shortage. In rural areas, where the Japanese population is aging, prejudice against foreigners would be deeply rooted because they have had little experience interacting with foreigners.

As foreigners' isolation in the local communities has become a social issue, some monks at Buddhist temples, which have functioned as local hubs, have begun to work to rebuild local communities to include the new influx of foreigners. In the light of the concern about the current crisis of survival of local communities and the possibility of temples disappearing, some Buddhist monks have been trying to revitalize the public functions of temples since the 2000s.

Among these, there would be a research trend that attempts to capture the social activities of Japanese Buddhist monks in the concept of "Engaged Buddhism". However, as Japanese society is currently transforming into a trans-local society, more needs to be argued about who Buddhist monks have been engaged with.

This could be popular in multicultural countries, but in Japan, this discussion seems to be just beginning to take root, and the concept, "Engaged Buddhism", needs to be re-visited. It is worth re-visiting it in the context of a shrinking community and an influx of foreigners in Japan. I will introduce this discussion through the response of monks of local Buddhist temples, which I believe is unique in the context of Japanese society.

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PS 3.4

Men, Meaning and Masculinities: Religion in the Lives of Men

Hommes, sens et masculinités : la religion dans la vie des hommes

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Kati Tervo-Niemelä | University of Eastern Finland

Jenni Spännäri | University of Eastern Finland

Anna Sofia Salonen | University of Eastern Finland

Marjukka Laiho | University of Eastern Finland

Chair / Discutant

Kati Tervo-Niemelä | University of Eastern Finland

Young Men's New Interest in Christianity in the Nordic Countries: Is Christianity a New Counterculture for Young Men?

Kimmo Ketola | University of Eastern Finland

Men, Masculinities and Religious Transmission In Finnish Families

Jenni Spännäri | University of Eastern Finland

Queering (Non)religion: Masculinities and Meaning Beyond Religion

Anna Sofia Salonen | University of Eastern Finland

Men, Masculinities, and Religion: Perspectives for Empirical Studies on Religion

Marjukka Laiho | University of Eastern Finland

Young Men's New Interest in Christianity in the Nordic Countries: Is Christianity a New Counterculture for Young Men?

Kimmo Ketola | University of Eastern Finland

Traditionally, research has shown that women are more religious than men, particularly in countries where Christianity is the dominant religion. However, recent studies from Finland have uncovered a surprising trend: young men are more drawn to Christianity than their female counterparts. This has led to an inversion of the gender gap in religiosity among younger generations. Similar trends have been observed in other Nordic countries.

Previously religious change has been largely analysed through the lens of decline. However, this decline is mostly observed among female generations and amidst this broader trend, another shift has been occurring among young men: a renewed interest in Christianity. Young men are not only more religious than young women, but they also seem to be becoming more drawn to Christianity compared to previous generations.

This paper presents recent findings on the gender gap in religiosity among youth, drawing on a variety of datasets, including surveys of Lutheran youth in Finland (2019–2024, N=120,000), the Transmission of Religion Across Generations data (5 countries, N=8,304), the Finnish Youth Barometer 2023 (N=1,811), and the Cultural and Social Values survey (NCF project, 8 countries, N=8,080). In addition, qualitative interviews with young men provide further insight into these trends. Through an analysis of these data, the paper explores the developmental patterns and potential underlying causes of the observed shift. These findings raise significant questions about whether the Nordic countries – renowned for their high levels of gender equality – are witnessing a reversal of the traditional gender gap in religiosity. Furthermore, it raises the question of whether this trend will emerge in other countries and whether Nordic nations, as leaders in gender parity, are at the forefront of this reversal.

This paper was co-authored by Kati Tervo-Niemelä from the University of Eastern Finland.

Men, Masculinities and Religious Transmission in Finnish Families

Jenni Spännäri | University of Eastern Finland

Religious transmission in families has been proven to be a gendered phenomenon: women, especially maternal grandmothers have a significant influence on the religiousness and its expression in descendants within the same family. Less is known about the role and experiences of men in religious transmission in families. However, the gendered religious landscape is rapidly changing in many developed countries, especially in those with advanced gender equality. The gender gap in religiosity is narrowing, and there are signs of men, especially younger cohorts, diverting more towards more conservative forms of religiosity. How is this transformation reflected in practices and meaning-making related to religious transmission?

This paper focuses on men and masculinities in the religious transmission in Finnish families, and in the international context. The study is conducted as a part of the international research project "The transmission of religion across generations: a comparative international study of continuities and discontinuities in family socialization", funded by John Templeton Foundation.

Our data comprise 17 family interviews (N=62 interviewees), where persons from three family generations discussed religious transmission and practices in their family.

The paper explores gender-specific religious education roles or 'styles', and experiences of parental influence from the male perspective – and how they might have shifted from the older to the younger examined cohorts. Our results show, for example, that especially older men exhibited the tendency of taking the role of 'facilitators' or practicing religion vicariously. Whereas particularly the youngest generation view their fathers and grandfathers seen as reliable and supportive in the times of crisis. These and other results add to the scientific comprehension of religion as a gendered phenomenon, and aids in understanding the current shifts in religiosity also in terms of religious transmission.

This paper was co-authored by Kati Tervo-Niemelä from the University of Eastern Finland.

Queering (Non)religion: Masculinities and Meaning Beyond Religion

Anna Sofia Salonen | University of Eastern Finland

Queering is a process that disturbs, challenges, and deconstructs categories and norms related to gender and sexuality. Drawing from this approach, queering (non)religion aims to problematize religion and nonreligion as concepts, questioning the normativities and social constructs associated with them. This paper applies queering to the study of religion and nonreligion, exploring its value in relation to the study of religion and gender, particularly men and masculinities. This presentation is part of the ongoing research project “Religion, Meaning, and Masculinities: Religion in the Lives of Men in Finland.”

The underlying premise is that focusing solely on religion may obscure the multiple meaning-making processes in people’s everyday lives. Adding nonreligious perspectives to the analysis of religion is crucial, but if applied in dichotomous manner, it risks reinforcing unnecessary divides rather than dismantling them. Therefore, delicate analytical tools are needed to explore the intersections between religion, nonreligion, and gender. Drawing from my previous research at the intersection of religion, nonreligion, and critical posthumanist and new materialist theories, I first outline insights into how to engage in queering (non)religion in theoretical and methodological terms. I then discuss how this approach can be utilized to understand how men construct identity and exercise power, freedom, and agency in their everyday life, how they negotiate contradictory identities, what they consider important, and where they seek meaning beyond religion. This analysis helps both reveal more nuances and set meaningful boundaries for investigating the role and meaning of religion in the lives of men in Finland.

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Men, Masculinities, and Religion: Perspectives for Empirical Studies on Religion

Marjukka Laiho | University of Eastern Finland

The starting point of this presentation lies in recent empirical notions highlighting growing religiosity among men, young men in particular, and the differentiation of worldviews and values between the binary categories of men and women, as noted in much statistical research both from the Nordic countries and beyond. Here, the concepts of men, masculinities, and religion are firstly operationalized with the aim of more nuanced empirical explorations. The presentation then moves on to map out both foci and blind spots of recent research on men, masculinities, and religion, highlighting noted silences around the 'eye of the hurricane'; the study of cisgender, heterosexual men (van Es, 2021). These notions based on earlier research literature point to a need for more nuanced ways of applying theoretical insights from masculinities studies into the empirical study of religion. Such nuanced ways entail conceptualizations like hegemonic, subordinated, marginalized, and hybrid masculinities – all pointing to varying lived experiences, positionings, and self-understandings of manhood in today's everyday contexts. Such approaches, it is claimed in the end, easily find their seat within the recent discussions on religious change, complexity, and intersectionality.

Places of Change: Adapting Religious Buildings to New Uses

Les lieux du changement : l'adaptation des édifices religieux à de nouvelles utilisations

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Carlo Nardella | University of Milan

Barbora Spalová | Charles University in Prague

Capital Games: The Corporatization of Vulnerable Religious Assets in the City

Barry Stephenson and **Nicholas Lynch** | Memorial University

Merchants in the Temple? Large Advertisements on Church Façades

Carlo Nardella | University of Milan

Capital Games: The Corporatization of Vulnerable Religious Assets in the City

Barry Stephenson and Nicholas Lynch | Memorial University

This paper examines capital investments entailing the corporatization of urban worship spaces, which we consider as examples of the philanthrocapitalism. The comparative geographical focus is Canada and Italy.

Increasingly, religious communities and their architectural assets are reframed as “under-utilized resources” to be “saved” through public-private partnerships, venture philanthropy, and market-driven interventions. The research explores how global financial actors and local stakeholders leverage narratives of social impact and community building to legitimize the commodification and transformation of sacred spaces into profitable assets.

Using case studies such as the Trinity Centres Foundation (Canada) and the adaptive reuse of Catholic cathedrals (Italy), the paper critically analyzes the tensions between religious heritage preservation and the financial logics driving these processes. It interrogates the roles of intermediary organizations that mediate between religious institutions and financial markets, effectively translating worship spaces into exploitable capital while presenting a veneer of corporate social responsibility and ethical investing.

This analysis highlights the socio-cultural and political implications of these transformations, questioning the ethical boundaries of capital intervention in vulnerable religious communities. It further explores whether such practices constitute “mission drift,” where social and spiritual objectives are subsumed by neoliberal market imperatives. By situating these developments within broader discourses of accumulation by dispossession and the New Public Management movement, this study contributes to the sociology of religion and urban studies, offering insights into the future of religious and community life in a corporatized world.

This paper was co-authored by Jordinn Nelson from Memorial University.

Merchants in the Temple? Large Advertisements on Church Façades

Carlo Nardella | University of Milan

Across Italy, more and more churches regularly in use for worship are requiring admission charges and putting portions of their space to profitable use. This development reflects, among other things, the increasing touristicization that has involved many church buildings all around the country, particularly the oldest and artistically richest ones, the soaring costs for keeping them in good working conditions, their (sometimes urgent) need for conservation or restoration, and the limited economic support provided by the State and other public institutions.

Such trends have urged the ecclesiastical entities owning or directly controlling these properties to globally rethink their funding strategies and the tools to implement them. The paper aims to investigate the rising trend of renting out the churches' façades to big companies to hang their advertising billboards and discuss it as a new tool that enables Catholic institutions to capitalize on the highly symbolic materiality and the central positions of their buildings.

Through analyses of ethnographic research data, press coverage and key informant interviews, the paper examines how the use of church buildings for profit-generating activities represents a key change for Italian Catholic institutions, which now find themselves forced to explicitly act also according to market logics. With this shift – it is argued –, new social actors, external to the Catholic field, come into play in the management of worship places with interests potentially in competition or open conflict with the ones of the religious actors.

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PS 3.6

Return of Religion? Migrations and Public Discourses around Europe

Retour de la religion ? Migrations et discours publics en Europe.

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Miroslav Tížik | Institute for Sociology, Slovak Academy of Sciences

Anne Lancien | Sciences Po, EPHE

Liminal Situations: Aki Kaurismäki's Cinematic Narratives of Refugees in Europe

Sérgio Dias Branco | University of Coimbra

Islamophobia: The Common Cause Between the (New) Spanish and Catalan Far Right Parties? Insights from Medium-Sized Cities

Víctor Albert Blanco | ISOR-UAB, CRESPPA

Religion and Populism in Scandinavian Politics

Pål Ketil Botvar | University of Agder

Muslim and Post-Christian Apocalypticism and the Modernisation Ditch

Zoltán Kelemen | Corvinus University of Budapest

Liminal Situations: Aki Kaurismäki's Cinematic Narratives of Refugees in Europe

Sérgio Dias Branco | University of Coimbra

This paper analyses two films by Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki on non-European refugees in Europe and seek to understand their contributions to the current discussions around this topic. *Le Havre* (2011) tells the story of a French shoeshiner who saves an immigrant child in the port city Le Havre. *The Other Side of Hope* (Toivon tuolla puolen, 2017) follows a Finnish businessman who meets and helps a Syrian asylum-seeker looking for his missing sister. Both films present narratives on migration that reveal contexts, conditions, events, and processes that people fleeing for refuge and safety in Europe live through. Through their artistic and perceptive approach, *Le Havre* and *The Other Side of Hope* open new perspectives on these present-day migrants' history and experience. *Le Havre* and *The Other Side of Hope* both focus on liminal situations that are spatial, temporal or categorical in nature. *Le Havre* is a "borderland," a liminal space, a small border town, a place of chance encounters and "border situations". Interestingly enough, religion does not play a pivotal role in "*Le Havre*", although *Le Havre* as symbol of a haven, a sanctuary, has roots in religious institutions. On the other hand, *The Other Side of Hope* offers insight, albeit on muted form of religious beliefs and practices, of Syrian migrants in Finland. The film shows the paradoxes of asylum procedures, characterized by transitional, liminal time and endless circles of waiting. In both films, we see that liminality applies not only to migrants but also to non-migrants. This is because the effects of global capitalism, the temporality of uncertainty, existential displacement and precarity are experienced by non-migrants as well.

Asylum, refuge, or sanctuary as institutional forms of protection in Western traditions have roots in religious practices. Although the films do not delve deeply into religious themes or make them central, evocation of humanity, which can be felt through both films, transcends cultural and religious differences. Critically discussing Kaurismäki's films thus allows for a deeper comprehension of the problems refugees face and invites a larger reflection on the resistance to existing reception and inclusion policies of the "Fortress Europe". Importantly, analyzing the films the paper offers an alternative perspective on the refugee experiences and religion, diverging from conventional representations often

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found in Western cinema, thus challenging prevailing narratives surrounding irregularized migration.

This paper is co-authored by Teodora Jovanović from the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Daniel Škobla from the Slovak Academy of Science.

Islamophobia: the Common Cause Between the (New) Spanish and Catalan Far Right Parties? Insights from Medium-Sized Cities

Víctor Albert Blanco | ISOR-UAB, CRESPPA

This presentation examines the discourses surrounding Islam and Muslims articulated by emerging far-right political parties in Spain and Catalonia. While these narratives have gained visibility in the broader public sphere, this study focuses on their localized manifestations in medium-sized cities. Over the past few years, new far-right movements have emerged as key actors in the Spanish political landscape. Despite differing stances on issues such as Catalan independence, these movements converge in their rhetoric against Islam, framing it as a threat to Spanish and Catalan identities.

A pivotal development in the Spanish party system has been the rise of Vox in 2018. Research has explored Vox's use of religion in its discourse, highlighting both the influence of ultraconservative Catholic groups in its foundation and its Islamophobic narratives. While Vox has a significant presence in Catalonia, it is not the only far-right party represented in the region. In the 2024 regional elections, Aliança Catalana (AC) secured two seats, following its 2023 victory in Ripoll's city hall and the obtention of representation in various city councils. Unlike Vox, AC is openly pro-independence, advocating for Catalonia's separation from Spain. Despite these ideological differences, both parties share a common stance against Islam, portraying it as incompatible with Catalan and Spanish identities.

This presentation explores the similarities and differences in the anti-Islamic rhetoric of Vox and AC, emphasizing its impact at the local level. The analysis draws on qualitative fieldwork (including interviews, document analysis and observations) conducted in three cities: Vic, El Ejido and Melilla. These cities, despite their diverse socio-political contexts, occupy similar positions within their respective territorial hierarchies and are governed by center-right parties (the People's Party in El Ejido and Melilla, and a Catalan nationalist center-right party in Vic). Moreover, far-right parties have (or have been) representation in each city's council. These cities also feature a diverse religious landscape, with numerous mosques and Islamic worship spaces. Far-right parties have exploited this religious diversity, advocating for stricter regulation of Islamic public expressions. By analyzing these cases, the presentation wants to better understand the Islamophobic rhetoric employed by far-right movements in Spain and Catalonia, highlighting the significance of territorial and urban dimensions in shaping these discourses and their correlated political strategies.

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Religion and Populism in Scandinavian Politics

Pål Ketil Botvar | University of Agder

Monday

This paper discusses the relationship between religion and party politics in Norway. Like in many Western countries, a right-wing populist party, The Progress Party, is on the rise, especially gaining support from young males. We will examine three questions: 1) What part of the electorate supports the right-wing party, and what are these voters' relationships with religion? 2) How is religion described in party programs and Parliamentary debates by parties on the right versus the left side of politics? Do Progress Party representatives differ from other representatives in the way they address religious issues? 3) What role does immigration play in the right-wing party's rhetoric and political platform? In what way is this different from other parties' politics?

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These questions will be discussed considering new theories about the rise of authoritarian and populist politics in the Western world. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2019) discuss how the overlap of specific crises and uncertainties pave the way for an authoritarian political turn. Rogers Brubaker (2017) describes the way religion is used by Western populist politicians as "civilizationism" more often than "religious nationalism," which is more common among East European populists. Theories about populism and religion will be discussed based on empirical analyses of recent survey data from Norway and other Scandinavian countries. The authoritarian and populist wave brings religion back into politics, albeit in a more indirect form than in previous times when the religious-moral cleavage was more dominant in political life.

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Muslim and Post-Christian Apocalypticism and the Modernisation Ditch

Zoltán Kelemen | Corvinus University of Budapest

This paper analyses the coexistence of Muslim, post-Christian and post-socialist groups in Europe and their shared sense of reality. According to Asabiyya: Re-interpreting Social Change in Globalized Societies by Heshmati and Tausch (2009) traditional and modernised societies represent high values of activity: while families provide cohesion in traditional Muslim societies, voluntary work maintains cohesiveness in highly modernised ones. However, in the process of transitioning from one to the other, these qualities of cohesion are often lost, and societies can be trapped in an atomised and inactive phase for long periods which is labelled the 'modernisation ditch'. Mobility and religious diversity have created a scenario in Europe where traditional Muslim groups, modernised post-Christian groups and post-socialist groups trapped in the 'modernisation ditch' have to coexist. This project aims to understand their mutual impact on each other and asks the question if they have a shared sense of reality. The paper's hypothesis is that an apocalyptic vision of the future might be one. Schneider's *The Apocalypse and the End of History: Modern Jihad and the Crisis of Liberalism* (2021) argues for a Muslim apocalypticism while both the post-Christian left and the post-socialist right have their own form of apocalyptic narratives: those of climate apocalypse and the migration induced cultural apocalypse, as introduced by Laczó and Gabrijelčić in *The Legacy of Division* (2019). The paper will also ask if the Christian and Muslim concepts of hope could provide an alternative common denominator.

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PS 3.7

Religious Education in a Time of Crisis*L'enseignement religieux en temps de crise*

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Brian Arly Jacobsen** | University of Copenhagen**Educating Against Anti-Jewish Hate: Re-examining the Role of Emotional and Social Resonance in Holocaust Education in Canada****Megan Hollinger** | University of Ottawa**Preventing Anti-Semitism Through Religious Education?****Anna Körs** | University of Hamburg**Crisis and Controversy: A Sociology of Religion Approach to Teaching Religious Education****Brian Arly Jacobsen** | University of Copenhagen

Educating Against Anti-Jewish Hate: Re-examining the Role of Emotional and Social Resonance in Holocaust Education in Canada

Megan Hollinger | University of Ottawa

In Canada, one of the most used tools for combating antisemitism is education. Specifically, Holocaust education is frequently employed to fight the perceived ignorance-based prejudice that causes antisemitism. For example, Holocaust education is increasingly relied upon by governments, with several provincial administrations mandating Holocaust education into their school curricula. However, what is evident is that rates of antisemitism are increasing in Canada and have risen to unprecedented levels following the October 7th attacks on Israel (B'nai Brith 2024). This rise calls into question the efficacy of Holocaust education as a tool to fight antisemitism, and I posit that, considering the unparalleled rise of antisemitism, Holocaust education is inadequate as is, but that there may be ways to strengthen it to become a more effective and impactful response.

My paper draws on my doctoral research on combating antisemitism in Canada and assumes education as a community approach to fighting this hate. The paper examines qualitative interview data from participants in three Canadian cities (Ottawa, Victoria, and Montreal) on what can make Holocaust education more effective at fighting antisemitism. It argues that Holocaust education must address the social and emotional elements of antisemitism, and, for it to be impactful at importing lessons about antisemitism and hate, it must affect people by creating emotional resonance with and relation to the material and Jewish stories.

My research also demonstrates, as does much of the existing literature, that antisemitism relies heavily on irrational thinking, emotions, and beliefs and thus may respond better to solutions that address the emotional and values-based aspects of people's minds and hearts rather than traditional textbook-style educational approaches. According to my research, stories, immersive experiences, and perspective-taking are key to affecting hearts and minds in the fight against antisemitism within an academic setting. Thus, this paper explores, using a social/psychological theoretical framework, how adjusting various aspects of current approaches to Holocaust education can make it more impactful.

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Preventing Anti-Semitism Through Religious Education?

Anna Körs | University of Hamburg

In the face of growing anti-Semitism and even more so since October 7, 2023, religious education in state schools in Germany is expected to contribute to the prevention of anti-Semitism by imparting knowledge about Judaism and Jewish life. Against this background, the paper deals with the fundamental question of how Judaism and Jewish life are addressed in religious education at elementary school level. Based on existing research on antisemitism (prevention) in the school context and religious education, the article presents three different cases of the teaching practice of Judaism in religious education, which were examined by means of participant observation, group discussions with pupils and interviews with teachers. The results show a considerable variance in teaching practices on Judaism – from largely not addressing Judaism, to teaching it as a history of persecution, to experiential learning about Judaism as a lived religion in a diverse living environment – as well as the pitfalls and dangers of reproducing anti-Semitic stereotypes. The results thus point to the central role of religious education teachers and their training and further education as an important desideratum in order to empirically assess and structurally develop the potential of religious education for Jewish education and the prevention of anti-Semitism.

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Crisis and Controversy: A Sociology of Religion Approach to Teaching Religious Education

Brian Arly Jacobsen | University of Copenhagen

Religious education in schools occupies a unique intersection of pedagogy and sociology, where addressing controversial topics such as war, terrorism, and radicalization becomes both an educational and societal challenge. This preliminary study investigates how religious education teachers in upper secondary schools navigate these issues, focusing on cases such as the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the Palestine war, and the July 22, 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway. Using semi-structured interviews with eight educators, the study examines the interplay between religious, societal, and pedagogical narratives within the framework of crisis.

Building on Myrto Tsilimpounidi's *Sociology of Crisis*, the research integrates a sociology of religion perspective to analyze how crises disrupt established social orders and religious imaginaries. These disruptions challenge educators to mediate between the emotional, moral, and intellectual complexities of crises, while engaging students in critical reflection on the role of religion in both exacerbating and resolving conflict.

The findings reveal significant variations in teachers' approaches, shaped by their personal competencies, institutional constraints, and the broader socio-political context. While structural barriers such as limited time and resources impede comprehensive engagement, innovative pedagogical strategies—such as utilizing sacred texts, religious ethics, and historical case studies—demonstrate the potential for religious education to foster resilience and critical civic engagement.

As a preliminary investigation, this study forms part of a broader Nordic research project aimed at exploring the transformative potential of religious education in addressing societal crises. By centering on the crisis concept, it underscores the need for a sociology of religion pedagogy that fosters nuanced understandings of religion's dual role in crisis and societal cohesion.

PS 3.8

Young Adults and Spirituality in Polarised Societies*Jeunes adultes et spiritualité dans des sociétés polarisées*

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

104, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session**Isabelle Jonveaux** | SPI Suisse romande, Université de Fribourg**Le religieux chez des jeunes québécois sans religion: questions de (non) transmission****Jean-Philippe Perreault** | Université Laval**Élisabeth Sirois** | Université d'Ottawa**Rapport à la spiritualité des jeunes adultes en Suisse romande****Isabelle Jonveaux** | SPI Suisse romande, Université de Fribourg**Les chrétiens baptistes de la région de Ferkessédouogu face à la culture sénoufo : Cas de Kisankaha de 1947 à nos jours****Donassongui Benjamin Soro** | Université de Genève

Le religieux chez des jeunes québécois sans religion: questions de (non)transmission

Jean-Philippe Perreault | Université Laval

Élisabeth Sirois | Université d'Ottawa

Pour des raisons culturelles et historiques, la langue (français) et la religion (catholicisme) ont été au Québec les traits centraux d'une identité nationale minoritaire en Amérique. Malgré un processus rapide de sécularisation dans les années 1960 et 1970, une forte majorité de québécois appartenait au catholicisme jusqu'à tout récemment. Le régime du catholicisme culturel tend, depuis un peu plus de 10 ans, à céder le pas à un régime de religiosité pluraliste marqué, notamment, par la montée du nombre de sans religion et la polarisation des identités (non)religieuses.

Ainsi, nous pourrions dire que les jeunes québécois actuels (18-30 ans) forment la première véritable génération de sans religion au Québec. Dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche intitulé *Le religieux chez les « sans religion »*, nous nous sommes intéressés à cette nouveauté en tentant de décrire la configuration et la dynamique de l'imaginaire de ces jeunes : croyances, valeurs, normes, spiritualité, etc. Nous avons été attentifs à saisir comment ces différentes composantes interagissent entre elles.

Interrogés sur l'origine et les causes de leur non-affiliation religieuse, les répondants donnent à voir les processus de socialisation à l'œuvre. Leur non-appartenance ne résulterait non pas d'un défaut de transmission, mais témoignerait plutôt d'une transmission « autre » : des propositions qui, bien que non explicitement religieuses, en assurent néanmoins la fonction. Nous nous proposons d'analyser les conditions de cette socialisation et transmission telles qu'elles apparaissent dans les récits de vie des participants, et de là, soumettre à la discussion quelques hypothèses.

Rapport à la spiritualité des jeunes adultes en Suisse romande

Isabelle Jonveaux | SPI Suisse romande, Université de Fribourg

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Quel rapport développent les jeunes adultes de 16 à 30 ans à la spiritualité ? Une enquête menée en Suisse romande par questionnaire et entretiens semi-directifs auprès d'affiliés à l'Eglise catholique et de non-affiliés tâche de saisir les modes d'appartenance actuels et modalités du croire chez les jeunes générations, y compris dans leurs désaccords avec les institutions religieuses. En construisant différents profils (rapport dogmatique à Dieu, religion qui fait du bien, rapport social au monde, rapport engagée dans l'Eglise), cette intervention réinterroge les types de relations développées au divin, les types d'engagements sociaux et ecclésiaux qui s'inscrivent dans le cadre de l'appartenance religieuse et les catégories de l'expérience spirituelle présentées par ces jeunes adultes. Cette recherche est aussi l'occasion de repenser la question des variables d'étude pour la mesure de la religiosité et de l'appartenance religieuse. La première partie présentera des résultats généraux du questionnaire sur le rapport à la spiritualité des 16-30 ans, tandis que la deuxième partie creusera les quatre profils précédemment évoqués. Enfin, la troisième partie étudiera le vécu des expériences spirituelles racontées par les jeunes adultes.

Les chrétiens baptistes de la région de Ferkessédougou face à la culture sénoufo : cas de Kisankaha de 1947 à nos jours

Donassongui Benjamin Soro | Université de Genève

Dans la mouvance de l'installation des missions protestantes sur le territoire ivoirien au XX^{ème} siècle, la Mission Baptiste de Côte d'Ivoire s'installa dans le pays sénoufo de l'espace ivoirien. Cette mission réussit à conduire plusieurs natifs à accepter Jésus-Christ comme leurs Seigneur et Sauveur (Soro, 2018). Ces convertis originaires du pays sénoufo, voulant être fidèle à la doctrine de la religion chrétienne, abandonnèrent de façon systématique les pratiques traditionnelles notamment le tchologo de la région de Ferkessédougou (M'Brah, 2019).

Cet d'abandon par ces chrétiens locaux fut la source de diverses formes de persécutions venant des leaders et garants des valeurs traditionnelles de la société sénoufo et des chefs de familles. Le but étant d'amener tous les fils de la région à rester fidèle aux pratiques traditionnelles de la société sénoufo peu importe la religion étrangère qu'ils pratiquent (Soro, 2022). L'obstination de ces chrétiens baptistes fut la source de souffrances diverses. L'expérience des chrétiens de Kisankaha, situé à environ 20 km de Ferkessédougou est très notable dans la christianisation du pays sénoufo. À partir de l'installation des premiers missionnaires baptistes américains dans la ville Ferkessédougou à la construction et la destruction du lieu de culte à Kisangaha, il apparait intéressant d'analyser la vie des chrétiens baptistes de cette région en rapport avec la reconnaissance de la Côte d'Ivoire comme un État laïc.

Cette étude s'appuie sur les sources d'archives de la mission baptiste, sur l'enquête orale et sur des ouvrages pour mettre en exergue les pressions que les chrétiens baptistes de la région du tchologo subissent dans leur épanouissement.

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PS 3.9

Socioreligious Change in (Post)Modern Societies: Theory and Research

Changement socioreligieux dans les sociétés (post)modernes : Théorie et recherche

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Katarzyna Zielińska, Anna Szwed

and **Agata Rejowska** | Jagiellonian University

From Alternative Medicine to Cult? New Religious Movements and Social Conflicts through the Lens of Pragmatic Sociology and Science and Technology Studies

Lucie Duillon | Science Po Strasbourg, ITI Makers

Practices of Secularity in the Polish Civil Sphere: Letters Written to the Freedom from Religion Foundation

Agata Rejowska | Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Religious Influence in the Adoption of Inclusive Intimate Citizenship: Insights from the Lithuanian Parliament

Evelina Juchnevičiūtė | Vytautas Magnus University

Sovereignty Beyond the State: Orthodox Churches and the Politics of Canonical Borders

Tornike Metreveli | Lund University

From Alternative Medicine to Cult? New Religious Movements and Social Conflicts through the Lens of Pragmatic Sociology and Science and Technology Studies

Lucie Duillon | Science Po Strasbourg, ITI Makers

This presentation aims to examine the contributions of Science and Technology Studies (STS) and pragmatic sociology to the study of social conflicts involving new religious movements and public actors in the health sector. It examines, as a case study, the controversies surrounding anthroposophic medicine in France and Switzerland since the 1990s, with a particular focus on accusations of “therapeutic sectarian deviations”.

By applying the methodological principle of symmetry from STS, a first axis illustrates how to develop a nuanced understanding of the arenas where these controversies unfold. This study draws on a diverse corpus of semi-structured interviews conducted with members of the anthroposophic medical community, affiliated New Age networks, politicians, and representatives of health administrations and religious regulation bodies in France and Switzerland.

In a second axis, it is shown how conceptual tools such as “translation” and “tests” have been instrumental in uncovering the performative dimension of conflict for this esoteric group with a therapeutic vocation, both paradigmatically and structurally. Based on trial archives and participant observations, the study sheds light on how confrontations with public authorities have shaped the spiritual healing practices of anthroposophic medicine professionals. Focusing on the dynamics involved in framing the defense of a “spiritual science” as a cause notably allows for attention to be given to the emergence of new forms of labor division within the group, particularly along gender lines.

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Practices of Secularity in the Polish Civil Sphere: Letters Written to the Freedom from Religion Foundation

Agata Rejowska | Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences

The Roman Catholic Church is one of the most powerful institutions in contemporary Poland, yet its role is increasingly questioned and one can observe attempts to redefine the boundaries between religion and other spheres of social life. Arrangements that used to be 'natural' and taken for granted (for instance public schools being places of religious socialisation) are increasingly often perceived as an encroachment of religion into a sphere that should remain secular. This paper analyses the content of 94 letters sent in the years 2013–2024 to one of the major secularist foundations functioning in Poland and published on the organization's website. The letters have been written by citizens. Their aim was to ask for the foundation's help or to draw its attention to violation of civil rights by the church. The paper captures how the understanding of boundary-crossing has been shaped over the years. It also shows how the notion of those whose rights are violated by the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy (the sole target of the letters) has expanded – starting from a quite particular group such as atheists and ending in a more universal collective of Polish citizens in general. Therefore, the overarching question of the paper is: what does this shift tell us about the changing understandings of the socio-religious order in contemporary Poland and about the changing role and place of the Roman Catholic Church?

Religious Influence in the Adoption of Inclusive Intimate Citizenship: Insights from the Lithuanian Parliament

Evelina Juchnevičiūtė | Vytautas Magnus University

The dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s marked the re-emergence of religion as a prominent force in Lithuania's public life. Despite its constitutional status as a secular state, the influence of religion has become increasingly evident in recent debates on women's and LGBTQ+ rights. Lithuania has not ratified the so-called Istanbul Convention and remains one of the last EU jurisdictions without any legal recognition for same-sex relationships. These initiatives have triggered ideological clashes between progressive and conservative actors, with the latter invoking Lithuania's Catholic cultural heritage. This opposition is reinforced by the instrumentalization of stripped-down and reinterpreted religious values, anti-gender rhetoric, and informal cooperation between politicians and the Lithuanian Catholic Church.

This paper aims to explore the ways in which religion shapes the political discourse around the implementation of more inclusive intimate citizenship, focusing on women's and LGBTQ+ rights initiatives in Lithuania. It is based on PhD research involving expert interviews with members of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (Seimas) and a critical analysis of parliamentary debates on various women's and LGBTQ+ rights initiatives. Set within the broader context of rising anti-gender and neo-conservative ideologies in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, the paper contributes to a deeper academic understanding of the interplay between politics, religion and gender in post-communist societies. It also challenges conventional secularisation narratives by highlighting the persistence and adaptation of religion in contemporary societies.

