



Visit **GORABS Online**  
[aaggorabs.wordpress.com](http://aaggorabs.wordpress.com)



## NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

Page 1: GORABS at the AAG

Page 2: Message from the  
Chair

Page 3: The David E. Sopher  
Award 2017 & 10th GORABS  
Annual Lecture

Page 4-5: Upcoming  
Conference Announcements

Pages 6-36: Papers and  
Sessions of GORABS interest  
at AAG 2017 Boston

Pages 37-41: Minutes from  
2017 GORABS Business  
Meeting



Please send comments, questions,  
letters, and newsletter  
submissions to  
Vincent M. Artman,  
GORABS Secretary,  
[vartman@gmail.com](mailto:vartman@gmail.com)

Dear GORABS Members,

On behalf of the rest of the Board, I hope that you will enjoy perusing the Spring 2018 edition of the GORABS Newsletter. This year, we have quite a few paper sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by the specialty group, and there are several other sessions that may be of interest to members.

Of special note is that this year are **GORABS's Ruby (40<sup>th</sup>) Anniversary**, as well as our **10<sup>th</sup> Annual GORABS Lecture**. This year's lecture is actually divided into two sessions, and will feature presentations by **Avril Maddrell**, **Paul Cloke**, and **Caroline Nagel**. Following the third talk, there will be a general discussion of all three papers. We hope to see you there!

Finally, please note that our webpage can now be found at: [aaggorabs.wordpress.com](http://aaggorabs.wordpress.com). You can also find us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag/>

-Vincent M. Artman, GORABS Secretary

### GORABS at AAG 2018 – NEW ORLEANS

Please note the following GORABS-related information, with reference to our forthcoming annual AAG meeting in New Orleans:

1. **10<sup>th</sup> Annual GORABS Lecture, 2018, Paper presentations marking GORABS's Ruby Anniversary are scheduled on Thursday, April 12 from 1:20 – 3:00 & 3:30-5:00 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor ;**
2. **The Annual GORABS business meeting is scheduled in the same room, immediately prior to the Annual Lecture (11:50 am – 1:10 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor )**
3. **GORABS is sponsoring 5 paper sessions this year.**

### GORABS Mission Statement

The central objective of GORABS Specialty Group is to encourage and advance the study of the geographical dimensions of religious phenomena and belief systems. This includes, but is not limited to, the study of spatio-religious aspects of human behavior, socioeconomic and political issues, material culture, gender role, and human-environment relations from a religio-geographical perspective.

GORABS intends to achieve its objectives by organizing scholarly paper presentations and discussion of sessions at the professional meetings, developing strategies to facilitate teaching the geography of Religions, publicizing information about GORABS, establishing contact with scholars in other related disciplines, and by seeking funding for research pertaining to the geography of religions.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear GORABS Members,

It's hard to credit it's been eleven months since my pre-AAG2017 Boston MA circular to you, and AAG 2017 was a good conference for us, as you will see in the business minutes attached to and forming part of this newsletter. Significant progress was made there, and since, with regard to our two significant anniversaries being celebrated over the next year, commencing with this AAG2018 conference and ending with our AAG2019 conference, namely **our GORABS Ruby Anniversary (40th) and the 10th Annual GORABS Lecture**. With both of these in mind, it has been a pleasure to invite, and to look forward to receiving the papers of Dr Avril Maddrell, Professor Paul Cloke and Professor Caroline Nagel as The Ruby Anniversary Lecture Series on 'GORABS Day' at AAG 2018, namely, Thursday April 12, which also happens to host our Annual Business Meeting! Our Ruby Anniversary Year celebrations will close with our annual lecture series joint-founders, **Peter Hopkins & Betsy Olsen**, doing a joint-affair for AAG2019, in Washington DC, with our continuing senior scholar, Prof. Stanley Brunn, continuing to form a part of the proceedings.

The number of GORABS-interest papers, and GORABS-sponsored sessions continues to do well, with over 50 papers and 5 sessions and our board has continued its annual tradition of personal approach to non-faculty and grad students to consider an application for The David E. Sopher New Scholar Award, in time for our deadline of March 31, 2018, giving ten days before the conference commences.

