

Call for Participation and Papers: American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting

Session title: Understanding Sacred Space: Current Research & Future Directions

Session organizer: Max Samson, DePaul University

From library toilets (Jones, 2019) to tourist attractions (Gilliat-Ray, 2005) and from Jazzercise studios (Finlayson, 2017) to city streets (Samson & Leichty, 2022), geographers are increasingly challenging the traditional dichotomy between "religious" or "sacred" and "secular" spaces to reveal the "contemporaneous cohabitation and competition between multiple forms of belief and non-belief" (della Dora, 2018, p. 45). The continual emergence of countless religions and belief systems beyond the so-called world religions should similarly draw our attention to the increasingly varied ways in which individuals and groups engage in processes of sacralization, desacralization and resacralization (see Chen, 2017; della Dora, 2018).

The Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) specialty group invites conversation about the future of geographical inquiry into sacred spaces, and to this end intends to run both a paper session and a panel session on this subject. Interested speakers are welcome to discuss their own research or to explore possible future directions with regard to geographies of religion. Possible topics of interest include but are by no means limited to:

- The meaning of concepts like "religion," "sacred," "secular," "spiritual" and "belief system" in contemporary and/or historic contexts, and how these terms inform our understanding of space.
- The negotiation of diverse individual and collective understandings of faith systems.
- The development of previously ignored or unforeseen spaces of sacralization.
- The relevance of religions and belief systems to questions of bodily autonomy.
- The short- and potentially long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for collective worship, religious belonging, pilgrimage and more.

If you would like to present as part of the paper session, please email your 250-word abstract through the contact form under "Contact" by November 2, 2022. If you would like to participate in the panel session, please email a topic and a brief description of what you are interested in contributing to the panel, again through the

contact form by November 2, 2022. We also ask that you state whether you are expecting to speak in person in Denver, or virtually.

Works cited

Chen, N. (2017). Secularization, sacralization and the reproduction of sacred space: Exploring the industrial use of ancestral temples in rural Wenzhou, China. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 18(4), 530–552.

della Dora, V. (2018). Infrasecular geographies: Making, unmaking and remaking sacred space. *Progress in Human Geography*, 42(1), 44–71.

Finlayson, C. (2017). Church-in-a-box: Making space sacred in a non-traditional setting. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 34(3), 303–323.

Gilliat-Ray, S. (2005). 'Sacralising' sacred space in public institutions: A case study of the prayer space at the Millennium Dome. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 20(3), 357–372.

Jones, R. D. (2019). The makeshift and the contingent: Lefebvre and the production of precarious sacred space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 37(1), 177–194.

Samson, M. G. M., & Leichty, J. G. (2022). Images of the urban religious landscape: Gen Z seek out the sacred in the city. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 39(2), 225–250.