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Sovereignty Beyond the State: Orthodox Churches and the Politics of Canonical Borders

Tornike Metreveli | Lund University

This paper offers a novel classification of canonical borders, contributing to a broader understanding of how Orthodox Christian churches define their canonical territories. It identifies four groups: 1. Canonical borders that fully align and overlap with political borders, where the state's sovereign territory serves as a template for national Orthodox churches to define their canonical territorial limits; 2. Canonical borders that extend beyond the local state's borders and pass through a neighboring state's territory but are not disputed by either the neighboring church or the state where the borders pass through; 3. Canonical borders that claim the whole territory of a neighboring state under their jurisdiction without dispute from other Orthodox churches; 4. Canonical borders that are disputed between neighboring churches, resulting from one church claiming territory over a portion or the entirety of a neighboring state's territory, which the local church challenges. Thinking and researching canonical borders allows us to focus on spatial strategies, geographical visions and territorial politics of Orthodox churches with which they try to exercise canonical sovereignty, maintain the status quo, or advance geopolitical interests. The paper utilizes cartographic analysis of canonical maps, examination of ecclesiastical documents, and qualitative case studies to understand better how Orthodox churches spatialize their power. The overarching goal of this paper is to advance the discourse on Orthodox geopolitics by integrating methodological and conceptual tools from geography, sociology, and political science.

This paper was co-authored by Gela Merabishvili from ELTE.

Religious Freedom: Structural Conditions and Everyday Practices

Liberté religieuse : conditions structurelles et pratiques quotidiennes

Tuesday, July 1st | 17:00–18:30

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Olga Breskaya and **Giuseppe Giordan** | University of Padova

Siniša Zrinščak | University of Zagreb

From Duty to Rights: The (Un)Expected Consequences of Religious Freedom

Olga Breskaya and **Giuseppe Giordan** | University of Padova

Mexican Secularism, Religious Freedom and Youth's Perception of LGBTQI+ Rights

David Eduardo Vilchis Carrillo | University of Padova

Conservative Religious Social Movement in Central and Eastern Europe: Is It About Religious Rights?

Siniša Zrinščak | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law

How Organizations Shape Religious Freedom

Ines Michalowski | University of Münster

From Duty to Rights: The (Un)Expected Consequences of Religious Freedom

Olga Breskaya and Giuseppe Giordan | University of Padova

A noticeable change has been observed in socio-religious paradigms from the 1960s to the 2000s, progressing from secularization through religious pluralism to the sociology of religious freedom. This theoretical change underscores the significance of each of these three phases, as they address specific practical issues relevant to their respective socio-historical contexts, while collectively outlining the trajectory of religious change and its sociological conceptualization. This paper delves into the three main phases of this paradigm shift and covers the sociological challenges to deal with the consequences of these phases.

Theories of secularization in the 1960s-70s evidenced the centrality of one's choices in the way of experiencing and practicing religious or secular beliefs, relying primarily on descriptive rather than normative concepts, with emphasis on the decline or disappearance of religion. In the 1980s-90s, theories of religious pluralism addressed the growing diversification of societies and the pluralization of religious and cultural lifestyles, emphasizing the need to connect normative concepts to the spiritual dynamics of daily life and the renewed public presence of religion. These theories foregrounded values such as coexistence, tolerance, and inclusion. By the 2000s, theories of religious freedom shifted attention to legitimizing individuals and groups in their pursuit of meaning through freedom of or from religion, requiring legal and political systems to protect such freedoms and sociology to approach the concepts of equality, nondiscrimination, justice, and dignity. In a new way, religious freedom contested social and political institutions revealing the most contested spheres of secular/religious competition through the prism of intersecting rights indicating the individual entitlements to freedom of religion, women's and LGBTQI+ rights, freedom of expression, and freedom from religion.

Mexican Secularism, Religious Freedom and Youth's Perception of LGBTQI+ Rights

David Eduardo Vilchis Carrillo | University of Padova

Secularism in Mexico is shaped by its anti-clerical origins, its connection to liberal-radical ideology and its tendency to legally regulate and control religious expressions. Although Mexican secularism has faced criticism and calls for revision, it remains an active legal-political principle in Latin America. It is often invoked to address challenges arising from religious participation in public debates, particularly on issues related to LGBTQI+ rights.

This study based on 16 semi-structured interviews explores the religious and political perspectives on LGBTQI+ rights and perceptions of secularism among a group of young men and women living in Mexico City. These individuals are part of youth groups from four religious traditions: Catholic, Presbyterian, Evangelical, and Muslim. The results show that there is a plurality of youth perspectives within different religious traditions regarding LGBTQI+ rights and their perceptions about secularism. The findings highlight the interplay between secularism and religious freedom in the sense that while secularism emphasizes the separation of the political and religious spheres, religious freedom focuses on supporting individuals in their quest for meaning in life. The results provide insights for future studies, encouraging deeper exploration of youth's attitudes toward religion and LGBTQI+ rights.

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Conservative Religious Social Movement in Central and Eastern Europe: Is It About Religious Rights?

Siniša Zrinščak | University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law

Numerous non-governmental groups' rise, and their public visibility, have been prominent in many Central and Eastern European countries in the last fifteen to twenty years. In general, they promote conservative values and have mainly targeted gender rights, abortion and LBTQI+ rights. The current literature discusses extensively the clash between the values and demands of such groups and gender and sexual rights. However, is there a clash with religious rights, particularly with religious freedom? The paper is based on an extensive literature review on how religious rights are conceptualized and empirically measured and whether and how religious rights are connected with gender and sexual rights. In addition, it is based on research on the websites of several prominent Croatian conservative groups to reveal how human and particular religious rights are presented and discussed. The paper's main argument is that religious rights are also at play in such groups' activities and that the scholarship should address this more consistently.

How Organizations Shape Religious Freedom

Ines Michalowski | University of Münster

Adopting a sociology of organizations perspective, this paper examines how five types of state-run organizations—the police, the military, prisons, hospitals, and schools—differ in their approaches to accommodating religion. It presents data from a newly developed dataset covering 19 countries worldwide, aiming to capture how a historically established religious majority and an (immigrant) minority are accommodated by these organizations in each country.

The dataset, based on national expert reports, includes six categories of indicators: religious apparel and symbols, dietary restrictions, religious holidays, time for prayer, space for prayer, and chaplaincy. This data was collected as part of the project EXC 2060 B3-39 Cross-Organizational and Cross-National Differences in Religious Accommodation, conducted at the Cluster of Excellence Religion and Politics at the University of Münster, Germany. The project aims to enable systematic comparisons of religious accommodation across countries and organizations.

While earlier literature highlights significant cross-national differences in how religion and religious minorities are accommodated, less attention has been given to the variations among organizations within a single country. Theoretically, this project seeks to bridge the literature on state-religion regimes with theories from the sociology of organizations, particularly those addressing the position of minorities within organizations. By presenting hypotheses and theories based on comparative empirical data, this study contributes to the discussion of how and why structural conditions for religious freedom vary.

This paper was co-authored by Anne-Solveig Henseleit and Marie Melchers, who are both affiliated with the University of Münster.

Parallel Sessions 4

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
4.1	On Karel Dobbelaere's Contribution to the Sociology of Religion and the ISSR/SISR <i>La contribution de Karel Dobbelaere à la sociologie des religions et à l'ISSR/SISR</i>	106
4.2	Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration <i>Récits religieux et non religieux sur la migration</i>	310
4.3	Religion, International Migration and Diversity (2) <i>Religion, migration internationale et diversité (2)</i>	110
4.4	We Should Know Better: The Problem and Promise of the Scholar-Practitioner <i>Nous devrions mieux savoir : le problème et la promesse du chercheur-praticien</i>	102
4.5	Religion, Activism and Social Change <i>Religion, activisme et changement social</i>	104
4.6	Dynamics Of Contestation: Religion and Liberal Values <i>Dynamique de la contestation : religion et valeurs libérales</i>	220
4.7	Resocialization in Relation to the Conventional Family, Religion, and Nationality <i>La resocialisation par rapport à la famille conventionnelle, à la religion et à la nationalité</i>	312
4.8	Miscellaneous Papers Session 1: Faith and Power in Transition: Religion's Role in Political Crises and Imaginaries <i>Miscellanées 1 : Foi et pouvoir en transition : le rôle de la religion dans les crises et les imaginaires politiques</i>	311

PS	TITLE	ROOM
4.9	Current Research on Congregations as Religious and Social Actors <i>Recherche actuelle sur les congrégations en tant qu'acteurs religieux et sociaux</i>	313
4.10	Theorising Religious Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia, And Secularization (2) <i>Théoriser le patrimoine religieux : nation, nostalgie et sécularisation</i>	414
4.11	Children in New Religious Movements: Succession of Faith and Religious Freedom <i>Les enfants dans les nouveaux mouvements religieux : succession de la foi et liberté religieuse</i>	002
4.12	Author Meets Critics: Families and Religion. Dynamics of Transmission across Generations <i>Familles et religion. Dynamique de la transmission d'une génération à l'autre</i>	103

PS 4.1

On Karel Dobbelaere's Contribution to the Sociology of Religion and the ISSR/SISR

La contribution de Karel Dobbelaere à la sociologie des religions et à l'ISSR/SISR

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Chair / Discutant

Jörg Stolz | University of Lausanne

Panelists / Les panélistes

For a Plural Sociology

Nadia Fadil | Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Karel Dobbelaere, sociologue international de la religion

Roberto Cipriani | Università Roma Tre

Karel Dobbelaere au passage crucial entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions (SISR)

Enzo Pace | University of Padova

Karel Dobbelaere, Scientology, and Soka Gakkai

Massimo Introvigne | CESNUR

The Man Who Made Secularisation Simple and Complex at the Same Time

David Voas | University College London

Karel Dobbelaere and Secularisation as a Multidimensional Phenomenon

Katarzyna Zielińska | Institute of Sociology, Jagiellonian University

Karel Dobbelaere and the Study of Meaning Systems

Giuseppe Giordan | University of Padova

Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration

Récits religieux et non religieux sur la migration

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Aybice Tosun | Eskişehir Osmangazi University

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants

Milda Ališauskienė | Vytautas Magnus University

Besim Can Zırh | Middle East Technological University

Paulina Polko | WSB University

Anita Stasulane | Daugavpils University

This panel introduces the COST Action CORENet edited volume, **Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration**, which was edited by Regina Polak, Ansgar Jödicke and Aybice Tosun and published by Brill.

*Ce panel présente le volume édité dans le cadre de la COST Action CORENet, intitulé **Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration**, et qui a été édité par Regina Polak, Ansgar Jödicke et Aybice Tosun, et publié par Brill.*

PS 4.3

Religion, International Migration and Diversity (2)*Religion, migration internationale et diversité (2)*

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Tuomas Martikainen** | University of Turku**Chair / Discutant****Evelyn Reuter** | University of the Bundeswehr Munich**Migration Waves from Turkey to Sweden Since The 1960s: Changes in Migration Aspirations Across Generations****Zühal Ünalp Çepel** | Dokuz Eylul University**Religious Change in Southeastern Europe: Emigration and Refugee Flows Shaping North Macedonia's Muslim Communities****Evelyn Reuter** | University of the Bundeswehr Munich**Faith in Transit: Religious Dynamics of Migration Through the Darién Gap****Carlos Samuel Ibarra Ramírez** | Conahcyt / Escuela de Antropología e Historia del Norte de México**Alberto Hernández Hernández** | El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

Migration Waves from Turkey to Sweden Since The 1960s: Changes in Migration Aspirations Across Generations

Zühal Ünalp Çepel | Dokuz Eylul University

For almost sixty-five years, Sweden has been a European destination for Turkish migrants seeking better political and economic conditions. Migration waves from Turkey to Sweden since the 1960s have produced differentiated migration trajectories. The first wave comprised mainly Turkish workers, and the recent wave comprises upper-middle-class and white-collar Turkish migrants. In recent years, the expectations and concerns of Turkish migrants in Sweden have changed with new generations. This paper aims to understand the views and feelings of Turkish migrants in Sweden about being a migrant, their differences from previous generations and other migrants in the country, and whether they aspire to return or stay. The paper is based on the social integration literature and findings of the interviews with representatives of 10 Turkish migration organizations in Sweden in 2024. It is argued first that the historical relationship between the Swedish state and Turkish migrants has built a safe environment for both, independent of factors such as religion, ethnicity, and gender, and second, that the successful social integration policies implemented until the 2010s have significantly influenced the views and perceptions of the new generations.

This paper was co-authored by Soner Barthoma and Andreas Önver Cetrez from Uppsala University.

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Religious Change in Southeastern Europe: Emigration and Refugee Flows Shaping North Macedonia's Muslim Communities

Evelyn Reuter | University of the Bundeswehr Munich

This paper explores how emigration and refugee movements along the Balkan Route shape intra-Muslim diversity in Southeastern Europe, with North Macedonia as a case study. While migration studies often focus on destination countries, emigration countries like North Macedonia remain underexplored, despite their unique socio-religious dynamics. As a transit country with a history of significant emigration, North Macedonia offers a distinct perspective on the impact of migration on local Muslim communities. The research based on fieldwork addresses how these dynamics influence the composition and interactions within the Muslim community, focusing on two case studies: the Bektashi Sufi order and Muslim asylum seekers.

The first case examines the struggles of the Bektashi Sufi order at the Harabati Baba Tekke in Tetovo to reclaim the Harabati Tekke, a contested property symbolic of their identity and religious freedom. Their efforts face opposition from the Islamic Community (IC) and neo-Salafi groups, highlighting tensions within the Muslim community. The second case investigates the experiences of Muslim refugees seeking asylum in North Macedonia, particularly their challenges in integrating into local Muslim communities.

This paper sheds light on the evolving dynamics of intra-Muslim diversity in Southeastern Europe. By focusing on the intersection of historical emigration, recent refugee movements, and religious diversity, it offers insights into the broader socio-religious transformations occurring in the region. The study contributes to the discourse on religion, migration, and diversity by highlighting the complexities and nuances of non-target countries like North Macedonia in shaping Europe's religious landscape.

Faith in Transit: Religious Dynamics of Migration Through the Darién Gap

Carlos Samuel Ibarra Ramírez | Conahcyt, Escuela de Antropología e Historia del Norte de México
Alberto Hernández Hernández | El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

In the context of contemporary migration, the Darién Gap—a critical and perilous transit zone straddling the border between Panama and Colombia—emerges as a compelling site to explore the intersection of religiosity and human mobility. This paper offers an ethnographic examination of this challenging and under-researched migratory corridor, investigating how the extreme experiences of transit reconfigure migrants' religious practices and beliefs. By focusing on this transnational crossroads, our proposal seeks to illuminate the diverse roles of religion: as a source of spiritual resilience in adversity, as a dynamic framework reshaped under extreme pressures, and as a driver of temporary and emerging identities and mobile communities. Drawing on a mixed methodology that includes in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis, our proposal aims to contribute to the understanding of migrants' lived experiences. Particular attention is given to personal narratives that reveal the dual role of faith—as an emotional and spiritual refuge, and as a belief system that is often modified, reimagined, or even abandoned in response to the harsh realities of forced displacement. The paper highlights processes of syncretism, religious innovation, and the re-signification of faith practices, shedding light on the devotional expressions and spiritual support networks that arise along these migration routes. Aligned with the goals of the thematic session, this proposal highlights the necessity of incorporating the spiritual dimension into analyses of migration and diversity.

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PS 4.4

We Should Know Better: The Problem and Promise of the Scholar-Practitioner

Nous devrions mieux savoir : le problème et la promesse de l'échange entre chercheurs et praticiens

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Paul Bramadat and **Rachel Brown** | University of Victoria

Yoga and the End of Innocence

Paul Bramadat | University of Victoria

The New Kid on the Mat: Reflections on the Problem and Promise of the Scholar-Practitioner from a New Convert

Rachel Brown | University of Victoria

From Participant-Observation to Experiential Anthropology: Embodying Fieldwork

Géraldine Mossière | University of Montreal

Yoga and the End of Innocence

Paul Bramadat | University of Victoria

By now, sociologists and anthropologists have some experience of thinking carefully about the challenges associated with data and theories produced by “scholar-practitioners.” The situation becomes more complicated when the scholars in question are mostly people of European origins who are trained in critical approaches to the study of religion and yet who adopt practices associated with Asian societies and communities. Some colleagues, and some within the communities in question, might argue that we should know better than to do this. In this paper I reflect on my own experiences as a scholar of religion who then became a scholar-practitioner. The simultaneous practice of and research about modern postural yoga, produce both unanticipated raw data and insights into positionality that might enhance our understanding of the external world we study and the personal vantage points from which we experience these places and people. This paper is part of the We Should Know Better project in which western-trained scholar-practitioners of a wide range of Asian spiritual and religious traditions reflect critically on this awkward life-stance.

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The New Kid on the Mat: Reflections on the Problem and Promise of the Scholar-Practitioner from a New Convert

Rachel Brown | University of Victoria

In this paper, I reflect on the core questions we are exploring in this panel from the vantage point of a relatively young scholar and a new practitioner. Since I am steeped in the conversations around identity politics and appropriation that dominate my generation of scholars, and since I took up my yoga practice in a post-#MeToo period, my choice to be a scholar-practitioner seems counter-intuitive. That is, given what my generational peers assume—but have not really needed to be convinced of—about colonialism, race, and gender dynamics, I really should know better. But what does one do when a practice we are encouraged to keep at arms' length actually changes one's life? In this presentation, I focus on the ways the body keeps the score (Bessel van der Kolk 2014), but also settles the score (Bramadat 2025) of past trauma, and how embodied knowledge provides a different set of data for us to consider as we approach our work as sociologists of religion. In this paper, I explore the ways that my training in the critical social scientific study of religion and my past trauma combined to make it difficult to engage with Asian and embodied knowledges (such as postural yoga). Now that – to use a metaphor common in the wellness world – my head and body work together, I can see the ways both my research and teaching on embodied religion are enriched while I can also see more clearly the challenges inherent in the scholar-practitioner perspective.

From Participant-Observation to Experiential Anthropology: Embodying Fieldwork

Géraldine Mossière | University of Montreal

In this presentation, I trace how my anthropological path on fieldwork gradually led me to a phenomenological approach based on embodiment. As this posture has met the conditions of my various research projects among practicing believers (from migrant Pentecostal churches, to holistic healing practices and communities, to converts to Islam), it also echoes in some ways my own biography that led me to draw my attention to the body and emotions as a personal Dasein. This stance draws on a specific trend employed by some anthropologists who propose experiential anthropology as a way to grasp how religious behaviour draws on personal experience as well as relationships between human and non-humans, and visible and non-visible realms. Drawing on my recent work among groups who use movement and the circulation of energy, I show how building knowledge through the body and sensations requires specific “somatic mode of attention” (Csordas) and discuss the ethical and methodological limits of this posture not to mention its possible political and “symbolic violence” (Bowie 2024).

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PS 4.5

Religion, Activism and Social Change*Religion, activisme et changement social*

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

104, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Mia Lövhheim** | Uppsala University**Michal Pagis** | Uppsala University**Chair / Discutant****Mia Lövhheim** | Uppsala University**Bridging the Gap: Religious Women's Agency in Secular Sweden****Maria Klingenberg** and **Mia Lövhheim** | Uppsala University**They are not Veils: Negotiating Agency and Resistance Among Deviant Female Musicians in Iran and Indonesia****Pasqualina Eckerström** | University of Helsinki**Muslim Women and Work in Indonesia****Rachel Rinaldo** | University of Colorado Boulder**Practitioner Reflections on Christian Social Action with Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe: Intentions, Identities and Interactions****Andrew Orton** | Durham University

Bridging the Gap: Religious Women’s Agency in Secular Sweden

Maria Klingenberg and Mia Lövhelm | Uppsala University

Religious women’s agency has been the subject of frequent debates both within research and politics, particularly in secular societies. During the last decades, academic debates have been characterized by increased contestation of secular feminist approaches to agency, wherein religion is considered an obstacle for women’s empowerment. Instead, scholars have pointed to how observance of religious teachings and rules, particularly within gender-conservative religious groups, can enable women’s agency.

The high degree of ongoing secularization, a societal emphasis on gender equality and an increased visibility as well as contestation of religious diversity makes Sweden an interesting case for studying intersections between religion, gender and agency. This paper introduces how female leaders in Swedish religious communities enact agency, and critically discuss existing typologies on women’s religious agency in light of these accounts. The empirical data consists of interviews with women from different religious communities who took part in a leadership program organized by the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities during 2016-20.

The findings suggest that strategies women develop evolve in interplay between experiences from secular and religious spheres, and in negotiation with religious and gender-based norms. A key point in our argument is therefore that studies of women’s religious agency not only need to consider women’s own articulations of their situation, but also how the surrounding context, including secular understandings of gender equality, can enable and not just restrict religious women’s agency.

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They are not Veils: Negotiating Agency and Resistance Among Deviant Female Musicians in Iran and Indonesia

Pasqualina Eckerström | University of Helsinki

Defiant female artists in Muslim-majority countries provide a unique perspective on how personal experiences intersect with broader societal issues, particularly regarding religion, traditions, and individual agency. This is especially prevalent in traditionally defiant music, such as rap, rock and heavy metal. While these genres of music have been predominantly male dominated, nowadays, there is a growing number of women in the Muslim world who participate in the creation of defiant musical expressions. This reality contests prevailing societal narratives that often depict women in Muslim contexts as in urgent need of external forces to liberate them. Musical activism serves as a form of resistance and a vehicle for re-appropriating identity and agency within these discourses.

This study uses qualitative interviews with female musicians from the two contexts to explore how they navigate activism, faith and agency through music, ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on gender, art, religious persecution, and activism in contemporary contexts. The Iranian movement “Woman, Life, Freedom” has demonstrated that women are actively asserting their autonomy and taking control of their destinies. The authoritarian regime uses religion as a tool to exercise control. This has culminated in severe responses to this transformative movement, with authorities labelling women who refuse to wear the hijab as criminals and mentally ill. Consequently, an increasing number of people are rejecting religion and its institutions. In Indonesia, the Islamic Feminism movement has emerged as a significant force in promoting gender equality through Islamic teachings. This movement has inspired female musicians to reclaim and showcase their religious identity to the world.

The participants in this study embody these nuanced perspectives. They express their agency through diverse interpretations of activism, including the reclamation of their faith and the outright denunciation of religious norms. For instance, some may view veiling—as opposed to unveiling—as an expression of personal agency.

As a result, this study aims to provide a new academic perspective on women’s music production as a form of counter-discourse in two different Muslim-majority countries. The narratives of these artists shed light on how sociopolitical contexts, the fluidity of social change, and women’s agency interact, allowing music to challenge or complement religious expressions.

Muslim Women and Work in Indonesia

Rachel Rinaldo | University of Colorado Boulder

During the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards, Indonesian Muslim women continued to be engaged in the workforce, in some cases becoming more substantial income earners or becoming family breadwinners. Based on extensive in-depth interviews, this paper examines how the gendered division of labor is playing out in this era of economic and social change. We explore the different ways women manage such arrangements and how Islam features in their negotiations of work and family responsibilities. Women’s increasing participation in paid work challenges the conventional male breadwinner ideology that the Indonesian state and many Muslim institutions have promoted and it also has the potential to bring greater autonomy for women. Yet, as our interviews reveal, the lack of access to paid childcare in Indonesia means that families are left to their own devices to figure out care arrangements. In such a context, religion helps to justify caregiving remaining largely women’s responsibility.

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Practitioner Reflections on Christian Social Action with Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Europe: Intentions, Identities and Interactions

Andrew Orton | Durham University

Religious aspects of identities can play complex roles within social contexts where increasing numbers of people are seeking asylum and refuge. For example, religion may be implicated in reasons why people seek refuge (including as one possible ground for facing a well-founded fear of persecution under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention). It may also play important roles in dimensions of responses from those within the communities where refuge is sought.

Christian churches and agencies are amongst groups which have provided organised support and responses for refugees and asylum seekers across Europe, often becoming entangled in related controversies and debates in the process. This paper shares practitioner perspectives from research bringing together Christian activists working with refugees and asylum seekers from diverse contexts in different European countries. The research was focused on practitioners from central, eastern and northern Europe, including the UK, drawn together by a co-ordinating team including Prosvirina, Brooke, Addy, Zitting and Orton, inspired by Väekäs' initial reflections. The methodology involved structured online and in-person reflective dialogue between diverse Christian activists involved in this work, adapting aspects of an established 'Community Action Based Learning for Empowerment' process (Addy). Through this reflective process, these participants sought to reflect and learn together on how their own intersectional identities and perspectives may have been significant within their work and engagement with refugees and asylum seekers. This paper explores these reflections, particularly focusing on how their identities and perspectives changed through this work, and how they engaged with the diverse intersectional identities and perspectives of others through it.

Dynamics of Contestation: Religion and Liberal Values

Dynamique de la contestation : religion et valeurs libérales

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / *Salle*

220, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Ines Michalowski | University of Münster

Thwarting Secularism as a Top Priority: How Orthodox Jews Prioritized Fighting for Religious Freedom over Fighting Social Change

Frédéric Strack | Université de Sherbrooke

Religion-Related Conflict and Cooperation in a British Traditional Elite University

Kristin Aune | Coventry University

Contested Spaces of Belonging: Safety and Identity Among LGBTIQ+ Muslims in Religious Environments

Teemu Pauha | University of Helsinki

Thwarting Secularism as a Top Priority: How Orthodox Jews Prioritized Fighting for Religious Freedom over Fighting Social Change

Frédéric Strack | Université de Sherbrooke

This paper relates to the role of secularism in how religious minorities navigate the clash between liberal and religious-conservative values. It intends to discuss the case of paradoxical non-mobilizations against abortion policies, and more broadly, morality policies. More precisely, the aim is to show why Orthodox Jews in France do not seek to repeal liberal policies they adamantly oppose, partly because of the evolution of *laïcité*. Indeed, as fundamentalist believers, they all in all reject policies such as the extension of abortion or same-sex marriage and frame them as unrighteous interference in God's creation. On top of that cognitive hostility, they dispose of the ways and means to organize: they are widely present in the Jewish institutions, they are occasionally in touch with public ones and they share conservative views with other well-organized religious groups [Du Cleuziou, 2010]. But still, there is no such thing as a proper Orthodox Jewish movement opposing morality policies. Why is it so? Why do they abstain from mobilizing, whereas, at first glance, they meet the requirements to speak up?

To figure it out, this paper compares with other vocal religious groups, such as Christian ones [Wood, Hughes, 1984; Sherkat, Ellison, 1997; Oueslati, 2011], and looks into the minority dimension and explores the notion of cultural distance [Evans, 1997; Nepstad, 1997]. That is where secularism comes into play: as a religious minority, Orthodox Jews are affected by the stricter governance of religion that has been enforced over the last 30 years in France. By questioning some of their core religious practices, it has generated new and more urgent issues than the fight against morality policies. To put it differently, this policy turn deprived Orthodox Jews of material and symbolic resources they could not spend on a mobilization against morality policies.

In doing so, it engages with collective action theories on what it takes for a group to mobilize. Whereas literature often holds cognitive resources as necessary [Swindler, 1987; Olliver, Johnston, 2000], alongside material resources, this combination is not always enough. Thus, this case study aims to show that cognitive resources may have an impact under specific cultural and political circumstances. This paper is based on research on the articulation of religious integralism and liberal society. It mobilizes 89 interviews with Orthodox Jews and elected officials, 71 observations with Orthodox Jews, and 289 issues of Orthodox newspapers.

Religion-Related Conflict and Cooperation in a British Traditional Elite University

Kristin Aune | Coventry University

Why do certain types of university see more religion-related conflict among students despite offering increased formal or organised opportunities for interfaith learning? This paper explores this question through a qualitative case study of one university from the 'traditional elite' or 'ancient' group of universities in the UK. It examines on-the-ground conflict against a backdrop of findings from two surveys, each of c. 4,500 UK university students, with a longitudinal sample of 1,000 students surveyed one year apart. The survey findings reveal that some forms of religion-related conflict have neither a positive or negative impact on students' interfaith learning, but others, such as coercion (when students feel pressurized to change or keep silent about their worldview), have a negative impact. The qualitative findings, based on interviews with students and staff and observations of religion-related events, reveal that global political and religious conflicts play a significant role. Students, many of whom are international and/or belong to religious minority groups, must also negotiate the university's Christian heritage. The plentiful provision of social activities undertaken by students who are often economically privileged bolsters a culture of debate which can be both productive and unproductive for peaceful interfaith relations.

This paper was co-authored by Mathew Guest from Durham University
and Lucy Peacock from Woolf Institute.

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Contested Spaces of Belonging: Safety and Identity Among LGBTIQ+ Muslims in Religious Environments

Teemu Pauha | University of Helsinki

In the context of rising Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments across Europe, the intersection of religious identity with sexual and gender diversity presents profound challenges for LGBTIQ+ Muslims. While mosques often provide Muslims with a refuge from the Islamophobic and racist attitudes they may encounter in their surroundings, mosque spaces are not safe for everyone. Reflecting the influence of conservative interpretations of Islam regarding gender and sexuality, mosque attendance strongly correlates with negative attitudes towards sexual minorities, which may, in turn, affect the sense of belonging for LGBTIQ+ Muslims in the mosque. Additionally, LGBTIQ+ communities may not always be safe spaces for Muslims either, as studies have indicated that they are not free from Islamophobia or racism. In response to these exclusionary attitudes, LGBTIQ+ Muslims have innovatively crafted alternative spaces that foster safety and community. The internet and social media serve as key platforms for connection, while inclusive mosques and personal spiritual spaces offer sanctuaries where Muslimness can be safely combined with minority gender/sexual identity. The project “Exploring the Contested Constructions of Sense of Safety in Religious Spaces” (CoCo), funded by the Research Council Finland and hosted at the University of Helsinki, investigates how LGBTIQ+ Muslims navigate spaces of safety and belonging. Our study employs online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation to explore the complex negotiations of identity and belonging within both physical and virtual religious environments. This presentation will share preliminary findings from our research in Finland, focusing on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ Muslims in traditional religious spaces, as well as in the often more queer-inclusive alternatives.

By exploring these contested constructions of safety, our study contributes to a broader discourse on the intersections of religion, identity, and morality in liberal democracies. It addresses the dynamics of contestation that arise when liberal and religious-conservative values clash, particularly as secularization and migration-driven pluralization reshape the public sphere. This research is pertinent to understanding how religious minorities, such as European Muslims, navigate these challenges, offering insights into the negotiation of religious diversity and liberal values in an increasingly polarized world.

This paper was co-authored by Jenni Spännäri and Anne Birgitta Pessi from the University of Helsinki.

Resocialization in Relation to the Conventional Family, Religion, and Nationality

La resocialisation par rapport à la famille conventionnelle, à la religion et à la nationalité

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Nader Vahabi | LISST université de Toulouse, ICM Aubervilliers

Changement de pratiques suite à un environnement religieux nouveau

Benoit Petit | Université Toulouse 2 Jean Jaurès

Nordic Complexity – What Difference Does Diversity Make for the Role of Religion in Schools?

Anders Sjöborg | Uppsala University

The Invisible Face of the Syrian War and Forced Migration to Turkey: Women

Murat Yarımay | Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi

Changement de pratiques suite a un environnement religieux nouveau

Benoit Petit | Université Toulouse 2 Jean Jaurès

L'auteur analyse une vingtaine de cas particuliers de migrant.es originaires du Bénin, du Sénégal ou de Madagascar. Sans apporter de conclusion générale pour une recherche en cours, le travail cherche, dans une approche synchrone, à formuler une hypothèse dans les trajectoires des personnes affrontées à un renversement de leur environnement religieux. Mais simultanément une approche diachronique compare les trajectoires de citoyens de la République démocratique allemande passant, avant et juste après la chute du mur de Berlin, vers la République fédérale d'Allemagne. Il est possible de voir des différences et des similitudes dépassant l'appartenance confessionnelle, selon que la « socialisation primaire » a été effectuée dans un milieu où la religion était minoritaire ou majoritaire, et les effets que produit le déplacement dans un pays où il y a un renversement de l'environnement religieux.

L'appartenances confessionnelle catholique ou musulmane dans un pays où la religion est majoritaire ou minoritaire impacte la séparation de la famille, le regroupement familial ou le divorce et le remariage.

Le changement de profession et l'insertion dans un ou plusieurs groupes religieux, dans des Groupe d'amitié chrétiens- musulmans, témoignent du renforcement ou de l'abandon de la pratique, ou un changement de religion. L'approche « constructiviste » de la socialisation secondaire montre les transformations des représentations de la famille conventionnelle, imprégnées à des degrés divers par l'appartenance religieuse.

Une attention particulière sera portée à des membres de familles ou congrégations religieuses (clercs, prêtres ou religieuses) qui voient des parcours atypiques de promotion / déclassement et une mobilité géographique plus ou moins accentuée.

Nordic Complexity – What Difference Does Diversity Make for the Role of Religion in Schools?

Anders Sjöborg | Uppsala University

The understanding of religion in the public sphere and school will continue to create tensions and conflicts. By looking at the place and role of religion in education, we may understand important aspects of the role of religion in society. In this paper, four Nordic countries of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland are juxtaposed to discuss what religion is allowed to be in these societal contexts, focusing on school. It is argued that Protestant secularism, together with individualization and diversity, plays an influential role in how religion is present in school. The paper explores how complexity theory contributes to our understanding of how religious diversity affects such developments in the four studied countries.