Following on from last year's annual report, lodged to AAG Communities, here is a reminder of our various tasks and sub-committees (and we do consider this year to be the commencement of our 40th year, which would then be celebrated up to and including AAG 2019 at DC)

Over the course of the next year, our newly established **GORABS Social Media Sub-Committee**, intends to 'up our game' with our website and in posting to Facebook. For the record, in case you have not already browsed them, these are [<https://www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag/>] and [<https://aaggorabs.wordpress.com/>].

Several positions come available at each conference for those interesting in serving on the GORABS Board, and *now is the time, **one month out**, when GORABS-minded member of the AAG can feel free reach out to us* and, indeed, may feel free to bring their expertise to our Annual Business Meeting on April 12, to support our 40th year and to reach out to their circle meantime, in making sure people know it is happening.

Best wishes,

*David J. Butler,  
GORABS Chair*

## THE DAVID E. SOPHER NEW SCHOLAR AWARD 2018

**Description:** The purpose of the David E. Sopher New Scholar Award is to promote intellectual enquiry from new scholars into geographies of religions and belief systems through the presentation of papers at the AAG meeting. Papers will be judged on potential contribution to the field of Geography of Religions and Belief Systems, organization, and written composition.

**Eligibility:** Both graduate students and untenured faculty, who are not currently serving on the GORABS board, can apply for the award.

**Award:** The amount for the 2018 award is a travel grant of \$250. The recipient will also be given an official certificate at the AAG awards luncheon.

**Disbursement:** A check will be disbursed to the winner at the 2018 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Annual Business Meeting at the AAG event.

**Requirements:** The paper and application form must be emailed to the GORABS chair in rich text or Microsoft Word format by March 31, 2018. The paper must subsequently be presented at the national AAG meeting, though it does not have to be in a GORABS sponsored session. A panel drawn from the GORABS board will judge the papers and determine a recipient. The winner will be announced in time to attend the awards luncheon with a GORABS representative. GORABS reserves the right to not make an award in a given year.

**Vincent M. Artman**, Secretary coordinates this award on behalf of the Board of Geography of Religion and Belief Systems (GORABS) – Email: [vincent.artman@wayne.edu](mailto:vincent.artman@wayne.edu)

### \*\*\*\*\* Don't miss the 10th GORABS Annual Lecture \*\*\*\*\*

The GORABS Annual Lecture 2018 celebrating our Ruby Anniversary is scheduled on Thursday, April 12 from 1:20 – 3:00 & 3:30 - 5:00 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. This event will include lectures from Professor Avril Maddrell, Professor Paul Cloke, and Professor Caroline Nagel, with discussion on all three papers to follow in the second session.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Finally, please join us at the GORABS Annual Business Meeting.  
The meeting will be held immediately before the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture in the same  
room.**

**CALL FOR PAPERS****Borders and Boundaries: 'Religion' on the Periphery  
Call for Papers**

Joint Conference between the British Association for the Study of Religions and the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions

**3–5 September 2018, Queen's University, Belfast**

Held in Association with the Religious Studies Research Forum at the Institute of Theology and the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics.

**Keynote Speakers**

[Gladys Ganiel](#) (Queen's University, Belfast)

[Naomi Goldenberg](#) (University of Ottawa)

Borders and boundaries define limits and margins, centres and peripheries. They demarcate territories, and separate entities and bodies and, as such, they function to guard space, limit action and exclude. They are, however, also contact zones and places of exchange, the 'limen' or threshold, the in-between, and the places of temptation and transgression. In the current political context when Ireland and the UK are faced with the dilemmas, paradoxes and implications of Brexit, this special joint conference of the British Association for the Study of Religions (BASR) and the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions (ISASR) invites paper, research slam, panel and roundtable proposals on the theme of Borders and Boundaries. Scholars based outside the Republic of Ireland or the UK are invited to submit proposals related to this theme regardless of whether their work relates to these islands. Scholars who are based in the UK or the Republic of Ireland and are working on religion and related categories are welcome to submit proposals on any topic whether or not it relates to the conference theme.