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The Invisible Face of the Syrian War and Forced Migration to Turkey: Women

Murat Yarımay | Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi

This study investigates the gendered dimensions of forced migration through the experiences of Syrian women displaced by the civil war and resettled in Turkey. Employing a feminist methodological framework, the research critically examines how forced migration reshapes women's socio-economic and cultural roles. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 14 participants – 10 residing in Kilis province and 4 in the Elbeyli refugee camp. Findings indicate that Syrian women encounter distinct challenges throughout the migration continuum, including gender-based violence, economic marginalization, psychological trauma, and limited access to healthcare and education. Migration has, in some cases, led to shifts in traditional gender roles, with some women entering the labor force for the first time. However, these changes have been accompanied by ongoing vulnerability and social exclusion. A key contribution of this study is its emphasis on the role of religion in the migration and adaptation processes. Shared Islamic beliefs and cultural practices between Syria and Turkey—such as religious rituals, dress codes, and dietary norms—have played a significant role in facilitating social cohesion and providing psychological resilience. Religion emerged not only as a source of continuity but also as a cultural bridge that eased the integration of many Syrian women into Turkish society. The study concludes by calling for gender-responsive migration policies that recognize the intersection of gender, displacement, and religion. It advocates for comprehensive support mechanisms tailored to the lived realities of displaced women in host countries.

Miscellaneous Papers Session 1: Faith and Power in Transition: Religion's Role in Political Crises and Imaginaries

Miscellanées 1 : Foi et pouvoir en transition : le rôle de la religion dans les crises et les imaginaires politiques

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / *Salle*

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Evelina Juchnevičiūtė | Vytautas Magnus University

Secularism and Social Imaginaries in South Africa's African National Congress

David Jeffery-Schwikkard | King's College London

Les acteurs religieux dans la redéfinition du pouvoir politique et de l'espace public à Tivaouane, Sénégal

Vakouro Marega and **Arnaud Lepetit** | Rennes 2

The Distinction between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in the West: The Case of Prominent Western Imams in the Aftermath of October 7

Elad Ben David | Ben Gurion University of the Negev

A Critical Examination of Effects of Hungary's Current Law on Churches on Muslim Church-Recognized Organizations

Dániel Vékony | Vytautas Magnus University

Secularism and Social Imaginaries in South Africa's African National Congress

David Jeffery-Schwikkard | King's College London

Although South Africa's population is largely religious and socially conservative, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has pursued secular and socially liberal policies since 1994. This paper explores the views of rural members of the ANC, using access to abortion as a focal point. Members distinguish between how they ought to behave personally and what ought to be the law; thus believing abortions should be accessible even though they believe abortions to be immoral. This approach is inseparable from a social imaginary of South Africa, characterised by the centrality of freedom in members' historical narrative, a national identity embracing diversity, and a universalist view of religion.

Les acteurs religieux dans la redéfinition du pouvoir politique et de l'espace public à Tivaouane, Sénégal

Vakouro Marega and Arnaud Lepetit | Rennes 2

La communication interroge l'influence des acteurs du religieux dans la reconfiguration de l'espace public et du pouvoir politique local à Tivaouane. Au Sénégal, cette ville sainte de la confrérie soufie Tidjaniyya, connaît chaque année des rassemblements religieux d'envergure dont le Gamou est le plus emblématique. Dépassant la seule dimension spirituelle pour devenir des moments d'affirmation identitaire et d'expression religieuse et politique, ces événements permettent aux groupes sociaux et religieux de se rencontrer, se confronter et de redéfinir la gouvernance de la ville.

Initialement fête traditionnelle, le gamou est devenu musulman au début du XXe siècle avec l'installation d'Elhadj Malick Sy à Tivaouane. Depuis, chaque année, des milliers de personnes y célèbrent la naissance du prophète Mouhammad. Bien qu'unificateur, le Gamou est aussi le théâtre de tensions et de divisions intra et interconfrériques. Par exemple le Dahiratoul Moustarchidine Wal Moustarchidat, scission confrérique tidjane, utilise l'hippodrome de Tivaouane comme lieu alternatif de rassemblement depuis les années 1980. Cet espace symbolise la contestation et l'affirmation identitaire face à la branche principale de la Tidjaniyya. La bipolarisation du Gamou interroge quant aux relations entre sphères religieuses et politiques. L'organisation et la manifestation de cet grand événement illustrent la manière dont les autorités religieuses redéfinissent leur pouvoir et leur identité dans l'espace public.

Tivaouane est à la fois une ville religieuse et une commune juridique. Ce double statut engendre une gouvernance complexe. Les nombreux acteurs religieux, politiques et associatifs y interviennent, avec parfois des chevauchements ou « dépassements de fonction ». Par exemple, l'association COSKAS a pris une dimension politique majeure, influençant les politiques locales et nationales. Les groupes religieux redéfinissent ainsi les rapports sociaux et renforcent leur capital symbolique en s'engageant dans la sphère publique, souvent au détriment de l'État.

Nous présenterons donc ici le contexte d'étude en articulant la singularité de Tivaouane autour du Gamou. Nous montrerons comment cette fête rassemble et révèle des divergences entre les groupes religieux. Enfin, nous aborderons la gouvernance complexe de la ville, résultat d'un double statut autour duquel composent de nombreux acteurs. Ces derniers y jouent un rôle crucial dans la reconfiguration de l'espace public, de la gouvernance et des rapports de pouvoir, avec des répercussions importantes sur la société sénégalaise.

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The Distinction between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in the West: The Case of Prominent Western Imams in the Aftermath of October 7

Elad Ben David | Ben Gurion University of the Negev

The concepts of loyalty and dissent have been sparking ongoing tension among Western Muslims during the post-9/11 era, manifesting in their expectation to show salient loyalty to their nation-states, on the one hand, while maintaining pride in their Islamic values and political affiliation, on the other hand. This reality has skyrocketed in the aftermath of October 7, where the unprecedented Israeli-Palestinian conflict has increasingly homogenized the social-religious-political differences between anti-semitism and anti-Zionist, which have already been blurred over the last decade. This backlash has caused prominent Western Muslim figures, who publicly criticize Israel's policy, to be automatically labeled as anti-semitic- a reality which has been exacerbated in the aftermath of October 7, and also boosted the phenomenon of Islamophobia.

I argue that there is a clear distinction among prominent Western clerics, who have constantly distinguished between their harsh criticism towards Zionism, while condemning any hatred towards Jews. As a case study, I examine the discourse of leading Western imams and their reaction to the aftermath of October 7. These prominent clerics represent mainstream Islam in Western communities, who gained prestige and influence during the post-9/11 era, and include, for example: Yasir Qadhi (US), Omar Suleiman (US), and Abdal Hakim Murad (UK). In the lecture, using qualitative research methods, I will explore various examples of these clerics' discourse, where they distinct between their harsh criticism towards Israel, especially regarding the Palestinians, with their positive attitude towards Judaism and Jewish people, such as: promoting stronger ties between Muslims and Jews to battle islamophobia and anti-semitism, and condemning any form of hostility towards Jews, which have risen since October 7. While this lecture explores the discourse of Western clerics in the aftermath of October 7, it also highlights the importance of Western Muslims, in general, to express their political stances unconditionally, without fearing political scrutiny undermining their citizenship status, or having to experience the ongoing tension of loyalty and dissent.

A Critical Examination of Effects of Hungary's Current Law on Churches on Muslim Church-Recognized Organizations

Dániel Vékony | Vytautas Magnus University

After the fall of the Soviet bloc, the democratic transition in Hungary brought in very liberal legislation on churches. This resulted in the mushrooming of religious organizations being recognized as churches. Muslim church-recognized communities also grew in number. From the original one church-recognized organization, we are aware of at least 3 Muslim organizations receiving church status by 2010.

The new FIDESZ-led government's supermajority after the 2010 elections brought in not only a new constitution, but also new legislation on religious organizations that created a much stricter legal environment for religious organizations being recognized as churches. Many previously church-recognized organizations lost their status in a newly created multi-tiered system of legal recognition. Only two Muslim organizations managed to obtain church recognition in this new system, the Organization of Muslims in Hungary, and the Hungarian Islamic Community.

This paper aims to critically analyse the current legislation and its short and middle-term effect on the remaining two Muslim church-recognized organizations. The paper will argue, that even though the current legislation is generally not considered as favourable for Muslim churches as the previous one, the current system still puts the two church-recognized organizations into a relatively powerful situation. As there is little chance for an emerging Muslim organization obtaining the church status these other two organisations have in the current Hungarian political climate, the two organizations that do have this recognition puts the current church-recognized Muslim organizations into a structurally powerful position vis-à-vis other Muslim communities in Hungary.

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PS 4.9

Current Research on Congregations as Religious and Social Actors

Recherches actuelles sur les congrégations en tant qu'acteurs religieux et sociaux

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Anna Körs | University of Hamburg

Syriac Orthodox Parishes in Sweden as Religious as Well as Non-religious Communities

Magdalena Nordin | University of Gothenburg

From Reducing Energy to Calling for Change: What are the Strategies Churches Adopt to Address Climate Change?

Katherine Comeau | University of Notre Dame

How Does Church Growth Work at the Local Level? A Qualitative Study of Megachurches in Houston and Minneapolis/St. Paul

Insa Pruiken, Thomas Kern and **Sarah Tell** | University of Bremen

Syriac Orthodox Parishes in Sweden as Religious as Well as Non-religious Communities

Magdalena Nordin | University of Gothenburg

The Syriac Orthodox Church, established in Sweden in the late 1970s, is one of the country's largest immigrant denominations with over 50,000 members, two dioceses and 48 congregations and has been significant for Suryoye in Sweden. This paper will explore the various activities, religious as well as non-religious, taking place in the parishes in Syriac Orthodox Church in Sweden. It will show how these activities relate to each other and demonstrate, using the concepts external and internal negotiations as well manifest and latent strategies, how they are part of integrations processes in the church. The analysis will be based on empirical material gathered through ethnographic fieldwork in three Syrian Orthodox parishes in Sweden, as well as through a survey to all 48 parishes in the Church.

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From Reducing Energy to Calling for Change: What Are the Strategies Churches Adopt to Address Climate Change?

Katherine Comeau | University of Notre Dame

Religious environmental movement organizations have increased in number in recent decades (Ellingson et al 2012). This suggests that religious communities have grown more interested over the years in addressing the effects of climate change. We know that churches have long been involved in political activity and social change and that has increased in recent decades (Beyerlein and Chaves 2020; Djupe and Grant 2002; Guth et al 2003). The National Congregations Study documented change over time; Beyerlein and Chaves (2020) found a statistically significant increase in the number of churches engaged in seven types of political activity measured in the study. More churches today discuss politics, encourage members to vote, and participate in local marches.

To what extent does this political activity address climate change? To date, the literature on churches (as an organization) and climate change has been scant (Haluza-Delay 2014). Social scientific literature on religion and climate change focuses more on the theology or the religious framing of the environment. However, churches can play a key role in addressing the consequences of climate change in their communities. For instance, churches can advocate for policies that help their communities cope with the effects of climate change, provide resources to their communities, and use their property to reduce emissions.

This research project addresses how congregations engage in addressing the effects of climate change in their communities. It examines the variety of ways in which churches are engaged in addressing climate change from no engagement to actively engaging government entities and providing resources to community members harmed by the effects of climate change. This project asks several key research questions: What are churches doing to address the impact of climate change in their communities? What level of awareness do churches have concerning the impact of climate change? How does this vary by geographic location?

To answer these questions, the data for this research draws on a survey of congregations in four U.S. states. This survey was fielded from March 2024–November 2024. The sample includes conservative and mainline Christian churches. Survey data included key descriptive variables such as religious affiliation, church budget, political and community engagement, and interest in addressing climate change.

How Does Church Growth Work at The Local Level? A Qualitative Study of Megachurches in Houston and Minneapolis/St. Paul

Insa Pruiskien, Thomas Kern and Sarah Tell | University of Bremen

Over the past four decades, the megachurch has become the dominating cultural model of religious organization in the protestant field of the United States. The blueprint of this model includes an organizational growth mechanism that allows the congregation to include ever larger groups of diverse people and, at the same time, foster an internal organizational identity. This mechanism consists of four elements: (1) the congregation offers personalized religious contents; (2) it lowers access barriers by establishing a zone of “popular culture” around the religious core of the congregation; (3) it increases strategic planning; and (4) it evaluates its outcome using both “best practices” and quantified measures.

In this contribution, we study how this mechanism unfolds at the local level of metropolitan areas. Based on a qualitative case study including 12 protestant congregations of different size from two metropolitan areas in the United States (Houston and Minneapolis/St. Paul), we compare the mechanisms of church growth in both cities. The study builds on 120 qualitative interviews, organizational documents and other background data from the congregations as well as online material.

Our findings indicate that the institutionalization of the megachurch model at the level of metropolitan areas depends on conditions on two levels: First, at the level of the local context, a high population growth and a diverse, but religious population ensure a steady influx of religiously inclined individuals to the congregations. Second, at the congregational level, strong bonds to denominational traditions constrain the institutionalization of the megachurch model.

PS 4.10

Theorising Religious Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia, and Secularisation (2)

Théoriser le patrimoine religieux : nation, nostalgie et sécularisation (2)

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

414, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Marian Burchardt | Leipzig University

The Loneliness of the Religious Hybrid: Maya Heritage and the Decline of Inculturation in Guatemala

James MacKenzie | University of Lethbridge

Prolegomena to the Study of Cultural Religion

Alberto Ghio | University of Padova

Theorizing Neopagan Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia and Secularization

Atko Remmel | University of Tartu

The Loneliness of the Religious Hybrid: Maya Heritage and the Decline of Inculturation in Guatemala

James MacKenzie | University of Lethbridge

In this paper, drawing on ethnographic research conducted since the late 1990s, I trace the fate of projects which seek to incorporate Maya heritage into Catholicism through projects of inculturation. Beliefs and practices associated with the Indigenous population of Guatemala have undergone considerable transformation in the last few decades.

While historically stigmatised by Christian evangelists of different stripes, aspects of Maya Spirituality (as it is currently called) came to be valued by progressive clergy in the 1970s through Vatican II-inspired programmes seeking to adapt their 'universal' message to 'local' religious contexts. While some claim that inculturation represents a dynamic new religious force in the region (Garard 2020), it seems that in Guatemala at least, these projects are in sharp decline. While there are many reasons for this, I consider two factors.

First, focussing on the church hierarchy in a major archdiocese, I document the long-term effects of a consistently conservative approach to "cultural" issues, which contrasts with the progressive reputation of the Episcopal Conference of Guatemala when issues of human rights and social justice are concerned. Second, I consider how Maya activists, invoking dynamics of nostalgia and nativism, have criticized as 'syncretic' and neo-colonial any attempts to promote a Maya-Catholic identity, claiming Maya Spirituality as a (more or less) exclusive marker of their identity. In the process, despite expansive interest (from both Maya-Catholics and anti-syncretic Maya) in mobilizing ethnic heritage as a source for religious identity, the options for Indigenous Guatemalans in this context have narrowed over time.

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Prolegomena to the Study of Cultural Religion

Alberto Ghio | University of Padova

«Cultural religion» is one of the most prevalent yet under-theorized forms of religiosity, characterized by the ambiguous persistence of religious symbols and identity in contexts where belief has faded. However, its theorization remains challenging due to fragmented research and its intersection with diverse topics, including irreligion, Church-State relations, and secularization, while the numerous expressions developed by scholars to understand it, from diffused religion to fuzzy fidelity, hinder a univocal interpretation of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, existing studies often focus on the role of courts and political actors in framing religion as «cultural heritage» but lack a clear theorization of the concepts of «religion» and «culture», often defaulting to a Christian-centric framework. Drawing from the existing literature, I posit that, even though majoritarian religions help forging a shared cultural substratum in a society, the culturalization of religion may extend beyond majoritarian traditions, applying to minority religions and spiritualities. Therefore culturalization patterns must be understood according to their religious, historical, and social contexts, moving past the disentanglement of church affiliation and strong religious commitment.

Research may address these issues by empirically analyzing the different meanings of «cultural religion» among social actors, and examining how these meanings shape – or are shaped by – social imaginaries. Exploration of the underlying processes of the culturalization of religion may provide a more nuanced interpretation of cultural religion and its interplay with secularization, supporting a broader understanding of how religion persists and transforms in contemporary societies.

Theorizing Neopagan Heritage: Nation, Nostalgia and Secularization

Atko Remmel | University of Tartu

The paper focuses on a curious case from Estonia, which is known to be – depending on the point of view – one of the “least religious” or “most secular” countries in Europe. This reputation seems justified inasmuch as religion equals Christianity but falls short of describing the situation when less distinct religion-related phenomena are considered.

One of the “less distinct phenomena” is a neopagan movement Maausk (Earth Belief) that became public in the 1980s. Building on global and local developments, this movement contributed to the development of a set of ideas that describe Estonian culture as inherently intertwined with local nature. As a result, the idea of Estonians as “forest people” has now become one of the cornerstones of contemporary Estonian national identity, while environmentalist attitudes are now considered a national characteristic and a part of heritage. Maausk movement has successfully secured a position as the protector of that heritage, and in turn, is widely perceived not so much as a religious but as a heritage protection movement. This has put a solid basis for the popularity of the movement and opened up numerous possibilities for influencing the developments in culture and politics.

The paper explores the premises and outcomes of these developments and argues that Maausk has achieved almost impossible – after 35 years of public activity, this NRM is now in a position where it has a say in cultural policy and environmental management, and at the same time is considered one of the most popular religions in Estonia.

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PS 4.11

Children in New Religious Movements: Succession of Faith and Religious Freedom

*Les enfants dans les nouveaux mouvements religieux :
succession de la foi et liberté religieuse*

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Yoshihide Sakurai and **Ng Ka Shing** | Hokkaido University

Controversies and Responses: Analyzing Yiguan Dao's Practices and the Allegations of Child Abuse

Ng Ka Shing | Hokkaido University

Jehovah's Witnesses in Japan: The Difficulties of Religious Families

Yoshihide Sakurai and **Koki Shimizu** | Hokkaido University

Controversies and Responses: Analyzing Yiguan Dao's Practices and the Allegations of Child Abuse

Ng Ka Shing | Hokkaido University

Yiguan Dao is a Chinese religious movement that emerged in the early 20th century. The core philosophy of Yiguan Dao combines elements from Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Traditional Chinese folk beliefs. It is widely practiced by ethnic Chinese around the world, especially in Taiwan and Southeast Asia. However, certain practices of the group have raised concerns in some quarters. One major issue is the group's recruitment methods, particularly claims that it targets children. In Taiwan, media reports from 2018 alleged that the group was "forcing children to join", a claim that Yiguan Dao strongly denied. Another controversial aspect of the religion is its advocacy for a vegetarian diet as part of its spiritual practice. Yiguan Dao teaches that vegetarianism is a way to cultivate moral purity and compassion, aligning with certain Buddhist and Daoist principles. However, there have been concerns about the health effects of this strict vegetarian diet, particularly for children and growing individuals.

These concerns became more widespread following a 2006 media report from Macau, where a follower of Yiguan Dao allegedly starved her seven-year-old daughter to death, leading to a ten-year prison sentence for the mother. Although the group emphasized that it does not mandate or force its members to follow the vegetarian diet, this case raised significant questions about the potential risks associated with such practices, especially for vulnerable individuals. This paper examines how Yiguan Dao has responded to the child abuse allegations, as well as how members of the movement have interpreted and navigated these controversies. Through an analysis of the group's public statements and interviews with followers, this paper explores the group's position on these sensitive issues and the broader implications of these controversies for its reputation and practices.

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Jehovah’s Witnesses in Japan: The Difficulties of Religious Families

Yoshihide Sakurai and Koki Shimizu | Hokkaido University

On December 27th, 2022, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare released a Q&A document on how to deal with child abuse related to religious beliefs, etc., and notified local governments and related organizations. This document also includes information on child abuse suffered by second-generation Jehovah’s Witnesses, including spiritual abuse such as blood transfusions being refused, whippings, and avoidance of former members and ex-members.

We, along with the Support Group for the Legal Defense of Jehovah’s Witnesses, conducted an internet survey (581 cases) conducted jointly from May 2 to June 30, 2023, and group interviews (21 people) with second-generation Jehovah’s Witnesses conducted in Sapporo, Tokyo, and Kyoto in August and September of the same year. In this survey, we statistically analyzed the mental health and thoughts of second-generation who were raised as Jehovah’s Witnesses, as well as their school days, employment, and current mental health, and we also enhanced the accuracy of our sociological analysis by listening to their life stories.

Author Meets Critics: Families and Religion. Dynamics of Transmission across Generations

Familles et religion. Dynamique de la transmission d'une génération à l'autre

Wednesday, July 2nd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Moderator / Modérateur

Roberta Ricucci | University of Turin

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Christel Gärtner | University of Münster

Gergely Rosta | University of Münster

Peter Beyer | University of Ottawa

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants

Monika Wohlrab-Sahr | Leipzig University

Solange Lefebvre | University of Montreal

Tuomas Martikainen | University of Turku

This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **Families and Religion. Dynamics of Transmission across Generations**, edited by Christel Gärtner, Linda Hennig and Olaf Müller.

*Il s'agit d'une séance de rencontre entre les auteurs et les critiques du livre **Families and Religion. Dynamics of Transmission across Generations**, édité par Christel Gärtner, Linda Hennig et Olaf Müller.*

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Parallel Sessions 5

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
5.1	Religion and Social Theory (1) <i>Religion et théorie sociale (1)</i>	002
5.2	Religious Networks, Diaspora Politics, and Integration: Islamic Movements in Europe <i>Réseaux religieux, politiques de diaspora et intégration : mouvements islamiques en Europe</i>	102
5.3	Intersectional Analysis of Religion and Migration <i>Analyse intersectionnelle de la religion et de la migration</i>	110
5.4	Author Meets Critics: Les écospiritualités contemporaines <i>Contemporary ecospiritualities</i>	103
5.5	Prolonged Singlehood and Divorce as Challenges to Religious “Family Values” in Conservative Denominations <i>Le célibat prolongé et le divorce comme défis aux « valeurs familiales » religieuses dans les confessions conservatrices</i>	104
5.6	Miscellaneous Papers Session 2: Religious Responses to Migration Challenges <i>Miscellanées 2 : Réponses religieuses aux défis migratoires</i>	312
5.7	Does Secularism Still Exist? (1) <i>Est-ce que la laïcité existe encore? (1)</i>	106
5.8	Youth And Religion <i>Jeunesse et religion</i>	220
5.9	Religion and Social Polarization: Gender, Health and Reproduction <i>Religion et polarisation sociale : genre, santé et reproduction (1)</i>	310

PS	TITLE	ROOM
5.10	Religion, Polarization and Political Crises <i>Religion, polarisation et crises politiques</i>	311
5.11	Religion, International Migration and Diversity (3) <i>Religion, migration internationale et diversité (3)</i>	313

PS 5.1

Religion and Social Theory (1)*Religion et Théorie Sociale (1)*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Titus Hjelm** | University of Helsinki**Secularisation: The Interactional Dimension****Titus Hjelm** | University of Helsinki**Rethinking Religious Competition: A Field Approach to Expansive Religion****Marian Burchardt** | Leipzig University**Post-Secularism as the Secularism of the Exit of Secularism. Australia as a Case Study of Passé Secularism****Adam Possamai** | Western Sydney University

Secularisation: The Interactional Dimension

Titus Hjelm | University of Helsinki

Secularisation, or ‘the process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance’ (Bryan Wilson), is at the same time the most influential and the most reviled attempt at theorising religious change. The literature has been stuck in debates about whether religion is declining or just changing form, and whether the claims of the secularisation paradigm are applicable only to a narrow ‘western’ case. Looking at institutional differentiation and individual religiosity measures, the answer to the question ‘is religion declining’ is often something trivial like ‘it is complicated’.

Whatever the disagreements in the literature, existing research does not fully cover what is implicated in the idea of secularisation. So far, the discussion has treated religion as something an institution or individual either possesses or does not—or does so in different degrees. This, however, ignores the fundamentally interactional nature of secularisation.

This paper proceeds from the argument that the degree of a society’s secularisation is not just a sum of its institutional and individual religiosities, but also a matter of how well religion *works* in social interaction. A deeply religious person, for example, will keep their faith to themselves in many social situations, because it is not appropriate to those interactions. Importantly, this may be the case in national contexts as varied as Sweden (where secularisation is assumed to be in an advanced stage) and Pakistan (where it is not). What does this say about the role of religion in society? This paper theorises secularisation as an interactional phenomenon, suggesting that secularisation should be considered a matter of the legitimacy of religion in social interaction. It also charts potential methodological avenues towards applying this perspective to empirical research.

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Rethinking Religious Competition: A Field Approach to Expansive Religion

Marian Burchardt | Leipzig University

A hoary chestnut in the study of religion is that secularization has meant not so much a turning away from religion as the increasing differentiation of the religious sphere from other arenas of social life and its retreat into the sphere of personal experience (Chaves; Chaves and Gorski). A second, less consensual perhaps, is that “religious economies theory,” once thought to provide an explanation for America’s continuing religious vitality in its competitive religious landscape is wrong, both theoretically and empirically (Gorski; Olson, Voas et al). Moving beyond the pitfalls of both secularisation and economies theories we suggest a perspective that puts religious competition at the heart of the study of religion, but sees religious actors as competing not only with other religious actors (competition among denominations or congregations, for example), but as fiercely engaged with—and often interpenetrated with—actors from other arenas. We thus propose a field-based approach to religion, focused on the dynamism of the religious field, which is in many cases so turbulent that it spills over into other fields, or even submerges them. Critically revisiting one of Bourdieu’s central claims, we argue that, under certain conditions, the very dynamics of competition may lead not to the strengthening but the erosion of field boundaries. We build and illustrate our argument with data from several African societies.

Post-Secularism as the Secularism of the Exit of Secularism. Australia as a Case Study of Passé Secularism

Adam Possamai | Western Sydney University

This article explores the current split among researchers on the decline or revival of religion in the public sphere in western societies. Taking Australia as a case study, and in light of other cases such as the US, there is undeniable data proving that religion is in decline in terms of identification. Coming back to the first wave of religious revivalist supporters in the last century who claimed that if religious attendance was in decline, it did not prove the end of religion. I argue that it is the same today with regards to religious identification. To support this argument, noting the ever-return of the sacred, this article observes the growth of a new religious minority in the public sphere engaging in a cultural war to support their understanding of religious freedom. While small in numbers, it puts in question the hegemony of the use of secular reason as the lingua franca of the public sphere. Following Gauchet's reading of Christianity as being the religion of the exit of religion, this article presents post-secularism as the secularism of the exit of secularism. Using Australia as a case study, the new phase of passé secularism is introduced.

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PS 5.2

Religious Networks, Diaspora Politics, and Integration: Islamic Movements in Europe

Réseaux religieux, politiques de diaspora et intégration : mouvements islamiques en Europe

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Sebastian Elsässer | CAU Kiel

The Role of Islamic Organizations in the Integration or Segregation of Migrants in Europe: A Systematic Review

Johannes Eurich | Heidelberg University

Transnational Karbala: From Rebellion to Reconciliation

Minoo Mirshahvalad | University of Copenhagen

Islamic Communities and Movements in Exile and Diaspora: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood

Sebastian Elsässer and **Hoda Salah** | CAU Kiel

The Role of Islamic Organizations in the Integration or Segregation of Migrants in Europe: A Systematic Review

Johannes Eurich | Heidelberg University

The paper presents a systematic review of journal articles examining the integrating or segregating role of Muslim organizations in the integration process of migrants in Europe. For this purpose, we performed an extensive search in electronic databases of relevant journals and analyzed the articles for their research results regarding the orientations of Muslim organizations. The literature points to a nuanced relationship between Islamic MSOs and immigrant integration and explores the contribution of these organizations, emphasizing their potential to act as bridges between migrant communities and their societies of settlement or to reinforce social divisions. While there is clear evidence that MSOs provide important services that support immigrant integration, there are also cases where MSOs can contribute to social segregation. This dual role may depend on various factors, such as the socio-political context of the host country, the mission of the MSO and its relations with local communities and state institutions. In contexts where Islamic MSOs are supported by inclusive policies and co-operate with broader societal institutions, they tend to promote integration and social cohesion. In contrast, in contexts where MSOs work in isolation or face hostility from the society of settlement, they tend to focus on preserving religious identity rather than promoting integration.

This paper was co-authored by Kris Vera Hartmann from Heidelberg University, Gülay Uğur Göksel from Istanbul Bilgi University, Didem Doğanılmaz Duman from İzmir Demokrasi University, Anila Sulaj from the Agricultural University of Tirana, Laura Maxim from the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași and Bárbara Bäckström from Universidade Aberta Lisbon.

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Transnational Karbala: From Rebellion to Reconciliation

Minoo Mirshahvalad | University of Copenhagen

This paper examines the activities of three transnational information campaigns initiated by young Shia Muslims across European, Russian, and Armenian cities. These campaigns aim to disseminate knowledge about Imam Hussain and his mission to non-Shia audiences. The campaigns serve as vivid examples of the struggles faced by Muslims in relatively hostile contexts as they seek integration and acceptance as law-abiding and peaceful citizens. They also represent new avenues of Islamic activism, focusing on dismantling stereotypes and correcting “misunderstandings” within host societies.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and an analysis of campaign handouts and social media content between 2018 and 2024, this study explores how campaigners adapt the narrative of the Karbala tragedy—widely regarded as the metahistorical cornerstone of Shia identity—to make it accessible and relevant to external audiences. These strategies enable campaigners to engage with out-group communities, testing and refining effective methods for presenting this pivotal historical event.

The findings reveal that, through this process, the Karbala narrative undergoes both content-based and linguistic modifications, while the concept of justice—central to the commemoration of this tragedy—is reinterpreted in new contexts. This research contributes to the understanding of transnational Islamic activism and highlights the importance of strategic communication in fostering intercultural dialogue and promoting mutual understanding in diverse societies. Future research could further explore how these campaigns shape community-building and identity formation among young Shia Muslims across different national contexts.

Islamic Communities and Movements in Exile and Diaspora: The Case of the Muslim Brotherhood

Sebastian Elsässer and Hoda Salah | CAU Kiel

This paper explores how migration reshapes religious communities and movements, considering variations across generations, gender, and national contexts. In the present-day world, Islamic communities of different types – Sufi orders, Islamist organisations like the Muslim Brotherhood, or Salafi groups – have often constructed global networks that encompass several regions of the Muslim world, as well as Northern America, Europe, and other parts of the world. This presence in the non-Muslim majority countries of the West (or other destinations) can be by choice, in search of a good education or better employment, or out of necessity, due to persecution and constraints in their home countries. In any case, communities are re-shaped by a numerous presence in countries of migration and exile, as they re-group under different conditions and struggle to help their members overcome the challenges of economic and social integration. In our field work, we study exile communities of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Istanbul, Qatar and London, which came into being after the military coup in 2013.

Through biographical interviews, we trace the life paths of our interlocuters and their changing relationship with the MB. As (former) MB members have been settling down abroad, different patterns of interaction with and demarcation from surrounding societies emerged, with notable variations according to gender, age/generation and education/social capital. Their life paths have also been shaped by the opportunities and constraints within host societies, and well as by geopolitical shifts that have had an impact on Egyptian exiles' asylum, residence or nationality status, and on their trans-border mobility. Our research shows how religious communities put a focus on self-preservation and mutual solidarity in (temporary) exile, not on assimilation or integration into host societies. Nevertheless, divergent paths within the community threaten established forms of organisation and hierarchy.

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PS 5.3

Intersectional Analysis of Religion and Migration*Analyse intersectionnelle de la religion et de la migration*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Antonio Montañés Jimenez** | University of Oxford, Autonomous University of Barcelona**Intersections of Religion and Gender. Women's Apostasies from the Roman Catholic Church as Resistance to Established Gender Order****Anna Szwed** | Jagiellonian University**Echoes of the Past: How Historical Memory and Religious Narratives Shapes Refugee Experiences in Modern Greece****Gülray Uğur Göksel** | Istanbul Bilgi University**Besim Can Zirh** | Middle East Technical University**Masculinity, Intersectionality and Roneos among Spanish Gitanos/Roma****Antonio Montañés Jiménez** | University of Oxford, Autonomous University of Barcelona**The Intersections of Religion, Gender and Sexuality. The Case of Catholic, Lutheran and Muslim Women's Lived Religion and Agency****Morta Vidūnaitė** | Vytautas Magnus University, University of Groningen

Intersections of Religion and Gender. Women's Apostasies from the Roman Catholic Church as Resistance to Established Gender Order

Anna Szwed | Jagiellonian University

This presentation explores the intersections of religion and gender through the lens of apostasy from the Roman Catholic Church. In my presentation I claim that, apart from being interpreted as a religious disaffiliation, apostasy can become a political act aimed at undermining the role of religion and religious institutions in the production of the wider gender order in society. In Poland it is largely influenced by a Catholic gender regime imposed by means of the entanglement of religion in social institutions and by culturalization of religion.

My presentation is based on a small scale qualitative research among women who apostatised from the Roman Catholic Church in the aftermath of protests against the tightening of the abortion law in Poland (Women's Strikes). I examine apostasy as a performative act of defiance by which women undermine not only the authority of the Church in the public sphere and its influence on women's rights in Poland but also the broader cultural and symbolic constructions of femininity and women's roles influenced by Roman Catholicism. This presentation aims to contribute to the understanding of how religious exit can intersect with gender resistance, offering new insights into the ways in which religion and gender are constructed and contested.

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Echoes of the Past: How Historical Memory and Religious Narratives Shapes Refugee Experiences in Modern Greece

Gülay Uğur Göksel | Istanbul Bilgi University
Besim Can Zirh | Middle East Technical University

This research paper examines the multifaceted interplay between memory, religious belief, and humanitarian attitudes towards refugees in Greece. Drawing on two recent Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) conducted in Athens and Lesvos in Summer 2024. The principal objective is to gain insight into the manner by which collective memories and religious affiliations shape the refugee reception and narratives about refugees, focusing particularly on the case of Syrian refugees, in alignment with existing scholarship such as the work of Aslı Iğsız, which examines the enduring legacy of the 1923 Greek-Turkish Population Exchange and its impact on contemporary perceptions of refugees. These historical memories continue to shape attitudes and inform present-day responses to newcomers, particularly in relation to issues of national identity, belonging, and the acceptance of “otherness”.

Lesbos, the third largest islands in the Aegean Sea with a population is approximately 90,000, came to the fore on the global stage in 2015, when the Greek islands witnessed the arrival of approximately one million refugees seeking asylum in Europe. The volume of these refugee influxes triggered “bottom-Up humanitarian assistance mobilization” on the island (Frydenlund, et al, 2020). The residents demonstrated remarkable flexibility and understanding, despite the challenging circumstances, later named “exceptional hospitality” (Kastrinou & Knoerk, 2024: 3). On the other hand, in Athens, there were more diverse reactions and different interpretations of hospitality.

Our independent but collaborative STSMs aim to understand the unique historical and social landscapes that shape refugee reception and narratives about refugees in these specific locations and how these narratives have been changed since 2015, from the initial mobilization stage (2015–2016) to the current period of uncertain waiting (2023–present). In doing so, it is our main aim to contribute the growing body of literature exploring the interconnected histories of refugee-dom, emphasizing the interconnectedness of refugee experiences across time and space. This research builds on the work of scholars such as Philip Marfleet and Dawn Chatty, who have advocated for the need to address the past and acknowledge the conceptual problems inherent in studying forced migration.

The findings highlight the necessity for integration policies that extend beyond the mere provision of practical assistance to engage with the intricate interplay of memory, religion, and local context.

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Masculinity, Intersectionality and Roneos among Spanish Gitanos/Roma

Antonio Montañés Jiménez | University of Oxford, Autonomous University of Barcelona

This article explores Christian principles, imagery, and ideas shaping the (re)making of masculine ideals, behaviour, and identities among Pentecostal Gitanos in Spain. Scholarship on Pentecostal masculinities emphasizes that in cultural settings dominated by 'macho' and other chauvinistic principles, men find it challenging to comply with Pentecostal standards of manhood, and those who do convert often lose standing before non-converted men as they are accorded an aura of effeminacy. Whereas many converted Gitanos struggle to meet Pentecostal moral standards too, Gitano believers attempt to reform their masculinity following dominant and highly valued ethnic ideals. The connection between masculine pathways of conversion, moral/spiritual commitment, and cultural prestige has significant implications for the ways in which Gitano male believers are perceived and appreciated as potential partners in Gitano cultural and communitarian milieus. The article argues that Pentecostal Christianity's gendered ideas about how men should behave defines ideals of masculinity, ethical expectations, and couple-making practices among Gitano communities. The article also provides an ethnographic account of the mechanisms involved in generating, reproducing, and sustaining discursive, social, and communitarian frameworks and courting practices (known as roneos) in which Pentecostal Gitano ideals and aspirations about manhood become meaningful and appealing.

The Intersections of Religion, Gender and Sexuality. The Case of Catholic, Lutheran and Muslim Women's Lived Religion and Agency

Morta Vidūnaitė | Vytautas Magnus University, University of Groningen

The presentation presents the results of PhD qualitative research (2021–2025) on the lived religion and agency of practicing Lithuanian Catholic and Lutheran women as well as of the comparable qualitative data on practising Lithuanian Muslim women from the ReliGen (“Religion and Gender Equality. Baltic and Nordic Development”) project (2021–2024). They demonstrate how these women find the meaning of life and agency in traditional religion. The PhD research shows that for Lithuanian Lutheran women, as members of a unique historical religious minority, involvement in various activities in the church is extremely important, through which they perform their female and Lutheran identities, and so (additionally) give meaning to their lives and position themselves in Lithuanian society. Lithuanian Catholic women, as members of dominant religion, practise their faith and leadership more for themselves and self-improvement. Islam provides Lithuanian Muslim women with an agency personally, through family and community, but rarely through a career, which can serve more as an area of personal autonomy, despite of religion. Both studies reveal where the women stand on the axis of conservative and liberal values (as regards the issues related to gender and sexuality, i.e., abortion and LGBTQIA+ rights). Although many women, especially Muslims, tend to be more conservative, still their stance on the issues can be complex in the country, which remains one of a very few in the European Union, that has not ratified the Istanbul Convention on gender-based violence or adopted LGBTQIA+ partnership or marriage law.

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PS 5.4

Author Meets Critics: *Les écospiritualités contemporaines**Contemporary ecospiritualities*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session**Irene Becci** | Université de Lausanne**Christophe Monnot** | Université de Strasbourg**Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants****Géraldine Mossière** | Université de Montréal**Mar Griera** | Autonomous University of Barcelona**Manéli Farahmand** | University of Fribourg/ CIC

Il s'agit d'une séance de rencontre entre l'auteur et des critiques pour le livre **Les éco-spiritualités contemporaines**, édité par Irene Becci.

*This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **Les écospiritualités contemporaines**, edited by Irene Becci.*

Prolonged Singlehood and Divorce as Challenges to Religious “Family values” in Conservative Denominations

Le célibat prolongé et le divorce comme défis aux « valeurs familiales » religieuses dans les confessions conservatrices

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / *Salle*

104, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Ari Engelberg | Hadassah Academic College

Religion as a Sexual Health Risk? Dissonances between Conservative Sexual Ethics and Sexual Behaviors

Tobias Künkler | CVJM-Hochschule

How Conservative Religious Communities Deal with Singles? Lessons from Communal Counselling Offered to Jewish Orthodox Singles

Ari Engelberg | Hadassah Academic College

Late Singlehood in Haredi Society in Israel – A Look to the Future

Yehudit Chassida | Herzog College

Religion as a Sexual Health Risk? Dissonances between Conservative Sexual Ethics and Sexual Behaviors

Tobias Künkler | CVJM-Hochschule

The paper focuses on the question of how the dissonances between conservative sexual ethics and sexual behaviors affect sexual health among highly religious Christians who are single or in relationships. It is based on the results of the triangular study 'Sexual attitudes and behaviors of (highly) religious Christians'. Part of this study was a quantitative survey (N = 10608) among (highly) religious Christians in German-speaking countries (convenience sample). On the one hand, this paper will look at the connections between the dissonances mentioned and sexual health (measured by sexual satisfaction and sexual agency) as well as the differences in this regard between singles and people in a committed relationship. Dissonance between conservative sexual ethics and sexual behaviors was measured in the study using the examples of sexual intercourse outside of the marital context, solo sexuality/ masturbation, porn consumption and sexual fantasies.

How Conservative Religious Communities Deal with Singles? Lessons from Communal Counselling Offered to Jewish Orthodox singles

Ari Engelberg | Hadassah Academic College

Traditionalist religious communities that attempt to uphold “family values” tend to view prolonged singlehood alongside divorce, as challenges not only for the individual and her family but for the community at large. This paper will look at advice offered by communal experts to singles. The results presented are based on research conducted among Orthodox Jews focusing on, but not limited to, Israeli Religious Zionism. Books, lectures, and conferences focusing on this subject were surveyed and the materials were analyzed using qualitative research tools. The results point to changes in the content of the advice offered to singles over the years. Three central themes were identified: 1. Regarding the search for a partner, in the past romantic love was disparaged and singles were encouraged to marry quickly. The focus was on the emotional work that will be required after marriage. Current advice has shifted dramatically and now the search for love is described as a spiritual quest. 2. Advice continues to capitalize on gender essentialist notions while allowing for some flexibility. 3. In the field of sexuality religious advice givers are more lenient than in the past but continue to uphold abstaining from sex prior to marriage as a standard one should aspire for. It will be claimed that these changes are not confined to the field of advice for religious singles but rather signify adaptations and transformations that have occurred in Religious Zionist “lived religion” over the last few decades.

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Late Singlehood in Haredi Society in Israel – A Look to the Future

Yehudit Chassida | Herzog College

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Delayed marriage is becoming increasingly common worldwide, with research highlighting the challenges and disadvantages associated with it. Within the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox Jewish) community, however, late singlehood is particularly complex due to societal expectations of establishing a family through structured marital arrangements. The purpose of this study is to examine the interplay between the community and the individual regarding the experience of late singlehood from the perspective of Haredi women. The research involved 25 unmarried women aged 25–35, all members of the Haredi sector. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore their relationships with the community to which they belong. The findings reveal that this period is perceived as a battleground between the single Haredi woman and her surrounding society. On one hand, the women encounter the voice of the community, which blames them for deviating from the expected timeline for marriage. On the other hand, the women's own voices criticize the community for enforcing marriage at any cost, without considering their personal choices. This research sheds light on contemporary issues surrounding family and marital values within the Haredi community. The first issue concerns late singlehood and whether it is perceived as fate or choice. The second highlights potential changes in the traditional matchmaking system in response to the rising age of singlehood. The findings suggest that late singlehood in the Haredi community signals the beginning of transformations in marital age norms and the nature of the spouse-selection process.

Miscellaneous Papers Session 2: Religious Responses to Migration Challenges

Miscellanées 2: Réponses religieuses aux défis migratoires

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / *Salle*

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Juan Carlos Martín | Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

The Older Migrant: Health and Wellbeing in the Twilight Years

Mary McDonnell Naughton | TUS Midlands

Hospitality Beyond Borders: Besa, Ethics of Care, and the Refugee Question

Hysni Skura | Bedër University

Transnationalisation et identité(s) des Églises évangéliques brésiliennes au Portugal : une étude de cas de l'Église évangélique Assemblée de Dieu de Pernambuco – IEADPE

Jonas Pereira De Oliveira Júnior | Université catholique de Louvain

Immigration, Diversification of the Religious Landscape, and Relationship with Social and Political Systems

Helena Vilaça | University of Porto

The Older Migrant: Health and Wellbeing in the Twilight Years

Mary McDonnell Naughton | TUS Midlands

This paper offers a comprehensive examination of the obstacles confronting older migrants in European countries and New Zealand, with a particular focus on the significant influence of language barriers on their social integration and well-being. Through a synthesis of findings from diverse disciplines and empirical studies, it offers a nuanced understanding of the migration experience among older populations. Beginning with an analysis of global migration trends, the paper sheds light on the growing number of older migrants seeking refuge and stability in host nations. These individuals often encounter substantial language barriers that hinder their access to essential services and limit their involvement in community activities. This paper emphasizes the critical role of healthcare professionals and policymakers in addressing cultural disparities and communication obstacles to enhance the health outcomes of older immigrants. It advocates for the implementation of fair healthcare policies that consider migrants' legal status and socioeconomic backgrounds, aiming to promote inclusivity and improve access to necessary healthcare services. It calls for tailored interventions, evidence-based policy initiatives, and community-driven support systems to empower older migrants as they navigate the complexities of migration and aging, ultimately striving to foster resilience and well-being among diverse migrant populations.

This paper was co-authored by Bárbara Bäckström from Universidade Aberta and Louisa Buckingham from the University of Auckland.

Hospitality Beyond Borders: Besa, Ethics of Care, and the Refugee Question

Hysni Skura | Bedër University

This paper explores the practice of “besa” in Albania as a model of refugee solidarity that challenges state-centric approaches to migration and asylum. Drawing on the works of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas on unconditional hospitality and the Other, and incorporating the feminist ethics of care, this paper constructs a theoretical framework for understanding how hospitality and solidarity can transcend the nation-state. In particular, the paper situates besa as a form of ethical relationality and code of honor that demands collective responsibility in the protection of refugees. By combining these philosophical perspectives with the sociological concept of transnationalism, the paper argues that besa offers a compelling alternative to the restrictive, border-based logic of current refugee policies. Through the historical and contemporary lens of Albanian refugee protection practices, besa is examined as an embodied form of solidarity “from below,” one that prioritizes the moral obligations of individuals and local communities over state-imposed legal systems. This framework not only critiques the limitations of modern state sovereignty in refugee protection but also offers a vision for a more just, compassionate approach to global migration. It highlights Albania’s interreligious dialogue, which fosters a culture of tolerance and mutual respect, as a crucial context for the development of besa as a moral imperative. The hosting of Jewish refugees by Albanians during World War II serves as a powerful historical example of interfaith solidarity and ethical action in times of crisis.

This paper was co-authored by Lorela Shehu from Boston University.

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Transnationalisation et identité(s) des Églises évangéliques brésiliennes au Portugal : une étude de cas de l'Église évangélique Assemblée de Dieu de Pernambuco – IEADPE

Jonas Pereira De Oliveira Júnior | Université catholique de Louvain

Cette étude porte sur l'identité et le processus de transnationalisation de l'Eglise Evangélique l'Assemblée de Dieu du Pernambouc (IEADPE) au Portugal, de 2010 à 2024. L'étude cherche à comprendre comment l'IEADPE, l'une des plus grandes églises évangéliques brésiliennes, s'est adaptée au contexte portugais et quelle influence elle a eue sur la scène religieuse locale. La transnationalisation religieuse, en particulier parmi les églises évangéliques brésiliennes, est un phénomène croissant et complexe.

En s'implantant au Portugal, l'IEADPE s'inscrit dans ce mouvement, cherchant à évangéliser et à renforcer sa communauté dans un nouveau contexte culturel et religieux. L'étude, de nature qualitative, combine une revue de la littérature, une analyse documentaire et des entretiens avec des pasteurs et des membres de l'église au Portugal. L'hypothèse centrale est que l'IEADPE s'inscrit dans le concept de « mission inversée », cherchant à revitaliser la foi chrétienne en Europe, un continent historiquement marqué par la religiosité mais confronté à des processus de sécularisation.

Les objectifs spécifiques de la recherche sont les suivants: 1) analyser les modèles de transnationalisation utilisés par l'IEADPE au Portugal; 2) étudier les stratégies d'évangélisation et de mission développées sur le territoire portugais; comprendre les adaptations culturelles de l'IEADPE au contexte portugais; 3) analyser la construction de l'identité religieuse des membres de l'IEADPE au Portugal, en tenant compte de leurs origines brésiliennes et du nouveau contexte d'insertion. Les résultats de cette recherche contribueront à une meilleure compréhension des processus de transnationalisation religieuse et de la dynamique des églises évangéliques brésiliennes à l'étranger, et alimenteront de futures études sur la religiosité dans des contextes transnationaux.

Immigration, Diversification of the Religious Landscape, and Relationship with Social and Political Systems

Helena Vilaça | University of Porto

Portugal still today constitutes one of the solid Catholic monopolies in Europe. Immigration flows have always been the main factor in the religious diversification of Portuguese society. The first moment occurred only in the 19th century with foreign residents, mostly British bourgeois Protestant elites, who began to evangelize the Portuguese population. Faced with the lack of freedom, the first protagonists of Portuguese Protestantism became actively involved in politics against the monarchical regime and occupied pivotal positions in the advent of republicanism in 1910. The second moment of religious diversity began with the democratic revolution of 1974 and was again associated with the presence of immigrants but with a different sociological profile: immigrants from former colonies, Brazil, and, from the 1990s, Eastern European countries, and Asian and African countries, predominantly employed in labor-intensive sectors, with great precariousness and low education. In this process, some groups restrict their claim to their rights to their ethno-religious identity. Others, however, are competitive and their aim is to reach the entire social context with their message. In the latter case, evangelicals are included, mainly (neo) Pentecostal or charismatic Brazilians and other evangelicals from the global south who also assume political protagonism, both in conservative and left-wing parties.

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PS 5.7

Does Secularism Still Exist? (1)*Est-ce que la laïcité existe encore? (1)*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**David Koussens** | Université de Sherbrooke**Kiyonobu Date** | University of Tokyo**Laicism Exists. The Uruguayan Case****Nestor Da Costa** | Catholic University of Uruguay**Laïcité face à la sécularisation : contribution oubliée des protestants à la défense de la laïcité dans le Japon d'après-guerre****Hiroki Tanaka** | Université Meiji**Processus de sécularisation dans les pays à majorité musulmane : le cas du Royaume du Maroc****Mohammed Khalid Brandalise Rhazzali** | University of Padova**La laïcité organisée en Belgique francophone, est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit?****David Koussens** | Université de Sherbrooke

Laicism Exists. The Uruguayan Case

Nestor Da Costa | Catholic University of Uruguay

Uruguay is a small Latin American country that experienced early secularization, leading to the separation of the Catholic Church and the state at the beginning of the 20th century. This process significantly influenced local culture and politics, often exhibiting anti-religious and, at times, Jacobin characteristics.

These tendencies persist today, manifesting in some instances as “dogmas of faith” that challenge the presence of religion in the public sphere, particularly among governing elites. While many transformations occur at the micro level, none question secularism as a foundational principle for democratic coexistence.

The presentation will outline key milestones in this historical process up to the present day, providing insight into long-term trends and emerging developments.

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Laïcité face à la sécularisation : contribution oubliée des protestants à la défense de la laïcité dans le Japon d'après-guerre

Hiroki Tanaka | Université Meiji

À quels changements la laïcité est-elle face au XXI^e siècle ? Pour répondre à cette question, il est nécessaire de remonter à son histoire. Si les historiens de la laïcité ont réussi de mettre en évidence la contribution protestante à l'élaboration de la laïcité française, le rôle essentiel joué par les protestants à la défense de la laïcité dans le Japon d'après-guerre reste encore méconnu. En explorant les publications des associations protestantes et diverses archives, cette communication met en lumière leur influence significative dans le mouvement anti-Yasukuni des années 1960–70, ainsi que la spécificité de leur approche triangulaire, juridique, historique et théologique, pour légitimer la séparation de l'État et des religions : tout en partageant la valeur universelle de la liberté de conscience, et en se référant à la mémoire douloureuse du régime d'avant-guerre, deux arguments communs à de nombreux groupes sociaux revendiquant la défense de la laïcité, les protestants ont également invoqué une justification théologique distincte. Cette approche pluridimensionnelle explique leur mobilisation disproportionnellement intense par rapport à leur statut ultra-minoritaire dans l'archipel nippon. Cependant, depuis plusieurs décennies, le déclin des institutions religieuses, accentué notamment par le vieillissement de la population, a entraîné la disparition des anciens leaders protestants du mouvement anti-Yasukuni et une érosion de la dynamique qui animait leur engagement en faveur de la laïcité. Nous proposons une hypothèse selon laquelle cette sécularisation, qui réduit l'influence protestante dans la lutte pour la séparation, explique, au moins partiellement, la mutation profonde de la laïcité dans le Japon contemporain.

Processus de sécularisation dans les pays à majorité musulmane : le cas du Royaume du Maroc

Mohammed Khalid Brandalise Rhazzali | University of Padova

« Le Maroc est un pays laïc », une déclaration faite par le ministre des Habous et des Affaires islamiques lors d'une audition à la Chambre des députés le 25-11-2024, a provoqué un débat sans précédent et polarisé dans la sphère publique et dans les cercles politiques et médiatiques. Cette déclaration, qui fait référence à ce que ce ministre a affirmé lors d'un entretien avec le ministère français de l'Intérieur sur la gestion politique du religieux concernant les Marocains de la diaspora, à l'occasion de la visite du président Macron, a suscité de nombreuses réactions de la part de divers acteurs politiques et leaders d'opinion. Ces derniers ont fortement rejeté la caractérisation laïque de l'État marocain, en se référant à la musulmanité de l'identité de la société marocaine et à la relation historique et sociale particulière entre la religion islamique et la sphère politique.

Le débat animé qui s'en est suivi est significatif parce qu'il met en évidence un plan de réalité empirique qui peut nourrir avec de nouveaux éléments les hypothèses du débat scientifique qui observent que même les sociétés à majorité musulmane sont affectées par les processus de sécularisation et de laïcisation. L'objectif de notre contribution est donc d'illustrer, à travers un long séjour sur le terrain, comment sur la base du paradoxe d'un État comme le Maroc, qui, bien que défini par son appartenance religieuse islamique, se trouve pleinement engagé dans la sécularisation.

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La laïcité organisée en Belgique francophone, est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit?

David Koussens | Université de Sherbrooke

Est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit? Si la question peut être posée pour ce qui concerne la caractérisation des aménagements politiques et juridiques de la diversité religieuse dans les démocraties libérales contemporaines, elle est également pertinente pour réfléchir à la « laïcité organisée » en Belgique francophone. La laïcité organisée correspond à un regroupement d'humanistes, de libres-penseurs et d'athées fondé en 1969 dans le but de promouvoir la « laïcité philosophique » et de dispenser des services d'assistance morale auprès de ceux qui s'identifient aux idéaux humanistes. Elle bénéficie depuis 2002 d'une reconnaissance et d'un financement publics jusque-là réservés par la Constitution belge à quelques cultes spécifiquement désignés. S'appuyant sur l'analyse de l'offre convictionnelle et rituelle de ce regroupement, cette communication interroge la pertinence contemporaine des catégories juridiques traditionnelles de reconnaissance des cultes et des organismes philosophiques non confessionnels en Belgique. Elle propose ainsi de réfléchir sur ce qu'est le culte, la religion, et par extension sur ce à quoi correspond la laïcité dans la Belgique contemporaine.

Youth and Religion

Jeunesse et religion

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / *Salle*

220, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Malki Poryes | Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Chair / *Discutant*

Gintarė Pocė | Vytautas Magnus University

How to Keep Young People Informed and Engaged about Religion: An Analysis of Albanian Students

Anila Sulaj | Agricultural University of Tirana

Religious 'Nones' among Italian and Uruguayan Youth: Spirituality, Pluralism, and Liberal Values in a Comparative Perspective

Olga Breskaya | University of Padova

Valentina Pereira Arena | Catholic University of Uruguay

"Take Evolution Theory, Mix it with God, and Religiously Speaking, You Are all Set:" Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Youth Negotiating Religious and Social Taboos

Malki Poryes | Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Conceptual Meaning-Making and Negotiations on Culture and Christianity among Finnish Nonreligious Young Adults

Tiina Parkkinen | University of Helsinki

How to Keep Young People Informed and Engaged about Religion: An Analysis of Albanian Students

Anila Sulaj | Agricultural University of Tirana

The role of religion in shaping societal values and individual identity is significant, yet engaging young people with religious knowledge has become increasingly challenging in modern, secularizing context. This is particularly evident in Albania, a country where religion intersects with a complex cultural history, young people's engagement offers valuable insights into navigating diverse educational environments. The study investigates strategies for enhancing religious awareness and engagement among Albanian youth, connecting these findings to broader questions about education, migration, and cultural diversity. It seeks to understand how religious education can adapt to the realities of superdiverse classrooms where migration and cultural pluralism shape learning experiences. The research uses qualitative and quantitative approaches, incorporating surveys and interviews with Albanian students aged 18–26 enrolled in public and faith-based universities. Preliminary results indicate that many young people value religion as a cultural and ethical framework but find traditional methods of religious education outdated. Digital tools and interactive methods are particularly effective, highlighting their potential to address engagement challenges in both Albanian and broader migrant contexts. To keep young people informed and engaged with religion, a shift toward innovative, technology-driven methods is important. Religious institutions and educators can foster a deeper, meaningful connection to religious knowledge by addressing the preferences and needs of Albanian students.

Religious ‘Nones’ among Italian and Uruguayan Youth: Spirituality, Pluralism, and Liberal Values in a Comparative Perspective

Olga Breskaya | University of Padova

Valentina Pereira Arena | Catholic University of Uruguay

To what extent do religious Nones embrace spirituality, support religious pluralism, and advocate for a broader spectrum of liberal values, such as gender equality and gay rights? This paper addresses these questions using primary data collected from a comparative study of Nones (n=844) among Italian and Uruguayan youth. The findings suggest that, regardless of cultural context—whether in predominantly Catholic Italy or more secular Uruguay—young Nones demonstrate a notable endorsement of spiritual identity, hold diverse beliefs, and engage in religious practices to varying degrees.

In Uruguay, Nones exhibit stronger expressions of spiritual identity and higher levels of religious belief and practice compared to their Italian counterparts. Additionally, a significant portion of Nones in both countries embrace religious pluralism and demonstrate tolerance toward diverse religions. Atheism is more prevalent among Italian Nones, while agnosticism constitutes a larger proportion within the Uruguayan sample. This socio-religious portrait of Nones is discussed alongside their perceptions of gender equality and gay rights, examining the extent to which “being a None” reflects a convergence of religious, pluralistic, and liberal values and principles.

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"Take Evolution Theory, Mix it with God, and Religiously Speaking, You Are all Set:" Israeli Ultra-Orthodox Youth Negotiating Religious and Social Taboos

Malki Poryes | Ben Gurion University of the Negev

Modern society often marks adolescence by self-exploration (Arnett, 2024). However, for Jewish ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) youth, the transition to adulthood is brief, focused on religious stability through early marriage (Nadan et al., 2019; Gersoni et al., 2024). This study examines how Haredi youth navigate this unique coming-of-age process, challenging Western youth studies' universality.

With limited space for identity exploration, the internet has emerged as a crucial outlet for young Haredim. This research investigates how the Facebook group Confessions of Haredim (CoH) serves as a platform for identity negotiation and taboo discussions, despite strict community prohibitions on internet use for adolescents (Mishol-Shaul & Golan, 2022). CoH, with over 6,000 members—many using pseudonyms—offers a space to question traditional norms and explore controversial topics like evolution, heresy, and sexuality.

Using online ethnography and discourse analysis, the study analyzed 1,000 posts and in-depth discussions from CoH (May 2022–September 2024). It explores how posts reflect personal positioning within the community, while responses engage in boundary work, reinforcing or challenging Haredi norms.

This research reveals how young Haredim construct a "DIY Orthodoxy" by balancing modern influences with traditional values. By engaging with taboo topics online, they negotiate a hybrid identity that adapts Haredi life to contemporary realities, fostering a reimagined Orthodoxy.

Conceptual Meaning-Making and Negotiations on Culture and Christianity among Finnish Nonreligious Young Adults

Tiina Parkkinen | University of Helsinki

Recently, the study of nonreligion has directed attention to young age cohorts – their values, identities and (un)beliefs. However, less is known about how nonreligious young adults understand and discuss various (non)religious, spiritual and societal concepts. This inquiry is especially significant when considering the role of conceptual categorisations in shaping the growing field of nonreligion. My research aims to answer this need using concept-based solicitation interviews of 30 nonreligious young adults, analysed abductively. The focus is on Finland, where previous research has characterised nonreligion as 'a new normal' among contemporary youth and young adults. Moreover, contemporary young adults have also been discussed in the context of the weakening of Lutheranism's cultural role, and the relationship between Christianity and cultural heritage has recently sparked a controversy in the Finnish public discourse. Drawing from 'cultural religion' (Demerath 2000) and 'believing in belonging' (Day 2011), this empirically focused paper centres on how nonreligious young adults ascribe meanings to Christianity and Finnishness. Based on my ongoing analysis, I will demonstrate the ways in which nonreligious young adults challenge the Finnish norm of 'habitual Christianity' (tapakristillisyyt) and how their conceptual meaning-making and negotiations intertwine with broader political challenges in a changing society.

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PS 5.9

Religion and Social Polarization: Gender, Health and Reproduction*Religion et polarisation sociale : genre, santé et reproduction*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Lise Eriksson** | Åbo Akademi University**Situating Cross-National Perspectives on Abortion Disapproval: Examining the Role of Religion in China, the United States and Across the Globe****Amy Adamczyk** | City University of New York, John Jay College and The Graduate Center**The Depolitization of Abortion in Denmark****Lene Maria Kühle** | Aarhus University**La mise en affaire des violences sexuelles sur mineures dans l'Église catholique : la recherche comme élément de réponse au scandale****Josselin Tricou** | Université de Lausanne

Situating Cross-National Perspectives on Abortion Disapproval: Examining the Role of Religion in China, the United States and Across the Globe

Amy Adamczyk | City University of New York, John Jay College and The Graduate Center

Cross-national views about abortion vary substantially around the world. While in some nations, abortion is seen as a controversial moral topic, in others it is viewed as a medical technology issue that offers an important means of population control and family planning. The vast majority of research that has been done on the factors shaping abortion disapproval has been completed in Christian-majority nations. These studies show that residents who feel that religion is important are more likely to disapprove of abortion. Likewise, in societies with higher overall levels of religiosity, residents on average are more opposed. Very little research attention has been given to abortion disapproval in countries without Judeo Christian histories.

This study draws on cross-national World Values Survey data to establish the link between religion and attitudes across the globe. I then use interviews from 40 informants (e.g., religious leaders, abortion doctors, journalists, academics, etc.) from China and the United States to better understand how residents see abortion, the role of religion, and other factors shaping perspectives. The two countries have contrasting religious contexts, which help illuminate similarities and differences. The United States has a Christian majority and highly religious population. Conversely, Buddhism is the dominant religion in China, which has low overall levels of religious belief. The findings offer fascinating insight into how abortion, personhood, and morality are framed in these different contexts.

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The Depolitization of Abortion in Denmark

Lene Maria Kühle | Aarhus University

Abortion was legalized in Denmark in 1973, marking a significant milestone as the first Western country to integrate abortion access as a statutory right within its national health system. Initially controversial, this legislation led to the formation of the Christian People’s Party. Over the decades, a consensus emerged, and by 2023, with the Christian People’s Party ceasing its opposition, no parliamentary platforms remained for abortion critics. This was however not unexpected for anti- abortionists, which only constitute a small fraction of the population, they had long turned to other ways of making their voices heard, however mainly unsuccessfully. In 2024, Denmark enacted the most radical change to its abortion laws since 1973, prompted by the 50th anniversary of free abortion and the 2022 overturn of Roe v. Wade. Based on material from parliamentary debates and actions of pro- and anti-abortion groups, this paper discusses how abortion rights became largely de-politicized in Denmark. It will further discuss whether this also represents a de-religionization of a topic, which is often considered to be a key issue for religions.

La mise en affaire des violences sexuelles sur mineures dans l'Église catholique : la recherche comme élément de réponse au scandale

Josselin Tricou | Université de Lausanne

Depuis la fin des années 1980, les cas de violence sexuelle sur personnes mineures impliquant des représentants religieux sont de plus en plus médiatisés et dénoncés. Cette mise à l'agenda médiatique et social croissante s'est principalement concentrée sur les violences perpétrées au sein de l'Église catholique romaine et sur leur dissimulation par sa hiérarchie. Dans ce contexte, plusieurs pays ont mis en place des commissions d'enquêtes indépendantes, à l'initiative de l'État ou des instances catholiques elles-mêmes, pour évaluer l'ampleur et caractériser le phénomène. En France, une telle commission a été installée le 13 novembre 2018 sous la présidence de Jean-Marc Sauvé. Un des points forts de cette commission est de s'être associée des équipes de recherche professionnelle, et surtout des sociologues, pour nourrir son expertise et son diagnostic. Or, la sociologie fait peur, car, sans nier les responsabilités individuelles, elle met en question les structures et les cultures loin du préjugé rassurant et défensif qui consiste à pointer du doigt la responsabilité de quelques « brebis galeuses » qui se seraient infiltrées dans un système sain et une institution sainte par ailleurs. Quand la recherche scientifique est appelée à la rescousse pour participer au règlement d'un problème social sur fond de scandale, et surtout quand ses diagnostics viennent percuter les « prénotions » d'acteurs et actrices engagés, il faut accepter qu'elle s'insère elle-même dans une chaîne d'accusations scandaleuses ou scandalisées, et puisse faire, elle qui était initialement convoquée pour participer à la résorption du scandale, l'objet d'un retournement en affaire, c'est-à-dire devenir à son tour objet de scandale.

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PS 5.10

Religion, Polarization and Political Crises*Religion, polarisation et crises politiques*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateur(s) de la session**Thierry Maire** | CEMCA**Sabrina Pastorelli** | CNRS**Chair / Discutant****Thierry Maire** | CEMCA**Politicization of Sharia in Western Jurisdictions****Guilherme Lima Vasconcelos Lira** | Corvinus University of Budapest**State, Church and Religious and Populist Semantics of Political Narratives During a Political Crisis in Contemporary Georgia****Sophie Zviadadze** | Ilia State University**Nations at War in Côte d'Ivoire: The Kingdom of God vs the Kingdom of the Law (2000–2010)****Jacques Ngimbous** | Boston College

Politicization of Sharia in Western Jurisdictions

Guilherme Lima Vasconcelos Lira | Corvinus University of Budapest

The establishment of Sha'ria Councils can be placed under a larger overarching debate of "Shariarization" of life where it is discussed to which extent some social aspects should be govern by religious principles (business, dietary needs and dispute settlement mechanisms), in Western societies, can be considered a good template to examine to which extent multicultural societies are effectively accommodating diversity (Cumper, 2014), especially Muslims, which engenders specific challenges and particularities (Moodod, 2007, Fukuyama, 2006), questioning strict secularization models, the public/private debate, and the accommodation of non-Western group traditions in a typical Western democratic setting.