**Paper Proposals:** please submit title and abstract of 200 words.

**Research Slam:** A research "slam" is a quick succession of presentations of max. 7 minutes per presenter that gives a lively impression of a project, a programme, a network, or a collaboration the presenter is participating in. Please submit research slam proposals in the form of a title and brief (max. 150 words) abstract. It is possible to submit a research slam proposal as well as a paper proposal.

**Panel proposals:** please submit abstracts of 200 words for panel proposals. All panel proposals should include the name, title, affiliation, and email address of each presenter plus the chair and discussant (if applicable) plus abstracts for each of the papers on the panel.

Proposals to be submitted to [isasrbasr2018@gmail.com](mailto:isasrbasr2018@gmail.com) by **27 April 2018** (please include name, title, affiliation, and email address). Confirmation of acceptance by **15 June 2018**.

**Deadline for proposals for papers, panels and the research slam: 27 April 2018**

**CALL FOR PAPERS****NCSR 2018: The 24th Nordic Conference in the Sociology of Religion.**

Growing religious diversity characterizes most countries across the world, often linked to the globalization of migration, politics, economies, and the media. The diversity offers new challenges of managing religion in countries that previously were more religiously homogenous. As many countries are characterized by complex patterns of both increasing public visibility of religion and secularization, religion is often at the center of political contestations. On the one hand, politicians struggle to develop public policies that balance human rights, equal opportunities for religious minorities, and the continuation of older religious traditions. On the other hand, various groups and political parties use religion to draw social, political, and symbolic boundaries – and some take extreme measures and use violence strategically to make themselves visible and enact their policies.

The 24th Nordic Conference for Sociology of Religion seeks a more thorough understanding, theoretically as well as empirically, of religion, politics, and boundaries. While sociologists often have attempted to understand these developments in terms of single dimension theories, we would like to find out how this complexity is part of processes of change and continuity in contemporary society. Contributions addressing these and other topics in the sociology of religion are welcome!

Key notes:

**Mark Juergensmeyer** (Professor of Sociology and Global Studies, Kundan Kaur Kapany Chair of Global and Sikh Studies, Fellow and Founding Director, Orfalea Center for Global & Int'l Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara): **The Global Rise of Religious Violence**

**Line Nyhagen** (Reader in sociology, Loughborough University, UK): **Contestations of Feminism, Secularism and Religion**

**Lorne Dawson** (Professor of Sociology and Legal Studies at University of Waterloo, Canada and Director of Canadian Network for Research On Terrorism, Security and Society): **Understanding the Role of Religion in the Radicalization of Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq**

Please contact professor [Inger Furseth](#) for more information.

---

**UPCOMING CONFERENCE**  
**European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR)**  
**June 17-21 Conference in Bern**  
See <http://www.easr.eu/> for more information





**AAG 2017 Sessions & Papers, sponsored by (or thematically linked to)  
GORABS interests:**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 10**

**Paper Session: For Whom and What Do We Grieve? The Spaces And Politics Of Diverse Experiences Of Death, Loss And Remembrance 1 (8:00 – 9:40 am in studio 5, marriott, 2nd floor)**

***Geography of Death, Memory, and Religion: Shrines dedicated to African Saints and Martyrs in Gujarat, India***

**Authors:** Neelima Jeychandran\*, *Pennsylvania State University*

**Keywords:** geography of death, sacred landscapes, memoryscapes

**Abstract:** In this paper, I discuss how African presence in the western Indian state of Gujarat is remembered and reinvented through the palimpsestic spatial layering of geographies of death and sacred landscapes. In the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat there are several mazars (shrines) dedicated to deceased African martyrs and saints. Most of these shrines are integrated into a Sufi Islamic worship culture and are modest structures constructed to house the tombs of the deceased Africans. Other than the small shrines, there are also a few mausoleums from the 16th century with graves of African martyrs. Thriving trade relations with the Swahili Coast brought African seafarers, merchants, and indentured labors, as well as slaves, to port cities on the western coast of India. In the case of Gujarat, not all Africans were slaves, some of them were employed by the local rulers as tax collectors, administrators, and soldiers, and a few Africans also became influential dignitaries and powerful generals in the Gujarat Sultanate (1407-1573 CE). The tombs of African ascetics and martyrs later became part of the sacred geography of Ahmedabad as the spirits of the deceased Africans continue to intercede in the lives of the local devotees. By examining the religious, mnemonic, spatial, and somatic practices at these shrines, I show how underrepresented discourses on Africans in India are constructed at these sites to generate an alternative discursive exegesis on African presence in India.