In a context of populism, social and political polarization towards topics that cover co-existence of difference, particularly Muslims, such as immigration, integration, the use of headscarves, religious practices and household affairs of minority groups, the incorporation of Sharia in Western jurisdiction is a source of social debate and discussion, instigating social and political conflicts in terms of pressure groups (traditionalist, feminist, secularists, universalist to mention some), political parties, religious leaders and State figures.

Sharia in the West has been extensively problematized in Social Sciences as a matter of gender equality (Yuval-Davis, 1991; Bano, 2012; Ali, 2013; Wilson, 2010; Razack, 2007; Голованова & Golovanova, 2017), and in a more state-centric manner, legal technicalities examinations (McGoldrick, 2009; Helfand, 2011; Sandber & Cranmen, 2019; Голованова & Golovanova, 2017), we aim to analyze Sharia as a source of societal division, to establish how Sharia is being captured by politicians and political parties, journalists, and political commentators, strengthening populist discourses, and aligning and re-aligning social groups throughout the political spectrum. Therefore, we propose a content analysis to examine, in recent years, how Sharia is provoking different (mis-)alignments in different Western jurisdictions, particularly Britain, Canada, and the United States.

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State, Church and Religious and Populist Semantics of Political Narratives During a Political Crisis in Contemporary Georgia

Sophie Zviadadze | Ilia State University

The complex relationship between religion and politics in post-Soviet Georgia is evident in the controversial rapprochement between the state and the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC). This relationship is characterized by the use of religious narratives for political legitimation and the increasing visibility of religion in the public sphere. The 2024 pre-election period and the post-election crisis demonstrate that this dynamic continues to shape the intersection of politics and religion. However, these developments also reveal parallel societal trends, including attempts to critically reassess the role of religion in the public space. This presentation will examine how the state's political discourse has "adopted" international right-wing populist ideas alongside local nationalist sentiments, politicizing religious issues during the political crisis. Notably, the ruling party's 2024 pre-election program declared its intention to recognize the Georgian Orthodox Church as the state religion. A central theme of their campaign rhetoric was the portrayal of political opponents as "fighters against the Church and traditions."

The discussion will focus on the religious semantics in political narratives, the political themes the GOC's narratives, and its eclecticism within the context of social transformation. The general goal is to analyze how the Georgian case exemplifies the complexities of the political and religious fields in a post-Soviet state, situated within the broader spectrum of global and local developments. Furthermore, the presentation will explore how state's political discourse fabricates the right wing populism, "crisis of democracy," intertwining it with moral issues, the defense of traditions, and with that threats to the development of grassroots democracy.

Nations at War in Côte d'Ivoire: The Kingdom of God vs the Kingdom of the Law (2000–2010)

Jacques Ngimbous | Boston College

This paper examines the bloody collision that occurred in Côte d'Ivoire between two diametrically opposed conceptions of nationhood. For ten years (2000–2010), a civil war pitted supporters of a nation based on the primacy of soil against those who aspired to erect the nation solely on the pedestal of blood. The second group was largely supported by the Ivorian evangelical community. Evangelical preachers and prophets took up the cause, extolling a spiritually inspired nationalism. "Blood" and "faith in Christ" became interchangeable categories. The natives of Côte d'Ivoire were largely equated with God's chosen ones while "foreigners" were branded as impious and enemies of God. The war of conceptions of nationhood was explicitly transformed into a war between the Kingdom of God's defenders and the Kingdom of Law's subjects. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate that, in an African context marked by strong religiosity, certain interpretations of the Bible run the risk of being radical and essentialist. As a result, they fuel conflict by legitimizing violent actions carried out by political actors. In a religious space such as Côte d'Ivoire, where evangelical Christianity has the wind in its sails because of its rapid expansion, the positions taken by religious leaders sometimes contribute to stiffening the political lines of certain government officials. This paper also aims to prove that the nationalism defended by Ivorian evangelicals was a response to the radicalism of liberal nationalists who took up arms to defend an open and strictly legal conception of the nation. In Côte d'Ivoire, the war of nations was waged by radicals on two sides: armed legalists and aggressive autochtonists.

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PS 5.11

Religion, International Migration and Diversity (3)*Religion, migration internationale et diversité (3)*

Thursday, July 3rd | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Tuomas Martikainen** | University of Turku**The Religious Composition of the World's Migrants****Stephanie Kramer** and **Conrad Hackett** | Pew Research Center**Religion, Context, and Attitudes toward Migrants: Evidence from Europe****Kenneth Vaughan** | Texas Lutheran University**Assessing the Impact of Religiosity on Youth Migration: A Quantitative Study in South-Eastern Europe****Monica Roman** | Bucharest University of Economic Studies**Expats, Refugees and Workers: Religions and Migration in the European Scenario****Roberta Ricucci** | University of Turin

The Religious Composition of the World's Migrants

Stephanie Kramer and Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

The religious affiliations of international migrants (or the affiliations they're perceived to have) can impact everything from the decision to leave home to where they move and how they're received in a new country. Religion can operate as both a push and pull factor, but previous research on religion and migration from a global perspective is sparse.

We estimated the religious composition of international migrants around the world by origin and destination country pair by combining UN migrant stock estimates with 270 censuses and surveys, all conducted in destination countries, that include information on religious affiliation and country of origin. Using censuses and surveys, we were able to make direct estimates of religious compositions for 54% of the world's migrants as of 2020. For the other 46% of international migrants, we used four imputation methods to indirectly make these estimates with the best data available.

Our results showed that, globally, nearly half of international migrants are Christians (47%), compared with an estimated 30% of the global population. Jews are the most likely to live outside their country of birth, with 20% of the global Jewish population living as immigrants. In general, people who belong to a minority religion in their origin country are more likely to have left. In many cases, the religious makeup of migrants is quite different from that of people who still live in the same origin country and from the overall population in the destination country. We discuss religious patterns for migrants within each region and provide details on the origins, destinations and most common routes for every studied religious group. The project also includes additional analyses on religion and migration in Europe, Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, India and the United States to provide greater depth and context for those areas.

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Religion, Context, and Attitudes toward Migrants: Evidence from Europe

Kenneth Vaughan | Texas Lutheran University

Research on Europe's illiberal turn increasingly points to nativism as the strongest predictor of authoritarian political preferences. Scholars also note that religion motivates some of the most important political cleavages at this moment. Still, our understanding of the nuances of how religion motivates attitudes toward immigrants is in its infancy, and the field remains characterized as mixed. Utilizing data from the European Social Survey, I find that religiosity generally motivates liberal attitudes toward migrants, however, this result is most consistent for religious minorities. National rates of religiosity have more complicated effects and point toward a group position model of anti-immigrant hostilities. I conclude with a discussion of secularization and how comparative case studies will better help scholars understand the pathways away from nativist hostilities available to religious and secular nations alike.

Assessing the Impact of Religiosity on Youth Migration: A Quantitative Study in South-Eastern Europe

Monica Roman | Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Religion plays a central role in the lives of many young people who migrate, offering a framework of moral, spiritual, and social support. Religious communities often serve as spaces for socialization and emotional support, helping to mitigate the negative effects of migration, such as loneliness and cultural alienation. At the same time, the experience of migration can lead to changes in religious behavior, participation in religious life, or even fundamental beliefs. This study aims to investigate the interaction between youth migration and religious behavior. It analyzes the motivations behind migration, how young people relate to religion in the context of migration, and the impact of religious behavior on migration intentions and experiences. The research employs a quantitative approach, using survey data collected from Romania and other South-Eastern European countries, based on a large sample of 10,900 young respondents aged 18–29.

We use a set of binary and ordinal regression models to assess the role of various individual factors, such as social status, age, gender, education, and attachment to the country of origin. Additionally, we hypothesize that religious diversity at the country level may influence how migration is affected by religiosity.

The results highlight notable country-level differences in the relationship between religiosity and migration. For instance, the effect of religiosity on migration is significant in countries like Kosovo and Albania but not statistically significant in countries like Romania or Bulgaria.

This paper was co-authored by Glorianne Borg Axisa from the University of Malta.

Expats, Refugees and Workers: Religions and Migration in the European Scenario

Roberta Ricucci | University of Turin

The issue of how faith, ethnicity and acculturation are related has been of great importance since the beginning of the so-called “refugee crisis”, as some European states have put up signs saying that only “Christian” refugees are welcome. Moreover, the strong Europeanization of migratory flows and the increasing mobility within the EU have shown the importance of considering not only the Muslim presence in the European scenario but also others.

Religiosity is very much alive among the various group of migrants, as evidenced by the various religious centers (mosques, musallas, chapels, temples). Thanks to a qualitative study conducted in 2022–2024, we’ll compare and contrast the religious identity of different immigrant groups (expats, refugees, labor migrants and their descendants) in Germany and Italy: Qualitative interviews and focus groups with religious leaders, policy makers and individuals (30 per group in both countries) will provide data to discuss how the religious landscape is changing in the face of current human mobility.

Parallel Sessions 6

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30
Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
6.1	Religion and Social Theory (2) <i>Religion et théorie sociale (2)</i>	002
6.2	Author Meets Critics: Global Islam and Consumer Culture <i>Islam mondial et culture de la consommation</i>	103
6.3	Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (3) <i>Religiosité : analyse des enquêtes quantitatives nationales et internationales (3)</i>	310
6.4	Religion and Gender in Public and Private Spheres <i>Religion et genre dans les sphères publiques et privées</i>	311
6.5	Measuring Religious Change (1) <i>Mesurer le changement religieux (1)</i>	102
6.6	Religion, International Migration and Diversity (4) <i>Religion, migration internationale et diversité (4)</i>	106
6.7	Politicizing Migration and Religion (2) <i>Politiser la migration et la religion (2)</i>	110
6.8	Visible Faith: Public Rituals, Digital Presence, and Civic Participation (1) <i>La foi visible : rituels publics, présence numérique et participation civique (1)</i>	220
6.9	Impacts of Increasing Nonreligion <i>Impacts de l'augmentation de la non-religion</i>	312
6.10	Working Group: The Religion and Social Exclusion CoE (RelEx): Preliminary Results <i>Le CdE Religion et exclusion sociale (RelEx) : résultats préliminaires</i>	313

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PS 6.1

Religion and Social Theory (2)*Religion et théorie sociale (2)*

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

002, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Titus Hjelm** | University of Helsinki**Lost in Translation? US “Congregations” and French “Religious Institutions”****Béatrice de Gasquet** | Université Paris Cité**The Epistemology of Magic: The Body and Spiritual Knowledge****Mary Jo Neitz** | University of Missouri**Epistemic Injustice and Social Studies on Religion****Dorota Hall** | Polish Academy of Sciences

Lost in Translation? US “Congregations” and French “Religious Institutions”

Béatrice de Gasquet | Université Paris Cité

In order to analyze conflict and change, sociologists growingly resort to meso-sociological rather than macro or micro-sociological explanations. Among sociologists of religion, the typical way of looking at meso-sociological levels has been to focus on “congregations” in the US, on “religious institutions” in France. In both cases, these words are not exactly theories, but they deeply shape the default-view of religion, even when theorists try and “decenter” them. What can be dubbed “methodological congregationalism” has been analyzed as a US- and Protestant-centered way of looking at religious practice: it conveys the ideal of voluntary organizations, freely chosen, locally-based, and self-governed. In France, where Catholicism has for long shaped the default-view of religion, “congregation” doesn’t translate as such. The closest equivalent would be the phrase “religious institution”, which, to the general public, tends to evoke the supposedly all-encompassing power of “the Catholic Church” in the past. Sociologist D. Hervieu-Léger thus spoke of “deinstitutionalization” to describe changes wrought by religious modernity. Both imaginaries, and their accompanying theoretical and methodological debates, do not translate well. Neither do they suffice in understanding the organizational dimension of religious conflicts, which rarely occur solely or primarily within worship spaces, nor typically pit “institutions” against “individuals”. This paper is based on research on conflicts and change around gender in contemporary French Judaism. In this context, synagogues are not the main site of contention. Rather, change happens in interstitial spaces that exist only because Orthodox Judaism functions as a transnational organizational field where a multiplicity of organizations (some of them non-religious) are more or less strictly connected. These loose connections are used as “wiggle room” by women.

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The Epistemology of Magic: The Body and Spiritual Knowledge

Mary Jo Neitz | University of Missouri

Many liberal 20th century Second Wave feminists were influenced by Simone De Beauvoir's discussion of secularization as a sign of progress and gender equality (De Beauvoir 1949). However, scholars, activists, and popular writers have questioned assumptions about pervasive secularization or its importance in facilitating social equality. Donna Haraway's groundbreaking work confronts the dualistic thinking that frames binaries such as nature/culture, purity/pollution, self/other, male/female, civilized /primitive. Her analyses of cyborgs (1985) and primate science (1989) challenge the ontology of thought that reflects divisions between humans and animals and humans and machines.

Along with other transnational feminists, Vietnamese writer and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha renounced the progress narrative. In her 1989 book, *Woman, Native, Other* Trinh reframed the enlightenment as an "endarkenment." Feminist critiques of colonialist discourse developed a logic that challenged binaries. In a forthcoming chapter in *The Witch Studies Reader* (Duke University Press) Miriam Goldman and I extend this critique to the magic/religion binary. We bring this critical conversation within feminism to bear on widespread academic marginalization of magic examining how western social scientists and religious studies scholars separated magic from religion and dismissed magic. We critique this colonial project. We explore the work of three queer feminists of color, starting with Gloria Anzaldua's foundational work, then moving to Jacqui Alexander and Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley. This paper extends this work by examining practices in which the body provides a tool for accessing knowledge, especially for subordinated people. Magic offers an expitmology, a way of knowing; through spiritualized labor, the body becomes a medium for the divine and a pathway to knowledge.

The paper suggests that placing magic as a central element in conceptions of religion disrupts the religion /secular binary and adds nuanced perspectives about religion, race, gender, and power. Moving away from old definitions of magic as evil, bad science, or primitive religion, sociologists of religion might reconsider how magic is a part of religion. The essentially pragmatic quality of magical practices oriented toward the experiential seems particularly suited to 21st century.

Epistemic Injustice and Social Studies on Religion

Dorota Hall | Polish Academy of Sciences

In her seminal book, Miranda Fricker (2007) conceptualized epistemic injustice as ‘a wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower’ and introduced notions of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. The first consists in the prejudice-driven denigration of someone’s credibility, and the other results from the structural prejudice that blocks the development of interpretive resources allowing all people equally to make sense of their social experiences and articulate them. Before Fricker, critical race theorists and feminist scholars offered a developed reflection on epistemic aspects of oppression and domination. Recent scholarship on epistemic injustice combines the Fricker’s account with these research traditions (Pohlhaus, Jr. 2012), and comments on numerous forms of epistemic oppression, including testimonial quieting and smothering (Dotson 2011) or epistemic exploitation (Berenstain 2016), as well as possibilities for epistemic resistance (Medina 2013). Social scientists interested in various areas of the social (in particular, justice system, healthcare) have found the epistemic injustice framework useful for uncovering epistemic wrongs done to marginalized people and highlighting structural ignorance typical of dominant groups. Sociological studies of religion employing these lenses are still very rare. This paper puts forward questions inspired by the epistemic injustice scholarship that can be asked by sociologists of religion interested in delving deeply into power relations involving religion. In particular, it focuses on how to use these lenses to highlight injustices and epistemic wrongs done to religious minorities and to regular believers within a church of strongly hierarchical organization, such as the Roman Catholic Church. It lays the foundations for the development of epistemic geographies of religion.

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PS 6.2

Author Meets Critics: Global Islam and Consumer Culture

Islam mondial et culture de la consommation

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**François Gauthier** | Université de Fribourg**Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants****Giuseppe Giordan** | University of Padova**Marian Burchardt** | Leipzig University**Lene Maria Kühle** | Aarhus University**Birgit Krawietz** | Freie Universität Berlin

This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **The Routledge International Handbook of Global Islam and Consumer Culture**, edited by Birgit Krawietz and François Gauthier.

*Il s'agit d'une séance de rencontre entre auteurs et critiques pour le livre **The Routledge International Handbook of Global Islam and Consumer Culture**, édité par Birgit Krawietz et François Gauthier.*

Religiosity: Analysis of International and National Quantitative Surveys (3)

Religiosité: analyse d'enquêtes quantitatives internationales et nationales (2)

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Jörg Stolz | University of Lausanne

David Voas | University College London

Measuring Country-Level Religiosity: Exploring Predictive Power Across Social Attitudes

Andrea Turković and **Francesco Molteni** | University of Milan

Expanding the Dataset of Integrated Measures of Religiosity (DIM-R+)

Piotr Laskowski | University of Białystok

National and Religious Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Population Attitudes

Gergely Rosta | Pázmány Péter Catholic University

Examining the Types of Changes in Religious Identity Among Taiwanese People

Gang-Hua Fan | Soochow University

Measuring Country-Level Religiosity: Exploring Predictive Power Across Social Attitudes

Andrea Turković and Francesco Molteni | *University of Milan*

In contemporary Europe, secularization presents a widely studied social phenomenon, characterized by decreasing religious affiliation, attendance, and belief. While well-discussed, there is no consensus on measurement and empirical definition of these processes. This paper examines the complexity of secularization, focusing on both its measurement and its relationship with social attitudes. Secularization is a context-dependent phenomenon, with diverse manifestations and multifaceted ties to social attitudes. Religious beliefs and identities activate differently depending on the attitude in question; some are rooted in scripture and dogma, while others rely on instrumentalized forms of religion as a source of group identity and othering rather than as a belief system.

Secularization also varies in how it shapes relationships with social attitudes across contexts. Previous research lacks standardized measures of secularization and detailed examination of its relationship with other phenomena. This study addresses these gaps by analysing the predictive power of contextual-level measures of religiosity in shaping social and religious attitudes across European countries, using data from the fifth wave of the European Values Study (2022) across 36 countries. We examine attitudes toward immigration, abortion, gender equality, and several dimensions of individual religiosity, alongside four contextual measures: the country-level average importance of religion, the proportion of affiliated individuals, an aggregated religiosity index, and the Government Religious Preference Index (Brown, 2020).

We assess which contextual-level variable serves as the best predictor for each dependent variable. Additionally, we evaluate which dependent variables are most effectively explained by each contextual measure. Moreover, we explore the conceptual overlap and distinctiveness of these contextual measures by analysing their intercorrelations and theoretical implications. The ultimate aim is to identify optimal measures of secularization for each of the research questions and move toward standardizing the measurements of country-level secularization.

By estimating separate multilevel regression models for each combination of dependent and contextual-level variables, we use effect significance, size and model fit as indicators of predictive power. Finally, we consider the role of religious-historical contexts, acknowledging differences in the manifestations and pace of secularization, particularly in understudied Orthodox countries.

Expanding the Dataset of Integrated Measures of Religiosity (DIM-R+)

Piotr Laskowski | University of Białystok

The DIM-R+ dataset combines the results of major international social surveys: European Social Survey (ESS), European Values Study (EVS), World Values Survey (WVS) and International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). It aims to harmonise religious variables and beliefs about supernatural phenomena. The project combines information on participation in religious practices, statements of faith, religious affiliation and beliefs regarding supernatural beliefs (e.g. life after death, reincarnation, heaven, hell).

The dataset includes more than 1.35 million observations. A particular value of the project is the ability to analyse long-term trends across cohorts and countries. The project takes into account socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender or year of birth, which makes it possible to study the relationship between religiosity and other social factors. The standardisation of data allows advanced comparative analyses between countries and cultures.

In future stages, it is planned to use logistic regression models to fill data gaps and to further integrate socio-economic variables such as education level or place of residence. DIM-R+ is an important tool for researchers interested in the dynamics of religiosity and supernatural beliefs globally.

This paper was co-authored by Łukasz Kiszkiel and Konrad Talmont-Kaminski from the University of Białystok.

National and Religious Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparative Analysis of Population Attitudes

Gergely Rosta | Pázmány Péter Catholic University

What distinguishes many Central and Eastern European societies from most Western European countries is the newly inflamed question of the unity of nation and religion, a question that often goes back to conflicts that are centuries' old. Thus, the fact that so many people in Poland, Croatia and Lithuania, as well as in most Orthodox countries, feel that they belong to a denomination and describe themselves as religious can certainly be traced back to the fact that it is natural there for people, as "good" citizens of the country (or members of the corresponding ethnic group), to affirm their own church.

Our paper investigates the relationship between political ideals of unity and religious identity in East Central and Eastern Europe. A comparative secondary analysis of population surveys is designed to work out similarities and differences with regard to the support for different concepts of national belonging and identity at the country level, with the particular focus being on examining the extent to which national and denominational affiliations are interwoven. The paper will then examine at the individual level whether and to what extent notions of national affiliation are related to the churchliness and religiosity, as well as certain religious-political orientations, of the interviewees.

This paper was co-authored by Olaf Müller from the University of Münster.

Examining the Types of Changes in Religious Identity Among Taiwanese People

Gang-Hua Fan | Soochow University

There has been considerable discussion about the influence of religion on human life since the mid-20th century. On the one hand, some scholars claim that during the process of secularization, the authority and significance of religion in human society have continuously diminished. On the other hand, with the rise of globalization, competition and integration between Eastern and Western religions have become more frequent than ever. Although the number of regular churchgoers within institutionalized religions has gradually declined, some scholars argue that the public's desire for religion and spirituality has not diminished. Instead, religion has become a more privatized and individualized matter. Amid these academic debates, research on changes in individual religious identity has garnered increasing attention.

Most existing studies on this topic in Taiwan are small-scale and focus on qualitative research within single religious groups. Consequently, we lack a broader and more precise understanding of the dynamics of religious identity changes across religious types and the demographic and psychosocial factors influencing these changes in Taiwanese society. Therefore, this paper seeks to utilize the latest 2024 Taiwan Social Change Survey data to depict Taiwanese people's current religious identity changes. It also aims to compare the sociodemographic characteristics and levels of uncertainty between individuals whose religious identity has never changed and those whose identity has changed. Lastly, it categorizes the transitions experienced by individuals who have changed religious identity.

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PS 6.4

Religion and Gender in Public and Private Spheres*Religion et genre dans les sphères publiques et privées*

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Kati Tervo-Niemelä** | University of Eastern Finland**Jenni Spännäri** | University of Eastern Finland**Anna Salonen** | University of Eastern Finland**Marjukka Laiho** | University of Eastern Finland**Chair / Discutant****Jenni Spännäri** | University of Eastern Finland**Rise, Grind – and Pray? Religion in the Political Male Wellness Influencer Space****Tuomas Äystö** | University of Helsinki**Gendered Myths in Finnish Dairy Production: A Critical Approach****Jenna Kuronen** | University of Helsinki**Spirituality, Gender, and Indigenous Heritage: A Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Women's Holistic Practices Between Mexico and Switzerland****Manéli Farahmand** | University of Fribourg, CIC**Religion and Queerness in Contemporary Georgia: LGBTQIA+ Individuals Negotiate Their Faith****Salome Esebua** | Vytautas Magnus University

Rise, Grind – and Pray? Religion in the Political Male Wellness Influencer Space

Tuomas Äystö | University of Helsinki

From Andrew Tate to Jordan Peterson, digital mentors sell lifestyle advice and worldviews to online audiences of millions of boys and young men. They combine male grievances, reactionary politics, and sometimes also religion with a promise of money, sex, and power. Such influencers have built successful careers promoting it. Using an emerging method anthropologist James Francis Cerretani has dubbed “algorithmography” (a neologism combining “algorithm” and “ethnography”), I chart religion in the English-speaking content tailored for audiences engaging with such male wellness influencers. Highly gendered and politically charged worldviews emerge, and religion often plays a part. I zoom into how religion functions as a resource in constructing a model for masculine life. I also consider the potency of algorithmography as a method for the sociology of religion more broadly.

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Gendered Myths in Finnish Dairy Production: A Critical Approach

Jenna Kuronen | University of Helsinki

In Finland, milk is symbolically linked to concepts like health and family, yet this idealized view contrasts with the harsh realities of intensive farming. Dairy production focuses on maximizing cows' reproductive capacities for profit, often at the expense of their welfare. While mapping out the data for my research, I noticed how the dairy industry utilizes family farms and gender norms in its advertisements. Additionally, marketing materials portray cows in a feminized light, suggesting that the cows enjoy their role in the production process. These discourses are the focus of my paper. The main argument of the study is that these discourses can be interpreted and theorized as cultural myths. Employing a multifaceted approach that blends religious myth studies, gender studies, and critical animal studies, my study uses ethnographic methods to gather data from social media and marketing materials of Finnish dairy corporations. I will apply multimodal critical discourse analysis to examine normative discourses in the marketing strategies of dairy companies. This approach is key to understanding how language justifies the commodification of cows and reproduces gendered beliefs in society.

As in religions, food cultures are not primarily concerned with whether they are objectively true or not – they function as phenomena that represent cultures and values, which need narratives to maintain their relevance. Food culture is a diverse area of study for myth research because our perceptions of food are deeply linked to the structures and beliefs of our society. My research creates a new way of understanding Finnish food culture and the beliefs associated with it as mythological phenomena, highlighting their role in the construction and maintenance of power relations.

Spirituality, Gender, and Indigenous Heritage: A Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Women's Holistic Practices Between Mexico and Switzerland

Manéli Farahmand | University of Fribourg, CIC

This paper investigates the intersection of holistic practices, gender issues and power dynamics within women-centered spiritualities drawing on indigenous Latin American worldviews. Focusing on the concept of 'Mother Earth', as reflected in fieldwork conducted between Mexico and Switzerland, the paper aims to explore how this concept shapes gender perceptions and contributes to understanding transnational aspects. It demonstrates how, despite shared symbolic references, the settings in Switzerland and Mexico take on distinct tones due to different social and contextual dynamics. Using a socio-anthropological approach, the paper analyzes discourses on gender, with a particular focus on women's holistic health practices, including cacao ceremonies, Red Tents, and mestizas' women circles based in pre-Hispanic heritage. Finally, special attention is given to beliefs surrounding the 'womb' seen 'as the most powerful energy center in a woman', reflecting broader tensions between binary gendered neo-spiritual frames and LGBTQI+ issues, analyzing how organizers address these issues or navigate their 'discomfort' surrounding them.

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Religion and Queerness in Contemporary Georgia: LGBTQIA+ Individuals Negotiate Their Faith

Salome Esebua | Vytautas Magnus University

Queerness and religiosity are important and relevant issues in Georgia today. The largest religious organization, the Georgian Orthodox Church, not only plays a decisive role in the legal status of the LGBTQ+ community in Georgia but also significantly shapes public opinion towards the LGBTQ+ community, activism, and individuals.

This study delves into the interplay between religion and queerness in contemporary Georgia. It sheds light on the unique ways LGBTQIA+ individuals navigate their faith in the context of religious constraints. The study's findings, derived from a robust methodology of 34 in-depth interviews conducted with LGBTQIA+ individuals over three months, offer valuable insights into the agency of LGBTQIA+ religiosity, enriching our understanding of this complex intersection. The study extends the discussion to the intersections of gender, sexuality, and religiosity and analyzes how these dimensions shape the religious experiences of the participants. It particularly highlights the strategies LGBTQIA+ believers use to reconcile their spiritual and queer identities, such as reinterpreting faith on an individual level or practicing spirituality without institutional affiliation. The resilience and adaptability of the community are significant aspects of the study.

Measuring Religious Change (1)

Mesurer le changement religieux (1)

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session

Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

Has a Religious Revival Occurred in the Former Yugoslav States? Tracing Trends in Religiosity from 1987 to 2010

Maruša Bastardi | ISSR

Bound by Ties: How Church Embeddedness Mitigates Fee-induced Exits from Churches

Elis Carlberg Larsson | Linköping University

Questioning East Asian Religiosity through Surveys in Japan

Koki Shimizu | Doshisha University

Yoshihide Sakurai | Hokkaido University

Changes in the Relationship of Religiosity and Social Structure – the Effects of Education and Social Status in Germany from an International Perspective

Edgar Wunder and **Veronika Eufinger** | Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der EKD

Has a Religious Revival Occurred in the Former Yugoslav States? Tracing Trends in Religiosity from 1987 to 2010

Maruša Bastardi | ISSR

The nature and extent of religious change in the former Yugoslav states, particularly during and after the Balkan conflicts, has been a subject of considerable discussion. While there is consensus among scholars that some degree of religious revival took place in the post-socialist Western Balkans, opinions diverge on its scope. Some argue that this revival was more prominent at the institutional level than the individual level (Fazlic, 2011; Karčić, 1997), while others point to shifts in specific dimensions of religiosity rather than a uniform transformation (Müller, 2009). However, a systematic and comprehensive analysis of these changes using consistent metrics over time remains absent.

This research addresses this gap by investigating trends in religious affiliation, worship attendance, and belief in God across the former Yugoslav region from 1987 to 2010. The analysis draws on a wide array of data sources, including international surveys (WVS, EVS, ISSP, ESS, SEESSP), census data, and two cross-national Yugoslav studies (Klasno biće Jugoslovanskog društva 1987 and Društvena struktura i kvaliteta života 1989).

The results demonstrate a clear pattern of religious revival in all former Yugoslav states except Slovenia. Among these trends, the growth in belief in God emerged first and was the most pronounced, preceding increases in both religious affiliation and attendance. This paper offers several key contributions, most notably through the creation of a harmonized dataset spanning 1987 to 2010 and a detailed analysis of the nature and extent of this religious revival in the region.

Bound by Ties: How Church Embeddedness Mitigates Fee-induced Exits from Churches

Elis Carlberg Larsson | Linköping University

Membership fees have proven to be an important factor in individuals' decision to leave religious organizations. Church embeddedness can mitigate this trend as it fosters a sense of belonging, making the perceived cost from higher fees tolerable and the perceived social cost of leaving too high. In this study, I investigate these dynamics using panel data on the entire Swedish population from 2001 to 2022 and an individual fixed-effects design to estimate the effect membership fees have on individual decisions to leave the Church of Sweden. To examine the role of religious embeddedness, I test whether the previously estimated effect is moderated by the number of individuals in one's social network who are members of the same church. The results show that higher membership fees increase individuals' likelihood of leaving and that this effect is smaller for individuals who share social ties with many other members of the Church of Sweden. To assess the influence of these individual-level effects on the aggregate membership trajectory, I use the estimates as the technical core in an empirically calibrated agent-based model which is used to simulate different counterfactual scenarios. The results from the simulation model suggest that while the church fee is of importance for the observed membership decline of the Church of Sweden, the decline would have been far steeper without the mitigating effect of religious embeddedness.

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Questioning East Asian Religiosity through Surveys in Japan

Koki Shimizu | Doshisha University
Yoshihide Sakurai | Hokkaido University

This paper explores the unique features of religiosity in Japan and East Asia using data from the “Global East Survey of Religion and Spirituality,” conducted in 2024, along with findings from prior studies and two other nationally representative surveys conducted in 2017 and 2022. The study highlights several key insights that challenge conventional Western frameworks for understanding religion.

(1) The proportion of non-religious individuals in Japan varies significantly, ranging from 30% to 70%, depending on survey wording and context. This reflects the complexity of religious affiliation in Japan, which often occurs at the family rather than individual level. For example, many families affiliate with Buddhist temples primarily for ancestral veneration. (2) Pluralistic religious affiliation is also notable; while not the majority, many individuals engage with multiple religious traditions, both subjectively and formally. (3) Subjective affiliation with religious groups shows only a weak connection to belief in deities or the afterlife. Interestingly, even individuals identifying as atheists or non-religious often hold spiritual beliefs, visit religious sites, or maintain household altars.

(4) Practices such as participation in annual rituals, ancestral veneration, and shrine visits strongly correlate with religious beliefs, often more so than formal religious memberships. (5) many Japanese do not perceive these practices as inherently religious, instead describing them as cultural customs. Paradoxically, those who engage more frequently in such practices are more likely to view them as secular.

Finally, (6) despite its distinctiveness, Japanese religiosity exhibits parallels with Western contexts. Strong religious beliefs are associated with higher subjective well-being, though affiliation with religious organizations can sometimes negatively impact well-being. Additionally, traditional religious practices and beliefs have steadily declined since the 1970s, while privatized spiritual practices, such as fortune-telling, have gained popularity among younger generations.

By examining these findings, this paper underscores the limitations of applying Western-centric definitions of religion to the Japanese context and emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive methodologies. The comparison between Japanese and Western religiosity reveals both the unique features of Japanese religiosity and its shared functional roles, contributing to a deeper understanding of global religiosity.

Changes in the Relationship of Religiosity and Social Structure – the Effects of Education and Social Status in Germany from an International Perspective

Edgar Wunder and **Veronika Eufinger** | Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der EKD

Since 1972, the Church Membership Survey has been conducted in Germany every 10 years as the most comprehensive national survey on religiosity. The latest edition, published in 2024 (N=5282), concludes for the first time that the previously observed negative relationship between education and religiosity has disappeared. Simultaneously, the educated members of the church who actively participate in church life are significantly overrepresented. Not only the relationship between religiosity and education is reversed compared to former decades, but also the relationship between religiosity and social status in general. A detailed analysis demonstrates this for a model of twelve social milieus. The changing social base of religiosity in German society is accompanied by a steady and huge decline of religiosity in the population altogether, both for church and non-church religiosity.

In the first part of this lecture we reconstruct the course of this socio-structural rearrangement, its causes and the implications for the future of religion in Germany. In a second part we compare the German results to similar developments in other European countries, based on data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), ranging from 1984 to 2018. International comparisons confirm the tendency that higher education is associated with lower belief as a cognitive dimension of religion. However, when viewed globally, the relationship with collective religious practices, presents a heterogeneous picture (Sacerdote & Glaeser 2001), suggesting culture-specific differences in the social significance of religion (Schwadel 2015). Finally, we discuss theoretical implications of our results for modelling secularization.

PS 6.6

Religion, International Migration and Diversity (4)*Religion, migration internationale et diversité (4)*

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**Tuomas Martikainen** | University of Turku**Thai-Finnish Families in Finland: Family Structure, Economy and Children****Mitra Härkönen** | University of Helsinki**Tuomas Martikainen** | University of Turku**Intersections of Religion and Migration: Maternal Roles in Shaping Cultural and Religious Integration Across Generations****Ana Uka** | Western Balkans University**Bárbara Bäckström** | Universidade Aberta**Religion, Queer Migration and Heteronormativity: Narratives of Migrants Who Left and Arrived in Lithuania****Gintarė Pocė** | Vytautas Magnus University**Perceived Religious and Ethnic Discrimination in Swedish Health Care****Lise Eriksson** | Åbo Akademi University and Uppsala University

Thai-Finnish Families in Finland: Family Structure, Economy and Children

Mitra Härkönen | University of Helsinki

Tuomas Martikainen | University of Turku

Although not a new phenomenon, the number of transnational marriages has constantly grown due to increasing globalization and Internet communication. In recent years, the spouse of Finnish men who have married a foreign citizen has often been of a Thai background. Due to the prevalence of marriages between Finnish men and Thai women, the majority (nearly 83 %) of the more than 12,000 Thais living in Finland are women. The situation is similar in all Nordic countries, as well as in many other European countries.

Despite the prevalence of Thai-Western marriages, there has been a lack of research on Thai-Western transnational households and family lives. This paper utilizes recent statistical and ethnographic data to investigate Thai-Finnish families living primarily in Finland from three perspectives. First, it examines the family structure of the families. Second, it explores the division of labor both within the families and in the broader community. Finally, it looks into the children's experiences in these families, focusing on child-rearing practices and the socialization of children into different religious worldviews, including Buddhist, Christian, and others. The paper draws from and contributes to the social scientific study of migrant families and generations.

Intersections of Religion and Migration: Maternal Roles in Shaping Cultural and Religious Integration Across Generations

Ana Uka | Western Balkans University

Bárbara Bäckström | Universidade Aberta

This study investigates the critical role of mothers in the resettlement and integration processes of migrant families, emphasizing their contributions to emotional stability, educational involvement, and the preservation of cultural and religious identities. For the aim of this study N=39 articles were identified from two databases. Drawing upon a systematic review of empirical literature, the research elucidates how mothers, as primary caregivers, navigate the dual responsibilities of maintaining heritage traditions and facilitating adaptation to host societies. Employing an intersectional framework, the analysis examines how intersecting dimensions such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and migration status influence maternal roles and religious practices. Findings reveal that mothers function as cultural intermediaries, transmitting religious values while addressing structural barriers such as language acquisition, labor market access, and limited social support systems. Their roles are shown to be pivotal in mitigating polarization and fostering inclusion within diverse, often fragmented, societal contexts. This study contributes to the broader discourse on the intersections of religion, migration, and social identity by exploring how mothers' cultural identity and religious practices both challenge and accommodate societal fractures. By integrating gendered and age-based perspectives, the research offers insights into the multifaceted ways religion interacts with other social categories, reshaping integration processes in a post-pandemic, globalized world.

This paper was co-authored by Anila Sulaj from the University of Tirana and Gilda Seddighi from NORCE.

Religion, Queer Migration and Heteronormativity: Narratives of Migrants Who Left and Arrived in Lithuania

Gintarė Pocė | Vytautas Magnus University

Religion, queer migration, and heteronormativity influence each other in complex ways as they intersect through social norms, cultural expectations, and power structures. These social phenomena are deeply interconnected in ways that shape the experiences and identities of queer migrants. This paper argues that religion can be one of the main actors reproducing heteronormativity in a concrete society and, in this way, influencing queer migration processes. The paper draws on theoretical insights on the link between religion, heteronormativity and queer migration and the empirical data from semi-structured interviews with twenty migrants from different sociocultural contexts: ten queer migrants who left Lithuania and ten queer migrants who came to Lithuania from Georgia, Iraq, Cameroon, Russia, and Belarus. Using a comparative perspective, the paper attempts to understand how queer migrants from different sociocultural contexts perceive the role and the impact of religion on their migration processes.

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Perceived Religious and Ethnic Discrimination in Swedish Health Care

Lise Eriksson | Åbo Akademi University, Uppsala University

Health care is a relevant setting for studies on perceived discrimination in diverse societies, considering that health care institutions are public spaces, where religions, beliefs and values collide and are negotiated. This paper will analyse perceived religious and ethnic discrimination in relation to cultural and religious diversity in Swedish health care through interpretative phenomenological analysis of formal discrimination complaints submitted to the Equality Ombudsman in Sweden (DO) from 2012 to 2021. Our previous research found that complaints of perceived religious discrimination in Swedish healthcare were related to misunderstandings of cultural and religious practices, unequal treatment in relation to religious symbols or clothing, mention of religious affiliation in patient records, and affirmative action in medical treatment considering beliefs. This paper will continue analysing complaints of religious and ethnic discrimination particularly from a migration perspective, while also addressing methodological challenges and validity problems in discrimination research. Discrimination is perceived and defined in varying ways, vulnerable groups such as migrants may underreport discrimination, and there is a high burden of proof for an event to be interpreted as discrimination in court. The term perceived discrimination is relevant to understand subjective experiences of discrimination. Drawing on the Thomas theorem we conclude: if religious individuals or migrants define discriminatory situations as real, they are real in their consequences.

This paper was co-authored by Birgitta Essén from Uppsala University
and Aje Carlborn from Malmö University

Politicizing Migration and Religion (2)

Politisation, migration et religion (2)

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Paulina Polko | WSB University

Reflections on the Changing Political Narratives on Immigration in Latvia

Anita Stasulane | Daugavpils University

Religion as a Factor Determining Securitisation of Migration: Case Study of Poland

Paulina Polko | WSB University

Framing Representation about Migration During Election Times: A Comparative Analysis of Online Portals in Turkey, Croatia and Serbia

Anita Lunić | University of Split

Jasna Milošević Đorđević | Singidunum University

Reflections on the Changing Political Narratives on Immigration in Latvia

Anita Stasulane | Daugavpils University

This paper deals with the political narrative on immigration during the refugee crisis faced in 2015 and 2022 by examining two component categories: narrative form and narrative content. It focusses particularly on the narrative shift as a process driven by historical memory, values, and religion. During the refugee crisis of 2015 negative evaluation of immigration as a threat to the host state's national security, economic security, European values, Christian ethics, public order, safety and the fear of Islamization were used to capture attention of public and influence policy outcomes. The refugee crisis of 2022 has revealed the shift of the political narrative towards a more positive appreciation of immigration as a natural, human, and historical phenomenon with a reference to universal principles, and an emphasis on the benefits of immigration for host society. A key question about the political narrative on immigration is what the implicit assumptions behind narratives are.

Religion as a Factor Determining Securitisation of Migration: Case Study of Poland

Paulina Polko | WSB University

The paper aims to present the research results on the relation between the securitisation of migration processes in the context of the religion of the people in the move. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been implemented in the analysis of political discourse after 2015 related to migration and integration. Rita's Floyd Just Securitisation Theory has been used to justify securitisation processes in analysed cases. Results show that in the case of Muslim migrants, religion plays an important role in their perception and determines their unjust securitisation, while in the case of Christian migrants, religion is not perceived as a factor determining the perception of the immigrants or unjust securitization.

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Framing Representation about Migration During Election Times: A Comparative Analysis of Online Portals in Turkey, Croatia and Serbia

Anita Lunić | University of Split

Jasna Milošević Đorđević | Singidunum University

Introduction. This study analyzes the narratives from the two most-read online portals in each of the three selected countries: Turkey, Croatia, and Serbia, focusing on a period when political elections took place in those countries. The study particularly looks on the treatment of migration issues across different online media landscapes.

Method. Several key issues are analyzed including: visible authorship (full name, anonymous, editorial board, initials, or only first letters), how migration-related sentiments are framed (positive, negative, neutral), the themes covered in the articles (such as crime, safety, and political events), the variety of sources cited and used (including political perspectives), and the origin of migrants and the preferred destination discussed. Additionally, we analyzed technical areas including article size, the presence of multimedia content. The articles selected for this analysis were identified using several keywords: migrant, migrants, refugee, migration, and asylum seeker. The content analysis spans a four months' period, from the beginning of March to the end of June 2024, which coincides with the holding of political elections at various levels in all three countries. The content analysis itself was conducted between October and December 2024.

Results. This is still ongoing process. A descriptive analysis of the data, examining the results for each country individually, followed by a comparison of the key issues across all three nations will be presented. This study offers comparative insights into media practices framing public sentiment, and the role of political discourse in shaping the narratives surrounding migration.

This research is a result of COREnet COST action

This paper is co-authored by Zuhail Unalp Çepel from Dokuz Eylül University

Visible Faith: Public Rituals, Digital Presence, and Civic Participation (1)

La foi visible : Rituels publics, présence numérique et participation civique (1)

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

220, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Minoo Mirshahvalad | University of Copenhagen

Avi Astor | Autonomous University of Barcelona

Kagyu Monlam Chenmo: A Global Festival of Compassion, Tradition and Unity

Malwina Krajewska | Nicolaus Copernicus University

New Media Experiences of Gen Z Muslims

Daniel Nilsson DeHanas | King's College London

Exploring the Impact of Streaming on Sunday Mass Attendance in Poland

Wojciech Sadlon and Mateusz Grzyb | Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University

'Existential community' in Sacred Space. Emerging Nonreligious Collective Death Rituals in Public

Ida Marie Høeg | University of Agder

Kagyu Monlam Chenmo: A Global Festival of Compassion, Tradition and Unity

Malwina Krajewska | Nicolaus Copernicus University

This presentation explores the phenomenon of Kagyu Monlam Chenmo, an annual prayer festival of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. Rooted in centuries-old tradition, the festival unites diverse audiences in collective prayers for global peace and compassion. Through its large-scale public gatherings and digital initiatives, the Kagyu Monlam Chenmo exemplifies how religious communities adapt to an increasingly modernised and secularised world.

This analysis focuses on both physical and digital expressions of the festival, highlighting its engagement with a broad audience through the promotion of ideas of unity, love and compassion. Digital platforms, including livestreams and social media, have expanded the festival's reach to a global audience, enabling wider participation and fostering interfaith dialogue. Furthermore, the alignment of the festival with civic activism, in addition to its ongoing collaboration between the monastic and lay sangha on a global scale, underscores its role as a dynamic social institution that transcends traditional religious boundaries. This fosters collective action and solidarity in addressing global challenges, including social inequality, environmental degradation, and cultural preservation. This collaboration highlights festival's capacity to integrate diverse actors and perspectives, positioning it as a living example of how religious communities can actively contribute to the public sphere and navigate the intersections of tradition, modernity, and social change.

New Media Experiences of Gen Z Muslims

Daniel Nilsson DeHanas | King's College London

This paper investigates how Gen Z Muslims – who are members of the first generation born into a world with the internet – use new digital media to navigate their experiences at university. There are currently two dominant research traditions on contemporary Muslims: the first focusing on ‘domesticating Islam’ through ‘security, control and containment’ (Sunier 2014) and the second empathically attempting to understand how Muslims are affected by Islamophobia (e.g., Sayyid and Vakil 2011). In contrast, in this new research project I explore how members of Gen Z use new media for sources of motivation, spiritual meaning, and ‘Muslim joy’ (see Khan 2023). I argue that digital media do not create a separate world, but they instead enable young Muslims to engage in ‘augmented reality’ in which they bring new powers into public space (Jurgenson 2012). Taking theoretical inspiration from Michel de Certeau, I explain how new media augment Gen Z Muslims’ ‘tactical’ resources for navigating the various institutional and parental ‘strategies’ experienced during university. Digital media resources themselves (particularly TikTok, but also Instagram and X among others) enmesh young Muslims in a new ‘strategy’ of ‘the algorithm’, which adds another layer of complexity to how they attempt to seek a fulfilled life. In this paper I will present research findings from a London UK university campus, placing these in the context of a wider comparative project on Gen Z Muslims at University that was undertaken with colleagues at Australian Catholic University, Sydney.

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Exploring the Impact of Streaming on Sunday Mass Attendance in Poland

Wojciech Sadlon and **Mateusz Grzyb** | Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University

The broadcast of Catholic Mass in Poland began in 1927 with Radio Poznań and has since expanded to include television and, more recently, online streaming. This evolution has created a new reality for liturgical practices, particularly in digital and mediated spaces (Berger, 2018). The mediatization of the Catholic Mass has coincided with a significant decline in Sunday Mass attendance, which fell from 50% in the 1980s to 40% in the 1990s, and below 40% in the 2000s (Sadlon, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, streaming Masses enabled Catholics to participate in religious rituals virtually on an unprecedented scale. Today, many parishes continue to offer streaming as a complement to in-person services, engaging not only regular attendees but also those who are homebound or geographically distant. The Catholic Mass attendance rate in Poland decreased by one-fourth during the pandemic, a trend corroborated by survey data. This raises important questions about the long-term impact of online Mass streaming on in-person attendance and overall engagement with the Church.

This presentation explores the implications of digitalization for religious practices in Poland, focusing specifically on the impact of streaming services on Mass attendance. We present (1) survey and census data on physical and virtual Mass attendance over the past decade, alongside existing data on virtual participation. We share (2) findings from our initial research on the number of Catholic Masses transmitted online in the Polish language. This includes the total number of online channels, the distribution of subscriber counts, and the timeline of channel creation, particularly noting the surge in channels during the pandemic. We analyze viewership data from YouTube channels broadcasting Sunday Mass, highlighting the most influential contributors and the distribution of view counts. Furthermore, we examine audience patterns for these broadcasts from 27.10.2024 and 03.11.2024.

Our findings emphasize the role of “digital traces” (Latour, 2007; Salganik, 2018) – data generated as a by-product of online activities – in studying Mass attendance. We demonstrate that online streaming contributes to the digitalization and “eventization” (Ciocca, 2024) of Catholic religious practices, reshaping participation within geographical and physical communities.

‘Existential community’ in Sacred Space. Emerging Nonreligious Collective Death Rituals in Public.

Ida Marie Høeg | University of Agder

Death ritual practice emerges as a novel way to understand the shifting religious landscape – a pivotal approach to comprehending religious/worldview stances, relationships, and communities. This paper presents a study of cemetery attendance conducted on All Saints’ Day, where family members gather to tend the grave plot and light candles. The study is based on fieldwork conducted in southern Norway, using a spatial approach to the cemetery space and cemetery ritual activities. The study reveals how social relations and place are interwoven with each other. Cemetery space is “sacred” in that the cemetery acts as a focus for the pilgrimage of friends and family and is protected from activities deemed ‘disrespectful’. Public cemeteries on All Saint’s Day provide a plural community expressed in ritual actions in public space. Public cemeteries arrange a ritual community across social and cultural differences, a community between the bereaved and between the bereaved and the dead. This particular day, the cemetery space does more; it offers a community of people who may or may not know each other and activates and displays’ existential configurations’ in a religious, spiritual or worldview sense. Finally, the study shows the need for a community for existential interpretations of death, in which nonreligious and non-institutional collective rituals in the public sphere give an opportunity.

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PS 6.9

Impacts of Increasing Nonreligion*Impacts de l'augmentation de la non-religion*

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateur(s) de la session**Lori Beaman** | University of Ottawa**Distinguishing Nonreligion in Relation to Religion and Not-Religion****Peter Beyer** | University of Ottawa**Are Nonreligious and Religious People Really Different?****Ryan T. Cragun** | University of Tampa**What Obituaries, Death Cafes, Death Doulas, and Palliative Care Tell Us About Death, Dying, and Social Change****Lori Beaman** | University of Ottawa**Religious Education in Schools: A Microcosm of Change****Linda Woodhead** | King's College London**Solange Lefebvre** | University of Montreal

Distinguishing Nonreligion in Relation to Religion and Not-Religion

Peter Beyer | University of Ottawa

The continuing increase in a great many countries around the world in the percentage of people who locate themselves outside the concept of religion and away from institutionalized religion has raised the question of what, if anything, this growing group, socially and psychologically speaking, 'does' if it does not 'do' religion. Research over the number of years has been attempting to address this issue through positing the existence of distinguishing concepts, among others, the concept of nonreligion. In this paper, I work towards a more precise and operationalizable understanding of what this nonreligion might be positively, how we might be able to recognize nonreligion and thereby study it effectively. I do this through an examination of the possible distinction between three social realities: religion, nonreligion, and not-religion. Along the way, I argue that religion is not and has never as such been foundational to societies and that therefore that nonreligion is not a necessity. The null hypothesis in the study of nonreligion must always be maintained as a possibility. I further identify three strategies for identifying nonreligion, namely by way of religious distinctions, religious functions, and unifying concepts under which both religion and nonreligion can be included. I further examine the question of the institutionalization of nonreligion, arguing that, unlike religion and a whole host of other realities that fall under not-religion, nonreligion is currently only marginally institutionalized in contemporary societies.

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Are Nonreligious and Religious People Really Different?

Ryan T. Cragun | University of Tampa

Beider (2022) argued that people who have left religion have some “religious residue” that positions them in between those who were never religious and those who are religious. Drawing on data from 8 countries – Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Norway, the USA, and the UK – I investigate whether those who have left religion are meaningfully different from those who were never religious. Average marginal effects controlling for basic demographics comparing these groups on various measures of religiosity suggest that any differences between exiters and those who were never religious are marginal at best. This research challenges the claim that people who leave religions carry religious residue.

What Obituaries, Death Cafes, Death Doulas, and Palliative Care Tell Us About Death, Dying, and Social Change

Lori Beaman | University of Ottawa

Religion can no longer be assumed to be the only meaningful framework for understanding the end of life for many people. Substantial portions of people in Canada, Australia, the United States, Brazil, Argentina, and the Nordic Countries have no religious affiliation, belief, or practices. This significant social shift is resulting in changing approaches to death, dying and the afterlife. Our research maps changes in obituaries, new ways of talking about death and dying, nonreligious understandings of the afterlife, changes in the conceptualization of palliative care, and nonreligious people's experiences of care giving at end of life through survey data and the perspectives of death doulas and hospice workers. Emerging understandings of nonreligious souls, afterlives and a life well lived are responses to the shift in the religious landscape. This paper draws from data sets gathered by the Nonreligion in a Complex Future research team to examine some of these issues.

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Religious Education in Schools: A Microcosm of Change

Linda Woodhead | King's College London

Solange Lefebvre | University of Montreal

Drawing on historical and empirical research in Canada and England, this paper considers how RE has changed since the 1980s. It considers how the teaching of RE mirrored the rise of multiculturalism, and how subsequent tensions and reactions to multiculturalism are reflected in what has happened to RE since the 2010s. The paper explores how curricular change comes about; to what extent it confirms sociological predictions about secularization, pluralization and individualization; and what drives and inhibits such change.

Working Group

The Religion and Social Exclusion CoE (RelEx): Preliminary results

Le CdE Religion et exclusion sociale (RelEx) : résultats préliminaires

Thursday, July 3rd | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Marcus Moberg | Åbo Akademi University

Ethical Considerations and Challenges for Studying Religion and Social Exclusion on a Global Scale

Linda Annunen | Åbo Akademi University

Media Representations of the Sami Indigenous People, the LGBTQI+ Community, and Prison Inmates in Finland with a Special Focus on the Role of Religion

Karoliina Dahl | Åbo Akademi University

Sacred Harmonies or Just Humming Along? Religious Rituals and Possibilities for Reconciliation between Citizens and African Migrants in South Africa

Clementine Nishimwe | Åbo Akademi University

Religion and Societal Inclusion and Exclusion in Peru. Preliminary Results

Rafael Fernandez and **Gustavo Hernandez** | Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya

Ethical Considerations and Challenges for Studying Religion and Social Exclusion on a Global Scale

Linda Annunen | Åbo Akademi University

This presentation provides an overview of ethical considerations within the Rel-ex-project. The focus is on topics that need to be considered when conducting research among vulnerable and marginalized groups. This includes issues related to practical efforts such as informed consent and securing ethical processing of personal information, as they present themselves when conducting research with socially excluded and vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the presentation addresses ethical considerations from the perspective of conducting research that aims at promoting mutual knowledge-exchange and empowerment of research participants.

Cette présentation donne un aperçu des considérations éthiques dans le cadre du projet Rel-ex. L'accent est mis sur les sujets qui doivent être pris en compte lors de la conduite de recherches auprès de groupes vulnérables et marginalisés. Il s'agit notamment de questions liées à des efforts pratiques tels que le consentement éclairé et la garantie d'un traitement éthique des informations personnelles, telles qu'elles se présentent lors de la conduite de recherches avec des groupes socialement exclus et vulnérables. En outre, la présentation aborde les considérations éthiques du point de vue de la conduite d'une recherche visant à promouvoir l'échange mutuel de connaissances et l'autonomisation des participants à la recherche.

Media Representations of the Sami Indigenous People, the LGBTQI+ Community, and Prison Inmates in Finland with a Special Focus on the Role of Religion

Karoliina Dahl | Åbo Akademi University

This paper presents preliminary findings from the RelEx background research on media representations of each of the three cases in Finland: prison incarceration, the Sami indigenous people, and the LGBTQI+ community. A comparison of these media representations reveals both notable similarities and differences in how these respective groups have been portrayed in Finnish mainstream media over the past 50 years and the visibility of religion in these portrayals. All three groups have typically been framed from a majority perspective, often through stereotypes that work to perpetuate stigmatization and discrimination. While religion has played a significant role in media representations of the LGBTQI+ community, it has been less visible in media representations of the other two groups. Whereas the ways in which religion has been present in media portrayals of prison inmates has greatly depended on the religion in question, representations of the Sami people have frequently focused on the presumed contradictions between an exoticized indigenous Sami religion and the Lutheran majority faith to which the majority of the Sami have also long belonged. In recent decades, however, a new type of media discourse has emerged that consciously strives to give voice to these groups themselves, thus challenging previous stereotypes and addressing historical misrepresentations.

Cet article présente les résultats préliminaires de la recherche de fond RelEx sur les représentations médiatiques des trois cas étudiés en Finlande: l'incarcération en prison, le peuple autochtone Sami et la communauté LGBTQI+. Une comparaison de ces représentations médiatiques met en évidence à la fois des similitudes notables et des différences dans la manière dont ces groupes ont été dépeints dans les médias grand public finlandais au cours des 50 dernières années, ainsi que la visibilité de la religion dans ces représentations. Les trois groupes ont généralement été présentés sous l'angle de la majorité, souvent à travers des stéréotypes qui contribuent à perpétuer la stigmatisation et la discrimination. Alors que la religion a joué un rôle significatif dans les représentations médiatiques de la communauté LGBTQI+, elle a été moins visible dans celles des deux autres groupes. Cependant, ces dernières décennies, un nouveau type de discours médiatique a émergé, visant délibérément à donner la parole à ces groupes eux-mêmes, remettant ainsi en question les stéréotypes précédents et corrigeant les représentations historiques erronées.

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Sacred Harmonies or Just Humming Along? Religious Rituals and Possibilities for Reconciliation between Citizens and African Migrants in South Africa

Clementine Nishimwe | Åbo Akademi University

Many religious communities in South Africa are not passively accepting the xenophobic attitudes prevalent in many institutions. A significant number of African individuals living in South Africa have suffered severe consequences of xenophobia, including loss of life, businesses, and personal belongings. Additionally, their self-worth and well-being have been threatened by xenophobic violence and discrimination. Drawing from two projects based in three different religious communities, the paper explores the potential (or lack thereof) of the rituals performed by these communities for the reconciliation process. The paper reflects closely on the implication of such religio-political position for the possibilities of reconciliation between African migrants and other citizens of South Africa.

Religion and Societal Inclusion and Exclusion in Peru. Preliminary Results

Rafael Fernandez and Gustavo Hernandez | Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya

This paper presents preliminary findings of the RelEx background research on each of the three shared cases in Peru: prison incarceration, the Awajun indigenous Amazonian people, and the LGBTQI+ community in the Lima metropolitan area. The paper focuses on the current situation of each group, with an emphasis on how religion has figured in dominant societal discourses on each case during the past couple decades. The role that religion has played in this regard has been highly dependent on the level of visibility and “space” that each group has occupied in public discourse generally. Each population also positions itself differently vis-a-vis what the Peruvian state regards as “inclusion,” with some of their perspectives being accepted and others being contested. The role of religion in relation to each case has been ambivalent and largely depended on the interaction and relation of each group to the beliefs and the values promoted by the dominant religious communities in Peru: the Catholic and Evangelical churches. In addition, the paper also reports on some of the challenges encountered in the initial empirical research and data collection in Peru.

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Parallel Sessions 7

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Building A

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7.3	Catholicism in Polarized Society: Navigating Modern Challenges (1) <i>Le catholicisme dans une société polarisée : relever les défis modernes (1)</i>	104
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Religion and Social Theory (3)

Religion et théorie sociale (3)

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / *Salle*

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Titus Hjelm | University of Helsinki

Boudon and the Extraterrestrials. A Generative Model of the Emergence of a Religion

Jörg Stolz | University of Lausanne

Disentangling Religion: Cultural, Pious, And Moral Dimensions in the Growth of the Far Right in Europe

Mar Grier | Autonomous University of Barcelona

“Non-Leisure? Thinking the Non-Location of Non-Religion”

François Gauthier | Université de Fribourg

Boudon and the Extraterrestrials. A Generative Model of the Emergence of a Religion

Jörg Stolz | University of Lausanne

Festinger et al.'s seminal book *When Prophecy Fails* provides an ethnographic account of the unplanned emergence of a small UFO religion, including the formation of supernatural beliefs, rituals, and leadership structures. This paper asks how this new religion could emerge in an unplanned way so quickly. To explore this question, I develop a generative model inspired by Boudon's framework. The model takes the form of an improvisational game between leaders and followers, oriented toward communicating with a supernatural player. It demonstrates how a new religion can emerge rapidly and unplanned. It explains why the religion is relatively organized, even though its prophetic messages may be messy or inconsistent. And it highlights conditions under which disappointments might lead either to the disintegration of the group or to the creation of new cultural elements of the religion. I conclude by discussing potential applications of this model in the history of religion and by speculating on its parallels with models of biological evolution.

Disentangling Religion: Cultural, Pious, and Moral Dimensions in the Growth of the Far Right in Europe

Mar Grieria | Autonomous University of Barcelona

The role of religion in the rise of the far right in Europe has predominantly been analyzed through the theoretical lens of “cultural religion,” which conceptualizes religion as a space of defensive communal identity. Within a secularizing Europe, the idea of a culturally Christian region has gained symbolic significance, offering tangible and material expressions of identity. This perspective emphasizes religion as heritage rather than spiritual practice, framing Christian symbols and narratives within a defensive, identity-driven cultural paradigm. However, this conceptualization provides only a partial understanding of the phenomenon. This paper offers a theoretical framework that disentangles and re-theorizes the far right’s engagement with religion through three interconnected but analytically distinct dimensions: religion as culture, piety, and moral imagination.

First, while cultural religion offers a framework for shared identity, religion as piety provides the far right with symbolic and ritualistic repertoires that foreground spiritual practice. These practices generate visibility and create spaces for religious devotion, which can become fertile grounds for cultivating far-right ideologies. Second, religion as moral imagination serves as a normative framework, defining ontological boundaries of subjectivity and delineating notions of good and evil. Through this moral dimension, religion imbues far-right political and cultural struggles with transcendent meaning, energizing cultural wars and bolstering ideological positions.

By distinguishing these dimensions—cultural, pious, and moral—this paper underscores the importance of disentangling their theoretical logics and modes of action. While these dimensions may function autonomously, they also intersect and occasionally contradict one another. The interplay between them reveals the complexity of religion’s role in the far right’s formation, reproduction, and public visibility.

Using VOX and the Spanish context as a case study, this paper demonstrates the applicability of this theoretical framework in practice, illustrating how these dimensions collectively shape the far right’s engagement with religion. By doing so, it contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of the multifaceted relationship between religion and the far right in contemporary Europe.

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“Non-Leisure? Thinking the Non-Location of Non-Religion”

François Gauthier | Université de Fribourg

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One of the curiosities of the last decade within the social scientific study of religion has been the rise of enquiries into “non-religion” and the appropriation of this notion as a substantive. Originated in quantitative surveys as a way for social actors to signal a distance from what Peter Beyer calls “churched religion”, “non-religion” has rapidly emerged as an alternative to the concept of “the secular” as secularization theories continue to show their limitations for understanding the present. Does “non-religion” provide the heuristic alternative its proponents claim? Does it allow us to draw new avenues for fruitfully thinking about today’s religious transformations, or is it simply the latest ruse of secularization to preserve the ideological underpinnings of modernism? Asking why “religion” is the only “social dimension” to warrant itself a “non” provides the starter for a critical analysis that suggests that the notion of “non-religion” is an aporia and that researchers should not stray too far from emic uses if they are to remain on safe ground. The paper closes by suggesting what should be an obvious alternative to the alternative of “non-religion” for thinking about religion in the Global-Market era, where social spheres are increasingly mixed and undifferentiated, as they have been for most of the history of mankind.

Monasticism in a Globalised World

Le Monachisme Dans Un Monde Globalisé

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organiseurs de la session

Barbora Spalová | Charles University in Prague

Isabelle Jonveaux | SPI Suisse romande, Université de Fribourg

Mount Athos and Its World: Monastic Withdrawal in Contemporary Greece

Paul Melas | University of California, Los Angeles

Evergreen Attractiveness of Monastic Values

Barbora Spalová | Charles University in Prague

The Magic of Not Ordinary: The Role of Vocabulary and Participant Experience in Kolín Monastery Courses

Tomáš Černák and **Aneta Darjaninová** | Charles University in Prague

Mount Athos and Its World: Monastic Withdrawal in Contemporary Greece

Paul Melas | University of California, Los Angeles

Mount Athos is an all-male and self-governing Orthodox Christian monastic community in Northern Greece. For more than one thousand years, it has served as a space of 'withdrawal' and 'exile' for Orthodox Christian men pursuing monastic asceticism and spiritual cultivation. Based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork and archival research within the community, this paper will specifically attend to the condition of Athonite monastic withdrawal within the context of contemporary Greece and Europe. It will argue that the community's isolation as well as the withdrawal of its monks, do not so much foreclose the possibility of material, communicative and spiritual connections to the 'world' that exists beyond its border, but rather mediates them through Mount Athos' various proscriptions and affordances, and through the desires and needs of diversely situated individuals both within and outside the community.

Mount Athos is today composed of twenty monasteries that house a population of 1746 monastics (ELSTAT 2021). The community also hosts several hundred Greek and international wage laborers, and hundreds of thousands male pilgrims yearly. Athonite monasteries over the past half century have also established dependency parishes in mainland Greece and abroad, that provide a space for both men and women to interface with Athonite monks, sacred objects and liturgical traditions. Anthropologists and religious studies scholars have argued that religious prohibitions can create interdependence and lasting connections by mediating between human subjects and spheres. Drawing from this literature, this paper will ultimately investigate how monastic renunciation and withdrawal from the 'world' mediate the connection that monks have with pilgrims, wage workers on Mount Athos, and male and female parishioners in Greece. In so doing, it will reveal the broader relational network of an otherwise isolated territory and religious community.

Evergreen Attractiveness of Monastic Values

Barbora Spalová | Charles University in Prague

The monastic values such as community, order, purpose, simplicity or stability have been reinterpreted, reinvented or reevaluated throughout history according to the needs of the communities and the societies.

Although Christian monastic values are no longer core values in western societies, there are still some individuals and groups who found the motivation to recreate these values and bring them to life in the frame of “traditional” or “new” monastic communities, or in their individual and family lives. In this contribution, the main topic is not so much the content of these so called monastic values, but rather the ways how the people discover / construct them as desirable (Kluckhohn), how they experience them emotionally, cognitively and practically as meaningful (Graeber) and how and why they commit themselves to live them. Although I am based in the anthropological action oriented approach to the understanding of values (values as results of human actions), I try to balance my fieldwork perspective by analysing the structures of values as lived in the certain communities and places and the perceived relationship of the communal monastic values to the values of the “world”.

I will analyse the processes of re-evaluation of monastic values using three ethnographic vignettes: 1. the revival of the Benedictine monasticism in the post-socialist Czechoslovakia; 2. communal life in the new monastic community in San Francisco, California; 3. contemplation courses in the Center of spirituality in Czechia.