**Paper Session: Children’s and young people’s geographies between “sandbox cities” and “playground cities” (8:00 – 9:40 am in Astor Ballroom II, Astor, 2nd Floor)’**

***Teaching Controversial Topics: Promoting Effective Citizenship And Student Empathy In Secondary Schools***

**Authors:** Neil Conner\*, *Delta State University*, Carolyn Casale, *Delta State University*

**Keywords:** Controversial topics, Citizenship, Empathy, Secondary Education, Geographic Education

**Abstract:** This paper explores pedagogical practices specifically designed to promote effective citizenship and student empathy at two high schools located in the Mississippi Delta. One of the schools in this study was public, with a predominantly African American student body, while the other school was private, with a predominantly Caucasian student body. Working closely with the instructors at these two schools, we designed and taught six interactive, co-teaching lessons related to the following controversial topics:

Mississippi/Confederate Flag, Religion and Education, LGBTQA+ Rights, American Sports and Socio-Political Activism, Genocide, and Privilege in American Society. This paper will discuss the framework of these lessons and the data acquired through pre- and post-surveys, student assignments, and co-teacher reflections.

## **Paper Session: Municipalities and Municipalism: Local Politics Beyond The North-South Divide (10:00 am – 12:20 pm in Napoleon C2, Sheraton 3rd Floor)**

### ***Counter-Municipal Cartographies And Planning Enclosures In Mumbai***

**Authors:** Malav Kanuga\*, *Anthropology PhD Program*

**Keywords:** Municipalism, Urban Space, Commons, Enclosure, Planning, Mumbai

**Abstract:** This paper draws on ethnographic research in Mumbai within recent grassroots campaigns contesting municipal planning paradigms at the heart of the city's current implementation of a twenty-year Development Plan. It discusses the emergence of a cycle of city-wide grassroots coordination and mobilization to intervene and shape planning "from below" which has included processes of diverse community consultations, community "mapping" of land use, the valorization of local knowledges of land and place, and public protests against layers of enclosures articulated through technical planning regimes and developmental governance. What is arising from mobilizations around the Mumbai's Development Plan is an unlikely and unprecedented "counter-municipal cartography" at the heart of which are question of enclosures and commons, livelihood, land use, social difference, and spatial organization. The paper reflects on the challenges of political mobilization and urban planning imaginary in conditions of deep informality structured around salient differences such as caste, class, religion, and gender that produce uneven and unequal landscapes of access to land and services, and structurally exclude large parts of society. By investigating the emergence of a counter-municipalist response to planning's multiple enclosures, it highlights the political cultures and imaginary expressed in these mobilizations and how we might understand their beginnings, affects, unlikely combinations and durations. The paper concludes with a reflection on the new orientations to time and space articulated in the city's layered history of enclosure and commons in the mobilizations which come together as well as come apart but nevertheless reconstitute the city as a terrain of struggle.

## **Paper Session: School Segregation In Contemporary Cities: Social, Spatial And Political Dynamics 1 (12:40 – 2:20 pm in Gallier B, Sheraton, 4th Floor)**