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The Magic of Not Ordinary: The Role of Vocabulary and Participant Experience in Kolín Monastery Courses

Tomáš Černák and Aneta Darjaninová | Charles University in Prague

Our paper focuses on the courses of the Kolín Monastery in the Czech Republic. Although publicly labeled as “monastery”, it no longer serves its original purpose. Even though the presence of monastic values is undisputed, the monastery now operates as a low-threshold Centre for spirituality, providing spiritual retreats & contemplation courses for the public. Since the building lacks a stable community, various courses are available instead, usually guided by members of distinct religious orders in cooperation with different therapists.

The paper explores how the monastic values are presented and altered by vocabulary that course leaders use to adapt to the participants. Such a vocabulary is more neutral, stripped of certain Christian terminological layers, yet not detached from the guide’s tradition. Combined with the given short duration of the course, the participants’ adaptation to unusual situations within the course and outside of their everyday experiences is crucial to understanding how each interprets their newly experienced social reality in a unique manner and whether specific form of vocabulary employed has possibly the potential to fully engage participants in the course.

The paper examines the impact of using certain vocabulary, which ideally is neutral, on participant’s ability to benefit from the course and integrate these values into their daily lives outside the monastic environment. Furthermore, we want to raise a discussion about the possible ways of adapting to the extraordinary nature of the course, as well as the role that familiarity with the guide’s vocabulary plays in helping participants endure certain monastic practices, despite not belonging to monastic order.

Catholicism in Polarized Society: Navigating Modern Challenges (1)

Le catholicisme dans une société polarisée : Relever les défis modernes (1)

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

104, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Wojciech Sadlon | Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Institute for Catholic Church Statistics / Institute for Catholic Church Statistics

“Ageing Well” as a Priest: Adapting Secular Gerontological Norms to Clerics

Alexandre Grandjean | University of Lausanne, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland

Integrating and Compartmentalizing the Body and Soul: Traditional and Progressive Catholics’ Perspectives on the Medicalization of Mental Health

Caitlin Anne Fitzgerald | University of Notre Dame

The Catholic Church as a Social Veto Player: A Comparative Analysis of the Political Influence of the Catholic Church During COVID-19 in Poland, Germany and Ireland

Sławomir Mandes | University of Warsaw

“Ageing Well” as a Priest: Adapting Secular Gerontological Norms to Clerics

Alexandre Grandjean | University of Lausanne, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland

Demographically half of the clergy members of the roman Catholic church of France and Switzerland is near turning over 75 years old. At that age, according to Canon Law, a priest is supposed to send a retirement letter from pastoral ministry to his bishop. However, it is not rare that aging priests continue their missions a few more years before slowly withdrawing toward a new period of their biographical life path. They often leave the presbytery for a place of their own, for instance flat sharing with other retired priests, returning to their biological family, living with a concubine or heading toward a medicalized institution (be it a religiously-driven or a secular one). In the perspective of dioceses, this demographic projection is a twofold challenge and a source of adaptation, inertly and externally. For dioceses, new ethical and theological framings of priesthood are brought about, presenting them as a model of human exemplarity in tension between priests remaining men apart from the others by ordination, while being like the others through their experiences of ageing and its consequences on health and livelihood. It also constitutes new situations of pragmatic and ideological encounter, convergence and divergence between church organizations and secular ones. Indeed, dioceses and priests themselves are adapting to new secular gerontological norms and models of “ageing well”, thus contrasting former institutional control while personalizing and adapting to individualized needs and wants. In this presentation, we first compare how dioceses in Switzerland (Romandie) and France (Franche-Comté) adapt to new professional models of caretaking of ageing priests. Then we present different field situations concerning aging priests themselves, comparing heterogeneous access to institutional resources in regard to their life path and priest status (incardinated, religious, priest-worker, fidei donum, foreign priests, etc). Through ethnographic observations, interviews as well as data collection, we thus analyse diocesan and clerical strategies of adaptation to ageing issues, taking into account local church histories and contexts, politics of public recognition of churches, integration of professional resources by lay persons, and the sociodemographic heterogeneity of aged priest of 75 years old and above.

This paper was co-authored by Carole Dessauges and Laurent Amiote-Suchet from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland

Integrating and Compartmentalizing the Body and Soul: Traditional and Progressive Catholics' Perspectives on the Medicalization of Mental Health

Caitlin Anne Fitzgerald | University of Notre Dame

Recent research has noted a cultural shift to attributing experiences of 'everyday suffering' (e.g., sadness, feeling down, excessive worry) to neurobiological insufficiencies, medicalizing what traditionally incorporated personal and experiential difficulties. However, Catholicism has historically offered meaning-making frameworks that Catholics can employ to make sense of this type of suffering, commonly referred to as theodicy. My research examines how traditional and progressive Catholics navigate points of tension and alignment between religious meaning-making and secular neurobiological frames of everyday suffering. By conducting in-depth interviews with Catholics, I seek to understand why Catholics resist, reconcile with, and embrace the medicalization of mental health and how these attitudes vary based on their theological orientation (i.e., traditional or progressive). Preliminary findings reveal two main orientations. Some Catholics resist what they perceive as the reductionist and dehumanizing medicalization of issues such as depression and anxiety. These interviewees advocate for an "integrative" orientation toward these struggles, placing an emphasis on "body and soul" by combining spiritual, social, and medical dimensions of human life. Other participants expressed a "compartmentalization" approach, not communicating any connection between the spiritual/social and the biological/medical aspects of human life, often going so far as to explicitly distinguish them from one another. By examining these perspectives, my research sheds light on how Catholics adapt to shifting cultural values and construct the self in a disenchanted world while also offering practical insights into how mental health issues might be addressed within the Church.

The Catholic Church as a Social Veto Player: A Comparative Analysis of the Political Influence of the Catholic Church During COVID-19 in Poland, Germany and Ireland

Ślawomir Mandes | University of Warsaw

The aim of the presentation is to determine the position of the Catholic Church (CCh) vis-à-vis state policy in Ireland, Germany and Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis is based on the theory of the societal veto actor (Tsebelis 2002, Fink 2008).

The regulations and laws introduced by the governments during the pandemic touched on issues important to the CCh such as: freedom of religion and worship, autonomy of the church. The local CCh selected for analysis operate under democratic regimes, but in different institutional contexts. The comparative analysis is based on the theory of the societal veto actor. According to this theory, churches are seen as actors that act according to their doctrine and have a certain capacity to block (veto) policies. In the first part of the presentation I will identify issues where the local CCh has acted as a veto player and assess the effectiveness of the veto. I will then examine how different levels of mobilisation capacity (measured by active adherents, religious participation and influence on public discourse) shaped the effectiveness of the church as a social veto player in each country.

The analysis will be based on a thematic analysis of all documents published by the local episcopate on the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic between March 2020 and March 2023. In order to assess the capacity to mobilise and the effectiveness of the actions taken, I will refer to an analysis of newspaper articles from the main national dailies, in addition to verifying the degree of willingness of the government to heed the Church's veto.

This research will be the first comparative analysis of the position of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the state during a pandemic, and will show how the Church – its characteristics as a social veto player – adapts to crisis conditions, and will reveal the dimensions through which the Catholic Church exercises veto power through formal and informal channels.

Measuring Religious Change (2)

Mesurer le changement religieux (2)

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / *Salle*

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

How the Religious Composition of Every Country Changed Between 2010 and 2020

Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

Interpreting Retrospective Religiosity Data in Light of Cohort Data

Konrad Talmont-Kaminski | University of Białystok

Is the Secularization Debate Religiously Biased? Evidence from a Survey Experiment

Valeria Rainero | University of Trento

Disidentification Among Australian Catholics 2001–2021

Bob Dixon | University of Divinity

How the Religious Composition of Every Country Changed Between 2010 and 2020

Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

In this presentation, we will discuss results from our latest estimates of how the religious composition of every country changed between 2010 and 2020. This work is based on careful demographic analysis of many hundreds of censuses, surveys, and other sources.

This paper was co-authored by Marcin Stonawski, who is affiliated with the Center for Advanced Studies of Population and Religion, and Stephanie Kramer, Yunping Tong and Anne Shi, who are affiliated with the Pew Research Center.

Interpreting Retrospective Religiosity Data in Light of Cohort Data

Konrad Talmont-Kaminski | University of Białystok

Recent work on secularisation has made it clear that following changes in religiosity during the period of socialisation is of central significance to understanding the process. The best possible source of data would be large representative longitudinal studies. In lieu of such difficult to obtain data, retrospective surveys offer an alternative that is known to be problematic due to the questionable accuracy of respondents' recollections of their religious commitment at a younger age. This shortcoming, however, can be somewhat lessened by interpreting the retrospective data in light of the cohort data from large representative surveys. In our presentation we will show how the responses from two international representative retrospective questionnaires can be evaluated in the context of the detailed cohort data from those societies sourced from the Dataset of Integrated Measures of Religiosity (DIM-R+). In particular, we will discuss how the biases in the retrospective responses appear to be connected to current age and religiosity. Doing this allows us to then use the retrospective data to arrive at a clear picture of how individual religiosity changes over the life-time in the societies we have examined, and how this leads to the patterns observed at the cohort level. In effect, we allow both sources of information to cast light upon each other.

This paper was co-authored by Piotr Laskowski and Łukasz Kiszkiel from the University of Białystok.

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Is the Secularization Debate Religiously Biased? Evidence from a Survey Experiment

Valeria Rainero | University of Trento

Secularization remains one of the most contested topics in the sociology of religion. Defenders of the classical thesis of religious decline clash with critics' confidence about the enduring role of religion in contemporary society. Although some degree of academic disagreement is normal and to be expected, this study investigates whether the persistent controversy on religious change is driven by ideological premises of its scholars. The aim is to assess whether a religious (or a secular) bias exist among religious studies scholars in evaluating research evidence regarding religious change. Through a factorial survey design, scholars are asked to evaluate fictitious academic abstracts in which conclusions on religious change are randomized. Prior research demonstrates that people are more likely to accept scientific evidence that supports their beliefs and question evidence that contradicts them – a bias known as “motivated science reception”. While this bias is well-documented among the general population, limited research addresses its influence on academics.

Finally, respondents are asked to evaluate the (non-)religious identity of the author of the abstract to measure implicit perceptions of an ideological bias in the field. Previous studies show that nonreligious individuals tend to view the combination of “religious” and “scientist” as counterintuitive and to see religious people as less scientifically able. Conversely, religious individuals tend to hold more compatibility beliefs about this combination of social identities. This study aims to test first, whether secular and religious respondents differ in their compatibility beliefs and second, whether this compatibility perception may change according to the conclusion of the fictitious abstract. The aim is to assess whether respondents perceive authors as more prone to be one-sided when their academic findings challenge respondents' expectations.

The survey will be administered to 2949 researchers who have published at least one journal article addressing the topic of secularization in the past 20 years. Researchers will be identified through a systematic search on Scopus database using a reproducible query, with survey administration planned in February 2025. Understanding how researchers reconcile their personal religious beliefs with their scientific evaluation is of primary concern in the social scientific study of religion. Only through self-examination of personal stances can scholars better handle uncertainty and ambiguity in enduring controversies, such as the debate on secularization.

Disidentification Among Australian Catholics 2001–2021

Bob Dixon | University of Divinity

A question on religion is included in every 5-yearly Australian census. An examination of data from successive censuses between 2001 and 2021 reveals that as many as 1.2 million people who formerly identified themselves as Catholics (or, in the case of young people living at home, were identified as Catholics by their parents) ceased to so during that 20 year period. This paper will discuss the methodology used to arrive at estimates of disidentification of Catholics for each of the five-year intercensal periods by age and sex and, where possible, for major overseas countries of birth, and compare those figures with estimates for Anglicans and other major religious groups. The findings will be situated within the context of changes occurring in Australian society and events in the life of the church such as high profile government investigations into clergy sexual abuse.

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PS 7.5

Religion, Colonial Legacy and Polarisation in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond

Religion, héritage colonial et polarisation en Europe centrale et orientale et au-delà

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Gergely Rosta | University of Münster

Marat Shterin | King's College London

A Thing of the Past? Coloniality, Decoloniality, and Whiteness in International Evangelical Missions in Northern Ireland

Claire Castles | Queen's University Belfast

Ethnic Minorities, Religion, and the Russian State Through the Lens of Postcolonial Theorising

Marat Shterin | King's College London

Christianity and Social (Non)Dialogue in a Polarised Society: Slovenia in an International Context

Igor Bahovec | University of Ljubljana

A Thing of the Past? Coloniality, Decoloniality, and Whiteness in International Evangelical Missions in Northern Ireland

Claire Castles | Queen's University Belfast

This paper explores, using the lens of critical whiteness theory, how the predominantly “white” supporters of international evangelical missions active in Northern Ireland (NI) engage with constructions of race, coloniality, and decoloniality. Drawing upon missions historiography and ongoing ethnographic fieldwork, it aims to address the lacunae of empirical sociological research around race, whiteness, and postcolonial power dynamics within both the sociology of religion in Northern Ireland and of missions more broadly. Discussion will cover how mission supporters in NI conceptualise whiteness and racialized power differentials, and manage the tensions between the evangelistic imperative to take “the whole gospel to the whole world” (Stott, 2009: 51) and postcolonial critiques of their work.

A post-conflict settler colonial society where religious observance remains high and the population is 97% “white”, Northern Ireland represents an active and economically significant support base for international evangelical organisations operating globally. While international missions are frequently considered a “thing of the past”, this paper contends that religious socialisation based on postcolonial conceptions of racialised peoples who are targets of evangelistic outreach continues to structure how “white” evangelical Christians (who remain a socially and politically influential subculture in NI society) view themselves and racialised “others” and engage with the wider world.

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Ethnic Minorities, Religion, and the Russian State Through the Lens of Postcolonial Theorising

Marat Shterin | King's College London

Can postcolonial theories help us explain the relationships between ethnic minorities and the state in contemporary Russia? Revisiting my earlier work, this paper addresses this question by focusing on the deployment of religion by both representatives of these minorities and state agencies in the discourses on loyalty and nationhood during the war in Ukraine. This focus is useful as postcolonial theorists often point out the colonising function of the Russian Orthodox Church while religions of ethnic minorities are seen as those of subalterns. Also, turning to postcolonial theories for explanations of these relationships is compounded by the Russian state's conspicuous use of 'decolonising' rhetoric, especially within the area of international relations. The paper argues that postcolonial approaches can be useful if we clearly identify the differences between the contexts in which these theories initially developed and the Soviet/post-Soviet realities. These differences have significant implications for how the 'post-colonial' is perceived, articulated and politically deployed in specific contexts. Ultimately, exploring and appreciating these differences allows us to evaluate the usefulness of postcolonial theorising per se.

Christianity and Social (Non)Dialogue in a Polarised Society: Slovenia in an International Context

Igor Bahovec | University of Ljubljana

In every society there are differences, contradictions and divisions that can lead to unacceptable inequalities, polarisations and exclusions. However, conflict can be resolved through mediation, or by forming a dialogical relationship with another who is different, so differences become a source of social synergy. What are the conditions and requirements for such development?

In this paper we will focus on the Slovenian experience and the role of Christianity. The social divisions and conflicts within Slovenian society go back at least two centuries. The most pronounced expressions were cultural wars, ideological struggles, the communist revolution, the post-war mass massacres. These divisions continue to divide today. At the same time, new divisions are emerging (e.g. moral, civil-societal, political, etc.). Despite the prevailing polarisation, there are also other voices and aspirations, including a genuinely dialogical attitude. The Catholic Church, which for centuries was the pillar of Slovenian culture and national integration, played different roles in these processes. More precisely, within Christianity there have been different orientations and actions, sometimes even opposing each other. Part of the Church was authoritarian and exclusive, the other wanted to develop an encounter with the development of the world, to be close to people, especially to people in need and suffering. In other words, there are cases where the Church has reinforced polarisation in society and cases where it has worked for the authentic oneness of the people. What conditions and demands are revealed regarding the dialogical encounter between Christianity and society.

What was happening in the wider Catholic Church and in European society must also be considered. We will be attentive to the experience of the Catholic Church, in particular regarding interreligious dialogue (e.g. the Assisi interreligious meetings, the document on human fraternity) and attitude towards the poor and the excluded.

Finally, it is important to recognise the differences regarding potentials and social consequences of different typical reactions to conflict. Regarding mediation in normative conflict, as Berger has shown, there are three types with different potentials and conditions. Similarly, not every dialogue is also a genuine dialogue, as Buber has shown.

PS 7.6

Migration and Muslim Population: Muslims in the West and Religious Minorities in the Islamic Societies

Migration et population musulmane : Musulmans en Occident et minorités religieuses dans les sociétés islamiques

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Yaghoob Foroutan | University of Mazandaran

Religious Minorities in the Islamic and Non-Islamic Settings: Socio-Demographic Perspectives

Yaghoob Foroutan | University of Mazandaran

L'impact des discriminations religieuses sur les inégalités professionnelles

Yasmin Teodoro | ENS Paris-Saclay / Ined / Dares

The Architecture of Intolerance: Mapping the Latest Patterns and Manifestations of Islamophobia in Australia

Susan Carland | Monash University

Religious Minorities in the Islamic and Non-Islamic Settings: Socio-Demographic Perspectives

Yaghoob Foroutan | University of Mazandaran

This paper focuses on the status of both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in varying religious contexts. According to Huntington (1996), Western ethno-religious minorities in the Islamic states are more discriminated against than Islamic minorities in western states. Is he right? I present research-based evidence to deal with this key research question. Accordingly, this paper includes two interconnected parts.

The first part examines the status of Muslim minorities in the western and non-Islamic contexts of Australasia holding a wide range of religious minorities including Muslims, Jewish, Buddhist etc. from throughout the world. This enables us to compare the statuses of these religious minorities both together and with the majority. Moreover, this part can provide more detailed analysis on Muslim minority as they came from varying settings of the Islamic world and explore the possibility of their varying experiences of discrimination or tolerance. For example, whether Middle Eastern Muslim minorities are more discriminated against than Muslim minorities from Eastern Europe?

The second part of this paper focuses on the status of religious minorities in the Islamic context. The field of study for this part is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since this is a Shi'a dominated context, its religious minorities include Sunni as well as Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christians etc. It highlights the key socio-demographic characteristics of religious minorities in this Islamic setting. Further, the discussion of this part is based on the findings of a content analysis. The results of this analysis explain the key patterns and differentials associated with the representation of religious minorities through the educational system. Finally, a concluding discussion on the main findings of these two interconnected parts will shed further light on the statuses of Muslim minorities and other religious minorities in the western and Islamic settings from a comparative perspective.

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L'impact des discriminations religieuses sur les inégalités professionnelles

Yasmin Teodoro | ENS Paris-Saclay / Ined / Dares

Quel rôle joue le stigmatisme religieux sur la situation socioéconomique, en France, aujourd'hui ? Dans un contexte de diversification du paysage religieux européen, de nombreuses recherches ont émergé pour analyser les inégalités sociales en lien avec le rapport à la religion (Adida et al., 2010 ; Connor & Koenig, 2015 ; Heath & Martin, 2013). Elles suggèrent l'existence de mécanismes stigmatisants qui pénalisent surtout le niveau d'instruction, le statut professionnel et la qualification professionnelle des musulmans. Pourtant, si derrière l'islamophobie se cachent des enjeux coloniaux, migratoires, de genre et de mépris de classe (Galonnier, 2019), les recherches en France qui s'attachent à mesurer et à caractériser de manière robuste ses impacts socioéconomiques demeurent rares, en partie à cause d'un manque de données. Tel est l'objectif de ce travail, qui pour y parvenir va s'appuyer sur les données de l'enquête Trajectoires et origines 2 (Ined-Insee, 2019–2020). Cette enquête, qui possède une diversité de questions permettant aux individus de déclarer leurs expériences et sentiments de discrimination, est particulièrement pertinente. D'une part, elle permet d'explorer plusieurs mesures du stigmatisme religieux, allant des discriminations objectives (situationnelles) et subjectives aux discriminations raciales en raison de la religion, telles qu'elles sont perçues et déclarées par les enquêtés. De l'autre, elle enrichit ces analyses grâce aux variables indirectes de discrimination, assez rarement mesurées, comme le port d'un signe religieux qui rend la croyance religieuse visible. En autorisant que les effets de ce mécanisme varient selon la religion (chrétienne ou musulmane), les analyses multivariées permettent de cerner finement l'influence pluridimensionnelle des discriminations ainsi que des marqueurs religieux sur la situation vis-à-vis de l'emploi, également mesurée de manière multidimensionnelle.

The Architecture of Intolerance: Mapping the Latest Patterns and Manifestations of Islamophobia in Australia

Susan Carland | Monash University

The social fabric of Australia is struggling.

The ASIO director-general stated in 2024 that Australia is becoming “more volatile and unpredictable” with an increase in “extremism, division, and elevated intolerance”. More concretely, in 2023, the Scanlon Social Cohesion Index, which measures the social cohesion rate of Australia every year, dropped to its lowest level on record.

It is in this environment of decreased social cohesion that Islamophobia, in particular, has flourished.

Islamophobia in Australia has been a consistent problem for decades, and following on from the Oct 7 attacks and the subsequent war on Gaza, Islamophobic incidents on Australian Muslims have increased 1300% in the last year, both as a response to – and as a driver of – decreased social cohesion.

The Australian federal government is increasingly concerned, providing tens of millions of dollars in community funding to fight Islamophobia and announcing in 2024 the appointment of a Special Envoy to Counter Islamophobia. This problem is also not unique to Australia: the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief stated that ‘anti-Muslim hatred had risen to epidemic proportions’ (Shaheed, 2021).

While previous research has tracked Islamophobic incidents in Australia, this data is at least two years old. Given the rapidly changing social cohesion and Islamophobia landscape in Australia, our paper presents the latest data and analysis from all reports to the Islamophobia Register Australia and extensive digital monitoring for 2023–2024, with a special focus on the relationship between anti-Palestinian prejudice and Islamophobia, demonstrating patterns and case studies around gender, physical assault, the relationship between media reporting and external events and spikes in incidents, religious buildings, and even the targeting of non-Muslims. This paper will situate our research within historical data on Islamophobia in Australia to identify emerging patterns and changes in Australian Islamophobia.

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PS 7.7

Does Secularism Still Exist? (2)*Est-ce que la laïcité existe encore? (2)*

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session**David Koussens** | Université de Sherbrooke**Kiyonobu Date** | University of Tokyo**Les mobilisations contre l'éducation sexuelle, une remise en cause des principes de laïcité****Claude Proeschel** | Université de Lorraine**Religion and Politics in Gender Disputes in the Brazilian National Education Plan: What About Secularism?****Janine Bendorovicz Trevisan** | IFRS**La laïcité organisée en Belgique francophone, est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit?****David Koussens** | Université de Sherbrooke

Les mobilisations contre l'éducation sexuelle, une remise en cause des principes de laïcité

Claude Proeschel | Université de Lorraine

Dans plusieurs pays occidentaux, l'on assiste à une mobilisation de groupes conservateurs religieux et politiques contre les programmes d'éducation sexuelle (France, États Unis, Canada, Belgique, Suisse...).

S'inscrivant souvent dans des mobilisations plus générales, visant également les droits reproductifs, l'égalité en matière de parentalité et de conjugalité, elles usent de plusieurs répertoires d'action : la voie politique, visant à faire évoluer les normes législatives, les mobilisations grassroots, l'entrisme dans les associations de parents d'élèves ou les conseils d'école, ou encore le cause lawyering devant les tribunaux..

A partir de deux terrains d'étude, la France et les Etats Unis, cette communication analyse tout d'abord la manière dont ces groupes usent d'argumentaires fondés sur le respect des droits fondamentaux (liberté de religion et de conscience, d'éduquer ses enfants en accord avec ses convictions..). Elle montre ensuite que sous cet apparent respect de l'Etat de droit, ces croisades morales visent une conformation générale de l'espace public remettant en cause les principes mêmes de laïcité et de déconnexion des normativités civiles et religieuses.

Elle étudie alors, à travers l'analyse des succès ou échecs de ces campagnes, comment la légitimité et la compétence des Etats laïques en matière d'éducation à la citoyenneté et à la démocratie sexuelle sont réaffirmées ou bousculées.

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Religion and Politics in Gender Disputes in the Brazilian National Education Plan: What About Secularism?

Janine Benderowicz Trevisan | IFRS

The National Education Plan is a legal document, drawn up every ten years, that defines goals and guidance for public education policies in Brazil.

In its latest version, the Plan for the decade 2014–2024, after much dispute between religious parliamentarians and social movements, ended up excluding any mention of the word gender in its guidelines.

The religious movement's argument was that gender equity and sexual education policies would end up introducing a malignant ideology to students and putting the traditional family and good customs at risk.

The paper analyzes, in the Brazilian political scenario, the process of writing the National Education Plan for the decade 2025–2035, especially on issues that promote clashes between social and educational movements, on the one hand, and religious segments, on the other.

The research analyzes the legal instruments: decrees, bills, conferences and public hearings that deal with the National Education Plan for the period 2025 to 2035 and the concerns and demands of politicians and religious jurists in relation to the National Education Plan.

The issue of gender is once again highlighted in the political debates for the elaboration of the Plan.

Social movements in defense of human rights argue that the school environment needs to welcome and include students from the LGBTQIAPN+ community and provide guidance on sexual education as a way to end gender-based violence inside and outside of school.

On the other side are Christian parliamentarians, arguing in favor of religious freedom and the traditional family. The investigation brings to light debates about the secular nature of the state, as religious values are used to define educational policies for the entire population.

La laïcité organisée en Belgique francophone, est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit?

David Koussens | Université de Sherbrooke

Est-ce toujours de laïcité dont il s'agit? Si la question peut être posée pour ce qui concerne la caractérisation des aménagements politiques et juridiques de la diversité religieuse dans les démocraties libérales contemporaines, elle est également pertinente pour réfléchir à la « laïcité organisée » en Belgique francophone. La laïcité organisée correspond à un regroupement d'humanistes, de libres-penseurs et d'athées fondé en 1969 dans le but de promouvoir la « laïcité philosophique » et de dispenser des services d'assistance morale auprès de ceux qui s'identifient aux idéaux humanistes. Elle bénéficie depuis 2002 d'une reconnaissance et d'un financement publics jusque-là réservés par la Constitution belge à quelques cultes spécifiquement désignés. S'appuyant sur l'analyse de l'offre convictionnelle et rituelle de ce regroupement, cette communication interroge la pertinence contemporaine des catégories juridiques traditionnelles de reconnaissance des cultes et des organismes philosophiques non confessionnels en Belgique. Elle propose ainsi de réfléchir sur ce qu'est le culte, la religion, et par extension sur ce à quoi correspond la laïcité dans la Belgique contemporaine.

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PS 7.8

Religion, Authoritarianism, Migration, and Conflict in East Asia: Case Studies from Japan and Taiwan

Religion, autoritarisme, migration et conflit en Asie de l'Est : études de cas au Japon et à Taïwan

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Massimo Introvigne | CESNUR

Religious Marginalization in Sociological Context: A Case Study of the Christian Gospel Mission (Providence) in Taiwan with Comparative Insights from South Korea

Yowting Shueng | National Chengchi University

A Multidimensional Approach to Tai Ji Men in Taiwan – Performative and Political Aspects

Márk Nemes | Hungarian Academy of Arts, Research Institute of Art Theory and Methodology

Soka Gakkai and Japanese Militarism: The Detention of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda

Massimo Introvigne | CESNUR

Martial Law and Religious Repression: The 1963 Suppression of Soka Gakkai in Taiwan

Rosita Šoryté | European Federation for Freedom of Belief

Religious Marginalization in Sociological Context: A Case Study of the Christian Gospel Mission (Providence) in Taiwan with Comparative Insights from South Korea

Yowting Shueng | National Chengchi University

In an era of increasing religious pluralism, new religious movements often face challenges in gaining societal acceptance. This study examines the marginalization of the Christian Gospel Mission (CGM, also known as Providence), with a primary focus on Taiwan and secondary analysis of its experiences in South Korea. In Taiwan, CGM has experienced varying levels of societal acceptance and scrutiny, influenced by cultural perceptions, media narratives, and public attitudes toward emerging religions. While the group has gained a following, it faces stigmatization driven by negative media coverage and misunderstanding of its doctrines. This has led to challenges in social integration and public perception. Comparatively, in South Korea, where CGM originated, the competitive religious landscape and polarized views have resulted in heightened scrutiny and marginalization, often intensified by selective media portrayals.

This research adopts a sociological perspective to analyze how religious competition, cultural dynamics, and media representations contribute to CGM's marginalization. By examining Taiwan as a case study and South Korea as a contextual reference, the study highlights broader challenges faced by new religious movements in achieving legitimacy and calls for greater awareness of religious freedom and diversity.

A Multidimensional Approach to Tai Ji Men in Taiwan – Performative and Political Aspects

Márk Nemes | Hungarian Academy of Arts, Research Institute of Art Theory and Methodology

Established as a Qigong academy in Taiwan in 1966, Tai Ji Men is dedicated to the practice of qigong, martial arts, and self-cultivation. Its primary aim is to cultivate harmony between the dualities of existence: yin and yang, heaven and earth, and body and spirit. The movement is particularly recognized for its unique global peace initiative and the captivating Dragon Dance performances conducted by devotees, known as the dizi, under the guidance of Dr. Hong Tao-Tze, also known as Shifu.

However, Tai Ji Men faces significant scrutiny in both Japan and Taiwan, stemming from issues such as the frequent misinterpretation of its donation practices (i.e., red envelopes), its unconventional organizational structure, and its unified front against increasing persecution. This paper will explore these topics from two perspectives, employing a phenomenological approach and the morphology of religions framework.

First, I will delineate the multiple interpretive layers of Tai Ji Men's public activities, particularly focusing on the ringing of the Bell of World Peace and Love and the Dragon Dance performance. Next, I will examine the range of reasons behind the observable political and societal opposition to Tai Ji Men in Taiwan, drawing insights from the tension between its prominent public presence and its status as a minority movement. Finally, I will draw comparisons with other movements of similar social standing in Taiwan, such as the Yiguandao movement.

Soka Gakkai and Japanese Militarism: The Detention of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Josei Toda

Massimo Introvigne | CESNUR

Unlike other Buddhist movements, Soka Gakkai did not support Japanese militarism during World War II and was accused of sedition and promoting blasphemy against Shinto and the Emperor. On July 6, 1943, Soka Gakkai's founder and first President, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, and his closest co-worker and future successor, Josei Toda, were arrested. On September 25, Makiguchi was moved to Nagamo Prison in Tokyo, notorious for its regime of malnutrition. On November 17, he was transferred to the prison hospital, where he died on November 18. Meanwhile, Toda remained in prison, where he vowed to chant "Nam-myohorenge-kyo" 10,000 times per day and to devote as much time as possible to the study of the "Lotus Sutra." The jail years were crucial for Toda, who reported that he experienced two awakenings in 1944. He was released on July 3, 1945. The paper discusses the life of Makiguchi and Toda in jail, their opposition to Japanese militarism, and the authorities' use of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law to suppress religious dissent. It also examines how these events shaped the future of Soka Gakkai.

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Martial Law and Religious Repression: The 1963 Suppression of Soka Gakkai in Taiwan

Rosita Šorytė | European Federation for Freedom of Belief

In the 1950s and early 1960s, economic exchanges between Taiwan and Japan led several Taiwanese to discover Soka Gakkai. In May 1961, five districts were formed. Soka Gakkai’s Taipei chapter was formally established in August 1962. On January 27, 1963, some members met President Daisaku Ikeda as he was changing planes at Taipei airport. These were, however, the years of Martial Law in Taiwan. On April 3, 1963, the leader of Soka Gakkai in Taiwan was summoned to appear at the Taiwan Garrison General Headquarters, responsible for the application of the Martial Law. He was told that Soka Gakkai was an illegal organization and that an order of dissolution was imminent. In fact, on April 9, the order to disband Soka Gakkai in Taiwan was served to its leaders. In the evening, a meeting of district leaders was held under the supervision of a senior police officer, and they approved a motion dissolving the organization. Members continued to be kept under surveillance and some had their careers compromised. Many continued to practice their religion privately, until in 1990, three years after the end of the Martial Law, Soka Gakkai was officially registered in Taiwan. The paper discusses the dissolution of Soka Gakkai and its reasons within the context of the religious repression of the Martial Law years, and compares it with the post-authoritarian crackdowns on other groups in Taiwan.

Author Meets Critics: Crises and Conversions: The Unlikely Avenues of “Italian Shiism”

Crises et conversions : les voies improbables du « chiisme italien »

Friday, July 4th | 09:30–11:00

Room / Salle

313, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Respondent / Répondante

Minoo Mirshahvalad | University of Copenhagen

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants

Roberta Ricucci | University of Turin

Alberta Giorgi | University of Bergamo

This is an author-meets-critics session for the book **Crises and Conversions: The Unlikely Avenues of “Italian Shiism”**, authored by Minoo Mirshahvalad.

*Il s’agit d’une séance de rencontre entre l’auteur et des critiques pour son livre **Crises and Conversions: The Unlikely Avenues of “Italian Shiism”**, écrit par Minoo Mirshahvalad.*

Parallel Sessions 8

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Building A

PS	TITLE	ROOM
8.1	Miscellaneous Papers Session 3: Religion, Identity, and Narratives in the Modern World <i>Miscellanées 3 : Religion, identité et récits dans le monde moderne</i>	102
8.2	How Local Religious Groups Have Changed in Switzerland, 2008–2022 <i>L'évolution des groupes religieux locaux en Suisse, 2008–2022</i>	103
8.3	Visible Faith: Public Rituals, Digital Presence, and Civic Participation (2) <i>La foi visible : rituels publics, présence numérique et participation civique (2)</i>	106
8.4	Visualizing Conflicts and Apocalypses. Religion and Visual Arts in a Polarized World <i>Visualiser les conflits et les apocalypses. Religion et arts visuels dans un monde polarisé</i>	110
8.5	Religious Asylum Claims Before National and International Courts in The Context Of Multi-level Governance <i>Les demandes d'asile religieux devant les tribunaux nationaux et internationaux dans le contexte de la gouvernance à plusieurs niveaux</i>	310
8.6	Studying Religion and Spiritualities in Latin America: Health, Circulations, Challenges and Perspectives (1) <i>Étudier la religion et les spiritualités en Amérique latine : santé, circulations, défis et perspectives (1)</i>	311
8.7	Catholicism in Polarized Society: Navigating Modern Challenges (2) <i>Le catholicisme dans une société polarisée : relever les défis modernes (2)</i>	312

Miscellaneous Papers Session 3: Religion, Identity, and Narratives in the Modern World

Miscellanées 3 : Religion, identité et récits dans le monde moderne

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

102, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Bisi Adenekan-Koevoets | University of Roehampton

Historicizing Non-Religion: Discursive Shifts and Identity Formation in the US and the UK (1881–2019)

Dominik Balazka | University of Milan, University of Turin, Catholic University of Leuven

Utopias as a Subject of Secularization Research

Robert Schäfer | University of Basel

A Tug of War? Leadership, Generation, Gender and Christian Mission

Bisi Adenekan-Koevoets | University of Roehampton

Sacrés dialogues: enjeux et pratiques dans l'Église multiculturelle en Suisse romande

Julie Matthey-de-l'Endroit | Université de Lausanne

Historicizing Non-Religion: Discursive Shifts and Identity Formation in the US and the UK (1881–2019)

Dominik Balazka | University of Milan, University of Turin, Catholic University of Leuven

This paper examines the historical evolution of non-religious discourses, focusing on the discursive relationship with religious others and on the changing conceptualization of positive secular identities. Using computational methods such as Topic Modeling, Sentiment Analysis, and Dynamic Word Embedding, this study analyzes a longitudinal dataset of magazines from four militant non-religious organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom, spanning 1881 to 2019.

The findings challenge traditional secularization theory by revealing that non-religious discourses often mirror fluctuations in the public prominence of religion. Increased visibility of religion correlates with heightened relevance attributed to religion by non-religious organizations and a higher proportion of negative sentiment in religion-related topics. Nevertheless, the demand for positive secular identities remains substantially stable over time at the organizational level, even when the relevance of religion is declining.

What changes is instead the understanding of these identities. Prior to 1945, atheism was closely associated with a prevalently anti-religious stance whereas humanism had a more distinctly a-religious orientation rooted in the scientific vocabulary. In the post-war period, both of these identities began to progressively converge, reflecting a growing emphasis on building positive secular identities, adopting a pragmatic orientation, and fostering internationalization. The study underscores how non-religious discourses evolve in response to societal transformations, revealing a shift from oppositional stances toward more constructive identities. The convergence of atheism and humanism illustrates how militant non-religious organizations redefine their narratives. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the interplay between religion, non-religion, and social change over time.

Utopias as a Subject of Secularization Research

Robert Schäfer | University of Basel

The research project presented investigates secular worldviews. The sociology of religion has been paying increasing attention to the so-called nones for about 10 years. The research gap lies in the fact that it has information about what these people do not believe in, but still knows too little about the positive content of secular belief patterns. This is also due to the fact that survey-questions are often phrased in such a way as to provoke a negative demarcation from religion. We therefore try to avoid explicit references to religion, while at the same time aiming at the problem that both religious and secular worldviews address: existential experiences of contingency. These are based on the perception that the world is not as it could be. They always presuppose a utopia, i.e. an idea of how things could be different. We analyze these utopias and use the findings as a basis for reconstructing current secular worldviews.

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A Tug of War? Leadership, Generation, Gender and Christian Mission

Bisi Adenekan-Koevoets | University of Roehampton

This paper discusses the internal power dynamics within African diaspora Pentecostal churches, focusing on power relations between church leaders and members. Power is present in any religious organisation and can be used to influence other people's behaviour possibly against their will. Using Andre Drooger's three-dimensional power relations model, I concentrate on the internal power structure of African migrant churches in relation to different generation and gender and the impact on intercultural mission. I will focus particularly on the impact of the hierarchical leadership style and centralised power and authority, mainly exercised by male first-generation leaders, on other members especially women and young people.

Young, second generation Nigerian Pentecostals, influenced by western education and values, argue for an inclusive leadership that accommodates all congregants including women. Drawing on an ethnographic study of three Nigerian-initiated Pentecostal churches in London and Amsterdam, I will show that power relations not only shape intergenerational and gender relations internally but also mission practices and the engagement of the second-generation with mission. While the missionary vision is similar between the first and second generation, the process of settlement has encouraged the emergence of significant differences in approach. The resulting intergenerational conflicts could potentially shape future power relations. The research shows that the development of diasporic churches as conducive spaces for diverse people requires decentralised power structures and a more representative leadership.

Sacrés dialogues: enjeux et pratiques dans l'Église multiculturelle en Suisse romande

Julie Matthey-de-l'Endroit | Université de Lausanne

Dans un contexte marqué par des migrations aux origines variées, une diversité croissante de communautés linguistiques et culturelles doit désormais cohabiter au sein de l'Église catholique en Suisse romande. Le partage des espaces saints en constitue un point central. Dans le cadre de ma thèse, je mène une recherche qui s'intéresse à l'utilisation commune d'un même lieu de culte par plusieurs communautés et aux défis organisationnels et symboliques que cela pose. À travers ce partage, l'Église catholique romande souhaite créer un dialogue interculturel. Ainsi le but est d'explorer ces dynamiques en examinant comment les pratiques religieuses, le vivre-ensemble et les relations interculturelles, si tant est qu'elles existent, se façonnent et évoluent dans ce cadre spécifique.

Cette communication propose de présenter des résultats intermédiaires de ma recherche doctorale, en fournissant une analyse des discours institutionnels et des pratiques informelles de l'interculturalité sur le terrain et également d'interroger les défis concrets et les enjeux liés à l'usage partagé d'un espace sacré commun.

Adoptant une approche qualitative et ethnographique, cette étude s'appuie sur une trentaine d'entretiens semi-directifs et des observations participantes effectués sur une durée totale d'une année, ainsi que sur l'analyse de documents institutionnels provenant des différents cantons du diocèse Lausanne-Genève-Fribourg, avec un intérêt particulier porté à la ville de Renens.

En interrogeant ces dynamiques concrètes, cette contribution offre une réflexion sur le potentiel des espaces partagés comme lieux d'innovation interculturelle au sein de l'Église catholique. Ces enjeux résonnent particulièrement avec le thème de ce panel, qui interroge les impacts des migrations sur les pratiques religieuses et la diversité.

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PS 8.2

How Local Religious Groups Have Changed in Switzerland, 2008–2022

L'évolution des groupes religieux locaux en Suisse, 2008–2022

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

103, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Jörg Stolz and **Jeremy Senn** | University of Lausanne

Christophe Monnot | University of Strasbourg

Critics / Discussants / Critiques / Discutants

Conrad Hackett | Pew Research Center

Giuseppe Giordan | University of Padova

Kati Tervo-Niemelä | University of Eastern Finland

The focus of this session is the final report on the second wave of the National Congregation Study in Switzerland. The National Congregation Studies have been so far conducted in the USA and Switzerland. They give a representative view on attributes and activities of local religious groups across all religious traditions.

Cette session se concentre sur le rapport final de la deuxième vague de l'étude sur les congrégations nationales en Suisse. Les études nationales sur les congrégations ont été menées jusqu'à présent aux États-Unis et en Suisse. Elles donnent un aperçu représentatif des caractéristiques et des activités des groupes religieux locaux appartenant à toutes les traditions religieuses.

Visible Faith: Public Rituals, Digital Presence, and Civic Participation (2)

La foi visible : rituels publics, présence numérique et participation civique (2)

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

106, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Minoo Mirshahvalad | University of Copenhagen

Avi Astor | Autonomous University of Barcelona

Political Magic on Social Media: Digital 'Altar Work' and Live-Streaming Rituals

Katri Ratia | Fribourg University

Sacralizing Media Spaces? The Hallow App's Mediatized Religious World from the Perspective of Deep Mediatization

Anna Pazio and **Marta Sobiech-Buzafa** | University of Warsaw

Public Religion and Digital Platforms Diversity: Religious Feminists Between Podcasts and Instagram

Alberta Giorgi | University of Bergamo

Spiritual Care in the Netherlands: From Faith-Based Work to Professional Caregivers

Andréa Damacena Martins | Independent Researcher, WoonzorgCentra Haaglanden

Political Magic on Social Media: Digital 'Altar Work' and Live-Streaming Rituals

Katri Ratia | Fribourg University

Magic has been used in the context of politics for hundreds if not thousands of years as many ancient grimoires attest, but contrary to the secrecy typical of historical magic practices, certain types of political magic today have public visibility in digital platforms. Politically motivated Pagans and Witches are portraying magic rituals in their social media channels, both as an expression of personal values and political positioning, and as collective practice in both political and religious senses. This confluence combining progressive politics and social justice concerns with alternative spirituality has been named 'radical spirituality' and 'progressive occultism' by commentators and scholars.

This paper discusses the online visibility of magical political resistance and the use of digital media in this context, as an expression of contemporary religious practice and civic participation which are not separable from each other. The examples include responses to Donald Trump's presidential campaigns and to other controversial characters and events in the media and in politics. The paper examines the ways in which politically motivated magic practices are represented and mediatized through the publication of photographs of individual 'altar work' practices, as well as videos and livestreams of collective magic rituals, and how this digital visibility becomes an act of claiming political presence. The paper explores how these magico-religious expressions are related to the political issues of rights, representation, and social justice, and how their public visibility participates in recruitment and mobilization efforts, from coordination of collective spellcastings on the religious side to the organization of protest movements and activities on the political one.

Sacralizing Media Spaces? The Hallow App's Mediatized Religious World from the Perspective of Deep Mediatization

Anna Pazio and Marta Sobiech-Buzafa | University of Warsaw

In an increasingly digitalized world, religious institutions, communities, and practices are being transformed by processes of deep mediatization. One manifestation of such changes is the growing popularity of mobile apps that support religious practices and their increasing hypermediality, i.e. presence in various media and non-media spaces simultaneously. A prominent example is Hallow, promoted as a “Catholic prayer app,” which has become extremely popular globally since the Covid-19 pandemic. The app's success can be linked to extensive online marketing efforts, as well as partnerships with well-known religious influencers such as Jonathan Roumie, the actor who plays Jesus in the American TV series “The Chosen”. Targeted both at individuals and communities associated with the Catholic Church, and spiritual seekers operating outside of it, the Hallow app constitutes a universe of actors, including different types of media and different communities. This universe is an excellent example of the impact of deep mediatization on religious communities and institutions which incorporate a variety of intersecting media into their communications, and draw on various secular discourses, including wellness, therapeutic discourses, and the language of marketing.

Our research, conducted under the auspices of an IDUB grant at the University of Warsaw, strives to analyze the Hallow app universe from the perspective of deep mediatization, showing how new forms of religious media become hubs around which community is built, and identifying the communication processes by which such communities function in different types of media simultaneously. To this end we utilize a variety of methods, among them digital ethnography, quantitative and qualitative content analyses of the app's social media content, as well as a social network analysis of the communication flows between different media within the Hallow universe.

In the course of our presentation we hope to answer a number of questions: (1) what forms of religious communication and communication practices related to religious and spiritual life are present in the Hallow universe? (2) What language do content creators use to communicate with their audiences, i.e. to what extent do they draw on religious and secular discourses (e.g. therapeutic, wellness-related) – and to what end? (3) Finally, to what extent can the narratives constructed within the Hallow universe be interpreted as the creators' strategic response to the processes of secularization and the declining number of Roman Catholic Church believers?

Public Religion and Digital Platforms Diversity: Religious Feminists Between Podcasts and Instagram

Alberta Giorgi | University of Bergamo

Scholars have demonstrated how digital platforms amplify the visibility and spread of voices often marginalized in religious communities, such as women and LGBT+ persons within Catholicism and Islam. Numerous studies have examined how Christian feminists utilize digital platforms—including Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and podcasts—not only to build and educate their audience (a counter-public) but also to foster dialogue and awareness.

Research indicates that digital platforms have, on the one hand, enhanced public awareness and understanding of feminist issues both within religious communities and in broader society. On the other hand, the affordances of these platforms influence the type of feminism that gains visibility and positive reception, as well as the specific audience being engaged. Analyses of Christian feminist influencers on Instagram, for instance, have shown how they often align with secular feminist influencers in promoting “popular feminism.” This form of feminism emphasizes female empowerment and women’s visibility but often sidelines deeper structural critiques traditionally central to feminist discourse.

This study employs content analysis to examine two Italian religious feminist influencers—one Catholic and one Witch—on Instagram, focusing on how they present themselves and frame their roles in relation to a broader, non-religious audience. By comparing these findings with previous research on Christian feminist podcasters, the study seeks to explore how different digital platforms shape the roles and strategies of religious feminist influencers.

Spiritual Care in the Netherlands: From Faith-Based Work to Professional Caregivers

Andréa Damacena Martins | Independent Researcher, WoonzorgCentra Haaglanden

The role of spiritual caregivers has gained increasing recognition in the literature for its professional contribution to strengthening well-being and mental health care within the Dutch public health system. Whether their work takes place in elderly homes, psychiatric clinics, rehabilitation centers, facilities for individuals with disabilities, or directly with individuals and communities in local centers, spiritual caregivers offer personal and specialized attention which is positively appreciated. This approach contributes to humanizing medical care and provides space for individuals to reflect on their religious, spiritual, or philosophical orientations and their sense of belonging in individualized and secular contexts. This growing acknowledgement represents a significant shift in the concept of medical health. It gives importance to integrating the spiritual and religious dimensions of a patient's needs alongside the biological, psychological, and social aspects traditionally addressed in medical care.

In this paper, I aim to explore the advanced role of spiritual caregivers within the healthcare system in The Netherlands. This development has moved the profession from being predominantly associated with mainstream religious traditions to becoming a specialized field focused on addressing suffering, offering consolation and hope, fostering self-orientation, and creating a reflective space for exploring identity and belonging. Additionally, I will draw this reflection taking into account my practices and experiences as a professionally trained non-denominational spiritual caregiver to illustrate effective ways and challenges to address "spiritual well-being" in secular and interfaith contexts.

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Visualizing Conflicts and Apocalypses. Religion and Visual Arts in a Polarized World

Visualiser les conflits et les apocalypses. Religion et arts visuels dans un monde polarisé

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

110, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Francesco Piraino | University of Bologna

Occulture: A Material Reading of Contemporary Art, Popular Culture, and Esotericism

Francesco Piraino | University of Bologna

Apocalypse at Home: The Role of Evangelical Novels and Comics in the Evangelical Framing of the World

Thierry Maire | EHESS

Occulture: A Material Reading of Contemporary Art, Popular Culture, and Esotericism

Francesco Piraino | University of Bologna

The concept of “occulture” describes the growing presence of esotericism, occultism, magic, and mysticism in popular culture and contemporary arts. This phenomenon has been explained as resulting from the mediatization, commodification, and individualization of esotericism.

This article proposes an alternative interpretation using a material approach, which considers occultural artworks not merely as mediatized religion but also as instruments of religious mediation. This perspective allows for a better understanding of the interplay among artists, audiences, and artworks, which generates diverse and fluid phenomena which are both religious and secular. Religious art can be consumed secularly, while secular art can be sacralized by the audience. To capture the complexity and heterogeneity of occulture, this article identifies five tensions that provide a tentative cartography of this unexplored territory:

1. Secular art vs. esoteric art;
2. Metaphysical ontology vs. performative ontology;
3. Author’s intention vs. audience’s reception;
4. Artwork as receptacle of religion vs. artwork as producer of religion;
5. Self-religion vs. religious tradition.

The representation of crises, tensions, polarizations and apocalypses, are at the heart of the occulture. This paper will especially draw on comics and illustrations, analyzing the biographical paths, the artworks, and the audience of the comics authors Alan Moore and Grant Morrison.

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Apocalypse at Home: The Role of Evangelical Novels and Comics in the Evangelical Framing of the World

Thierry Maire | EHESS

Among the surprises I encountered during my PhD research on “Evangelicals in the Public Space in Guatemala” was the presence of evangelical novels and comics. It arose from some interviewees, and attracted my curiosity as I believe ideas do not come alone and I wanted to trace the cognitive aspects of belief among this category. Popular culture does play a direct influence on how people may view things around them, how they interpret them and thus gives meaning to one’s life and purposes.

In that sense, evangelical novels and comics, solely imported from the US, contribute to disseminate among believers a specific interpretation of political issues, linking religion, and very specifically the Apocalypse and the Rapture theme, to the fight between good and evil and political stances. It tends to nurture a political preference for conservative positions and a “Us vs them” posture to anything deemed evil, aka opposed to biblical teachings and manner of living. I argue that helps fostering radical stances on a number of social and political debates and has political consequences in pushing polarized views. Analyzing these cultural products has allowed me to better understand the evangelical worldview among Guatemalan evangelicals, through a different approach to religion by paying attention to the cultural framing of ideas.

Religious Asylum Claims Before National and International Courts in The Context Of Multi-Level Governance

Les demandes d'asile religieux devant les tribunaux nationaux et internationaux dans le contexte de la gouvernance à plusieurs niveaux

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

310, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Sabrina Pastorelli | CNRS

Chair / Discutant

Massimo Introvigne | CESNUR

Persecution for Reasons of Religion: Making the Case for an Analysis of Violence in Studying Religion-based Asylum

Helmi Halonen | University of Helsinki

Demandeur l'asile pour raisons religieuses en France // Religious Asylum Claims in France

Sabrina Pastorelli | CNRS

Asylum Seekers from the North Caucasus Between Sufism and Salafism

Kristina Kovalskaya | GSRL, EPHE

Persecution for Reasons of Religion: Making the Case for an Analysis of Violence in Studying Religion-based Asylum

Helmi Halonen | University of Helsinki

Though all religion-based asylum claims centre on the threat of religiously motivated violence or persecution, research on religious asylum has rarely touched on questions of violence or its relationship with religion. This matters because a successful claimant needs to demonstrate a nexus between the persecution they fear and one of the five Convention grounds for asylum. Therefore, the way immigration authorities understand religious motivations for violence directly impacts asylum decision-making. This is further complicated by a cultural unease around admitting or investigating links between religion and violence at all, a topic that is seen as extremely sensitive. In asylum determination, however, civil servants need to directly address the role religion plays in persecution, violence and abuse.

In this paper, I discuss my ongoing postdoctoral project on the assessment of religiously motivated violence in Finnish asylum determination. Analysing 250 asylum case files on religious persecution with a wide variety of claimant backgrounds and religious affiliations, the project asks 1) which kinds of violence, and towards whom, are accepted as related to religion in asylum determination, 2) how are instances of religion-related discourse in asylum interviews related to instances of discourse about violence, and 3) how do discursive constructions of the relationship between religion and violence function as part of justifying asylum decision-making. I argue that focusing on how immigration authorities handle accounts of religious violence provides a vital new angle on researching religion-based asylum, and also provides insight into how state authorities define religion in a context of migration governance.

Demander l'asile pour raisons religieuses en France // **Religious Asylum Claims in France**

Sabrina Pastorelli | CNRS

Comment on arrive à la décision de reconnaissance au droit d'asile pour motifs religieux ? Qui sont les acteurs qui accompagnent les demandeurs d'asile ? Quel rôle jouent-ils ? Quels sont les critères utilisés par les juges et quelles sont les preuves permettant de reconnaître persécution religieuse ?

A partir des récits des demandeurs d'asile pour motifs religieux, nous allons faire état des démarches qu'ils doivent accomplir à travers les diverses instances nationales. Nous analyserons le rôle joué par les acteurs (associations et avocats) tout au long de la procédure de reconnaissance. Nous présenterons également les décisions de justice qui reconnaissent la persécution religieuse sur la base de la Convention de 1951 relative au statut des réfugiés.

How is the right to asylum based on religious grounds recognized in France? Who supports asylum seekers? What role do they play? What are the criteria and evidence used by judges in the assessment of religious persecution?

On the basis of the narratives of asylum seekers on religious grounds, we will describe the steps that they have to take through the different national authorities. We will analyze the role played by actors (associations and lawyers) throughout the recognition procedure. In addition, we'll look at the court decisions recognizing religious persecution based on the 1951 Refugee Convention.

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Asylum Seekers from the North Caucasus Between Sufism and Salafism

Kristina Kovalskaya | GSRL, EPHE

The research on asylum seeking and asylum giving practices has often been inspired by the European-centred zone of postcolonial relations (Triandafyllidou, Modood 2011; Ammerman 2013; Tudor 2017; etc.). In this context, the comparisons with other post-imperial spaces and populations will bring insights in our understanding of the functioning of these processes. Based on my doctoral research on religious expertise in Russia and on my current study on post-Soviet Muslims migrated to Europe, this paper analyses the case of asylum seekers for religious reasons coming from the North Caucasus and, precisely, of Chechen, Ingush and Dagestani origins.

Mostly formed within a Sufi dominated environment, these women and men often switch to other forms of Islam before or after their migrating experience. The question of Salafi belonging is crucial during their migrating itinerary transforming them into criminals or victims according to the legal and political context of the country where their file is examined. Basing on my interviews with refugees and their advocates, as well as other workers of asylum structures, held within two projects funded by the French government and the Institut Convergences Migrations in France, Switzerland and Belgium, I will analyse these cases through the theoretical framework on the crossroad of sociology of religion, migration and asylum studies.

Studying Religion and Spiritualities in Latin America: Health, Circulations, Challenges and Perspectives

Étudier la religion et les spiritualités en Amérique latine : santé, circulations, défis et perspectives

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / Salle

311, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / Organisateurs de la session

Verónica Giménez Béliveau | Universidad de Buenos Aires, CONICET

Olga Odgers-Ortiz | El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

A Comparison of Catholic, Evangelical and Traditionalist Healing Practices in a Highland Maya Town in Guatemala

Jakob Egeris Thorsen | Aarhus University

Traditionalist Catholic Sensibilities in Latin America: Body, Health, and Critique of Modernity

Verónica Giménez Béliveau | Universidad de Buenos Aires, CONICET

Healing Across Borders: African Migrants' Religious and Therapeutic Itineraries Through Latin America

Olga Odgers-Ortiz | El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

A Comparison of Catholic, Evangelical and Traditionalist Healing Practices in a Highland Maya Town in Guatemala

Jakob Egeris Thorsen | Aarhus University

In this paper I explore the healing practices of Catholics (mainstream and Charismatic), Evangelicals and Traditionalists in a highland Maya town in Guatemala. During the last 50 years the religious landscape has been in rapid transformation. Today the majority of the population is either Evangelical or mainstream Catholic and only a minority practice the hybrid Maya-Catholic Traditionalism. Religious Transformation and modernization are closely interconnected. Overall, it is characterized by the promotion of a modern telos of progress and freedom, as well as the domestication of fate. However, pre-modern social imaginaries still play a significant role, and modern, pre-modern and post-modern worldviews are often intertwined, especially within the religious field. Among indigenous Maya, healing rituals play a central role in religious practice. There is a need for healing (both physical and psychological) due to a frequently absent and inaccessible healthcare system, family relations and gender roles in transformation, existential anomie, and the randomness and precariousness of the economic system and labor market. The paper will explore the differences and similarities between healing practices within the religious groups and attempt to explain these in the light of modernization theory, the different religious traditions as well as the common cultural-religious heritage. The paper is based on a recent fieldwork from 2025.

Traditionalist Catholic Sensibilities in Latin America: Body, Health, and Critique of Modernity

Verónica Giménez Béliveau | Universidad de Buenos Aires, CONICET

Catholicism in Latin America has given rise to movements of different types, from liberationist to charismatic. It has also generated various traditionalist currents that circulate in different countries and are characterized by the demand for a traditional society governed by Christian principles and organized by the Catholic Church. Traditionalist Catholic sensibilities have a specific vision of the body and health that is closely linked to their religious beliefs and rejection of modernity.

In traditional catholic milieus the body is conceived as a sacred gift from God, inherently sexed as either male or female according to divine order, thus rejecting the social construction of gender and opposing feminist and LGBTQI+ conceptions. Contraceptive methods and abortion are therefore rejected for impeding natural reproduction, and medical advances such as in vitro fertilization are criticized as interference with God's plan. The role of family and woman is central in the construction of the traditional catholic imaginary. Women are essentially linked to the maternal role, and expected to cultivate discretion, devotion, and sacrifice.

Traditional Catholic sensibilities emphasize a pure and healthy body that reflects its divine essence. This is why practices such as sport, outdoor activities, healthy eating and ordered sexuality within marriage shape a Catholic way of life. Furthermore, the body is seen as a spiritual battleground, permeable to the struggle between good and evil. Excesses such as unrestrained sexuality or drug use are believed to open the door to evil. RNA vaccines are viewed with suspicion as modifications of the divine order, in line with conspiratorial theories. There is a critique of consumerism, with the belief that the constant pursuit of material satisfaction is a deviation from authentic religious values and leads people away from God. A simple, natural and regulated life is idealized. Nature is seen as a space of purity: the consumption of healthy, natural food prepared by women is promoted as a form of family union.

Traditionalist Catholic sensibilities propose notions of the health and the body, which they try to project into the public sphere in order to influence government policies. Social polarization in America is fertile ground for traditionalist sensibilities, supported by social and political movements that propose right-wing visions of society, as in the case of Milei in Argentina, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Bukele in El Salvador and Trump in the United States.

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Healing Across Borders: African Migrants' Religious and Therapeutic Itineraries Through Latin America

Olga Ofgers-Ortiz | El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

Migrants crossing Latin America to seek asylum in the United States face extreme vulnerability, encountering numerous obstacles that deteriorate their physical and emotional health. With limited access to public healthcare systems in transit countries, they construct therapeutic assemblages that combine biomedicine, alternative medicine, and religious healing practices in varying proportions.

These assemblages are dynamic and evolve as migrants move through different contexts, interacting with others and exchanging knowledge to restore or maintain their health. The processes of transformation of these assemblages during migration are referred to as therapeutic itineraries. These itineraries reflect how migrants adapt their health strategies to changing circumstances, blending available resources with personal and collective practices.

This paper draws on fieldwork conducted in Tijuana, Mexico, to examine the therapeutic itineraries of migrants from Africa. Their experiences illustrate the plasticity of these itineraries and highlight the central role of religiosity in health care among migrants journeying through Latin America.

This paper is co-authored by Olga Lidia Olivas-Hernández from El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

Catholicism in Polarized Society: Navigating Modern Challenges (2)

Le catholicisme dans une société polarisée : relever les défis modernes (2)

Friday, July 4th | 12:00–13:30

Room / *Salle*

312, Vytautas Magnus University, V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas (Building A)

Convener(s) / *Organisateurs de la session*

Wojciech Sadlon | Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Institute for Catholic Church Statistics

Navigating Modern Challenges with Digital Media: A Case of a Roman Catholic Community in Łódź, Poland

Marta Kołodziejska | University of Warsaw

Emigration of Young People from the Catholic Church in Poland. Why and Whether at All is It Becoming a Reality?

Michał Mraczek | Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław

Social Media Discourses and Activists' Experiences of Catholic Anti-Abortion and Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the U.S.

Giulia Evolvi | University of Bologna

Navigating Modern Challenges with Digital Media: A Case of a Roman Catholic Community in Łódź, Poland

Marta Kołodziejska | University of Warsaw

The Roman Catholic Church has been actively making use of digital media for decades, expanding and diversifying its digital presence. Numerous works have addressed the adaptation of digital tools by the institutional Church (cf. Narbona 2016, Diez Bosch 2015, Campbell 2023, Radde-Antweiler and Grunenthal XY), with this digital adaptation intensifying during the COVID-19 pandemic (Mandes, Kołodziejska, Rabiej-Sienicka 2024). In Poland, the pandemic years (2020–2023) also coincided with a drop in mass attendance, which reached 28% in 2020, and showed only a one-percentage-point increase in 2023 (ISKK 2021, 2024). The use of digital media, despite the general enthusiasm within the Church, was also met with some theological and practical reservations and challenges (cf. Kołodziejska, forthcoming), and in the Polish case has not reversed the secularization tendencies. Digital media use itself has shown to have both positive and negative effect on religious institutions, and it may serve as a unifying, as well as a divisive force in the community (cf. Mandes, Kołodziejska, Rabiej-Sienicka 2024).

This paper explores the challenges of using digital media in Catholic parishes, based on a case study of a Jesuit community in Łódź, a city in central Poland. Drawing on the concepts of deep mediatization (Hepp, 2020) and religious media settlers (Hall, Kołodziejska, Radde-Antweiler, 2023), this paper examines how the Roman Catholic Church, as a corporate actor, responds to deep mediatization processes by using digital media to maintain community and assert authority. The analysis of the online activities in the Jesuit community during and after COVID-19, and of interviews with clergy and laypeople involved in their organization, has shown that the community effectively combines online and offline communicative practices, resulting in a form of “hybridization” of religious activities. This allows the community to maintain its mission and obtain the aforementioned goals, while at the same time helps it address the challenges of digitalizing society. Based on the findings, it will be argued that the “hybrid church” is a strategy of managing secularization processes on a micro-scale, but one that may have macro-scale effects as well.

Emigration of Young People from the Catholic Church in Poland. Why and Whether at All is It Becoming a Reality?

Michał Mraczek | Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław

More than thirty years after the collapse of the communist system in Poland, the Catholic Church is still in the process of redefining its place and role in a pluralistic society. Especially in the second decade of the 21st century, there was a clear acceleration of the process of secularisation of society and distancing from the Catholic Church. The fastest and most rapid changes in this regard are evident among young people who are moving further and further away from the Church. Religious faith is becoming more and more a matter of personal choice for a young person, rather than a matter of their cultural inheritance. In this context, it seems necessary to ask the question of the Church's adequate response to the ongoing processes of change and, above all, to take into account the new cultural and social context and the characteristics of successive generations (e.g. Z or Alpha). The presentation will focus on the changes taking place in the spirituality of Polish youth in its various aspects, among others: self-declaration of faith, religious practices, moral attitudes, participation in religious classes or priestly vocations. An attempt will also be made to identify the main motives for the distancing of the young generation from religion and the institutional Church, and to find an answer to the question of whether this is related more to the increasing secularisation of society or negative phenomena in the Church (e.g. paedophilia, links to politics). The enormous influence of the media, and especially the Internet, in shaping the consciousness of particularly the youngest generation who draws information about the world and life, but also about the Church, primarily from this source, is increasingly noticeable. An analysis of the current situation will lead to the question of the Church's response to the processes of change taking place.

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Social Media Discourses and Activists' Experiences of Catholic Anti-Abortion and Anti-Gender Movements in Europe and the U.S.

Giulia Evolvi | University of Bologna

Anti-gender groups organize campaigns across Europe and North America to protect traditional family values (Cordoba Vivas 2023). Alongside criticism of feminism and LGBTQ+ rights, these groups focus on abortion and reproductive healthcare. They utilize a rhetoric inspired by Catholicism to campaign against abortion (Garbagnoli 2016), and are active on social media to influence the public debate on the topic, often connecting with far-right populist movements (Graff e Korolczuk 2021); hence, this paper explores the following questions: How do anti-gender movements employ Catholicism to campaign against abortion? How are these discourses reflected on social media? Focusing on the transnational anti-gender platform CitizenGO (Katsiveli e Coimbra-Gomes 2020), the paper's methodological approach combines qualitative and quantitative analysis of Instagram posts, with observations of two Marches for Life (in the U.S. and Italy) and interviews with activists. The findings suggest that anti-abortion narratives on social media differ from the experiences of activists. On the one hand, Instagram posts refer to Christianity to portray Catholics as "victims" of secular modernity, sometimes in ironic, emotional, or sensationalistic ways. On the other hand, activists usually motivate their actions quoting prominent Catholic figures and stressing the sanctity of human life. In conclusion, the paper argues that anti-gender groups' use of social media seeks to influence media discourses on abortion through "us versus them" dynamics with secular culture that capture public attention; at the same time, people active in anti-abortion groups are not the main target of social media narratives because they tend to prefer campaigning in offline Catholic milieus.

NOTES

Religion, Migration and Conflicts in Polarized Societies
38th Biennial ISSR Conference

Layout design by Laura Petrauskienė

Approved for printing 14 06 2025. A run of 330 copies. Issuance by Order No. K25-022.

Published by
Vytautas Magnus University
K. Donelaičio g. 58, LT-44248, Kaunas, Lithuania
www.vdu.lt | leidyba@vdu.lt

Printed by
UAB „Vitaė Litera“
Savanorių pr. 137, LT-44146, Kaunas, Lithuania
www.tuka.lt | info@tuka.lt

38th
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Conference