### ***State Supported Segregation? Examining Migrant Clustering in Primary Schools in Ireland***

**Authors:** Valerie Ledwith\*, *National University of Ireland, Galway*

**Keywords:** School choice, segregation, Ireland

**Abstract:** In Ireland, research on school ethnic and/or racial composition has been relatively sparse, with recent education policy debates focused on whether the dominance of the Catholic Church in primary school provision is an appropriate model for an increasingly diverse population. These debates are clearly informed by and reflective of increased diversity in the school population as a result of increased immigration to Ireland in the last 3 decades; however, the emphasis is on increasing the types of school available to provide a variety of options for parents to choose from. While efforts to ensure that students from a range of religious or non-religious backgrounds are catered for in education contexts are to be lauded, this research shows that an unintended consequence of this approach is increased ethnic segregation as a result of school choice. This is

not surprising, given the evidence from research on school choice which highlights how school choice exacerbates socio-economic and demographic segregation. In effect, school choice in Ireland is deepening the potential for ethnic and/or racial segregation, even though the primary aim of choice policy is to remove religion as a selection criteria for schools. As such, this research suggests that enshrining parental choice as the corner-stone of school provision in Ireland is flawed since it, intentionally or otherwise, builds an educational infrastructure that encourages school segregation.

## **Paper Session: Conceptualizing The Geographies Of Religion In Education (12:40 – 2:20 pm in Studio 5, Marriott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

### ***Geographies of Jewish Education: The Dynamic Spatiality of Jewish Practice and Identity in the Anglo-Jewish Community***

**Authors:** Maxim Samson\*, *University of Leeds*

**Keywords:** Religion, ethnicity, education, Jewish, identity

**Abstract:** In spite of the controversial place of religion within many contemporary societies' education systems, the spaces where religious education occurs have received relatively little geographical attention. Through empirical (qualitative) analysis of Jewish day school education in England, this paper highlights how a geographical approach can facilitate new understandings of faith schools, secularization and multiculturalism. In particular, the paper illustrates how Jewish schools are becoming increasingly central to Jewish practice and identification amongst the 'mainstream' Jewish community. Parents were able to cite their Jewishness as a means of securing a school place that they believed would provide an excellent secular education for their children – as well as a vicarious Jewish community for themselves – without necessarily requiring them to undertake the 'traditional' practices associated with a Jewish identity, such as in the home and synagogue. Indeed, families' Jewish practices were highly personalised and diverse, in many ways challenging notions of 'authentic' Jewishness. Consequently, Jewish schools were seen to represent important sites of contestation over what it means to be Jewish or to practise a Jewish identity, with implications for the ways in which ethnoreligious identities are lived, performed and understood in contemporary multicultural societies.

### ***Geographies of Religious Education during the Allied Occupation of Japan***

**Authors:** Jolyon Thomas\*, *University of Pennsylvania*

**Keywords:** education, religion, Japan, occupation

**Abstract:** When American-led forces occupied Japan on 2 September 1945 after a brutal war, they set about promoting democracy through several contradictory initiatives: Political purges removed democratically elected leaders from public office. Censorship programs promoted freedom of expression. And liberalization of public school education led to draconian crackdowns on curricular content. Japanese schoolchildren censored their own textbooks by redacting them with black ink and cutting out offensive passages with scissors; "ultranationalist" educators left schools in two rounds of purges. The occupiers summarily discontinued courses in History, Geography, and Self-Cultivation (shūshin) and forbade the wartime practices of bowing in the direction of the imperial palace or venerating the imperial portrait. These initiatives were ostensibly about fostering Japan's new postwar democracy, but they were also about eliminating "State Shinto" as a coercive national religion. Set in a context of overlapping political jurisdictions and in a situation in which the occupiers saw religion as both inimical to democracy and constitutive of it, the Occupation project of reforming Japanese public school education reflected divergent notions about the relationship between religion, subject formation, and public school education. This paper traces these competing ideas while tracking salient changes in postwar Japanese pedagogy. Maps changed. History was abruptly rewritten. And the changing spaces of schoolyards



and classrooms focused pupils' attention not on the palace at the heart of Tokyo, but on their own little hearts and minds.

### ***Secularity, National Temporalities And The Politics Of Religious Difference In Copenhagen***

**Authors:** Tatiana Fogelman\*, *Roskilde University*

**Keywords:** religion, difference, diversity, temporality, national, Jewishness

**Abstract:** Most scholars alike see Copenhagen as "a pioneering municipality and a role-model for other municipalities with respect to diversity" in Denmark (Andersen et al 2014: 4). In 2014 the city itself has boasted that it had become the 3rd most inclusive city in Europe, according to the Intercultural cities index, and claimed it was well on its way to achieve its goal to become "the most inclusive metropolis in Europe" by the year 2015. That very same year, however, left-dominated Copenhagen municipality ended the decades-long cooperation agreement with the only Jewish nursery and preschool in Denmark, effectively forcing it to leave the public sphere and privatize. This came about as the municipality's Children and Youth Committee withdrew its previous willingness to accommodate the daycare's need for more closed days - due to keeping closed on all Jewish holidays - than the officially permitted number. Drawing on document analysis related to the case and interviews, this paper investigates peculiar politics behind this case against the background of both self-proclaimed "diversity mainstreaming" in the city and politicians' lingering concerns about minorities' parallel societies. I focus on the understanding of both, religion and diversity, and their modes of governance both in the city and Danish society more broadly, including how they pertain to the issue of national temporalities and rhythms and their presumed secularity. Approaching this case through the concepts of redistribution and recognition I highlight the role of legacies of equality-as-sameness, paradoxical secularism and progressive self-image in this case of political disagreement.

### ***Losing the Faith?: Protestant Boarding Schools in 21st Century Ireland***

**Authors:** David Butler\*, *Department of Geography, University College Cork (UCC)*

**Keywords:** Youth, Reformed Christian, generational change, Ireland

**Abstract:** The paper aims to provide critical insights into the continuing importance of faith-based education geographies and its relationship to Protestant youth culture and relationships in rural Ireland over the last quarter century. Protestants have always placed a special emphasis on church schools, often sending their children considerable distances as weekly boarders to obtain a foundation with the peers of their own church, often significant communities which remain predominantly, though not exclusively, on the land. Against this background, Protestants practised of a form of self-exclusion for much of the twentieth century - forming a community within a community - with separate support networks and services. Reluctance to abandon this system of inter-generational faith continuity is exhibited by Protestants managing a very high proportion of the remaining boarding schools of urban and rural Ireland. This system is now threatened by government funding cuts and the redistribution of educational allowances previously relied upon by these minority communities. Little attention has been given the evolution of youth education in the various reformed Christian denominations in Ireland and, based on extensive interviewing in case-study schools, this paper seeks to highlight changing attitudes towards church community, education and religion - long seen as an invaluable means of holding the line against intrusion from without - using oral testimonies from the older generation of youth (with memories back to the 1980s) as well as from contemporary Protestant and Roman Catholic youth in Protestant managed boarding schools.

**Discussant:** Edward Davis, Emory & Henry College.

**Paper Session: Food Geographies: Culture, Media, Politics 1 (12:40 – 2:20 pm)**

## in Studio 3, Marriott, 2nd Floor)

### ***Spiritual Flavours: Using Visual Arts Practice To Explore Food And Faith In West London***

**Authors:** Laura Cuch\*, *University College London*

**Keywords:** Food, Religion, Photography, Film, Art, Visual Methods, Public Engagement

**Abstract:** In this paper, I present the project *Spiritual Flavours* (the practice element of my PhD) to reflect on my experience of using visual arts that draw on food media genres, such as cooking programs and cookbooks, to investigate the relationship between food and faith. This is a collaborative arts project with members of different faith communities in the suburbs of West London, who contribute recipes that they relate to their spirituality and religious practices. These communities include a Synagogue, a Sri Lankan Hindu Temple, a mosque, a Sikh Gurdwara, an Anglican church, a multicultural Roman Catholic church and an ethnically diverse Pentecostal church. Through interviews and cooking sessions, the project pays attention to affective relationships with food, as a vehicle to explore ideas about home, gender, inheritance, tradition, difference and belief. These sessions are the basis of a 'multi-faith' short film and a cookbook. On the one hand, the book visually explores a wide range of relationships between food and spirituality across home and the worship spaces. On the other hand, through the use of a three-split screen, the film focuses on three people from three of the faith communities to create visual and sonic synchronies and asynchronies between home cooking, religious practices and biographical narratives. Finally, I argue that visual arts practice (distinct from visual methods) contributes a performative understanding of religious culinary traditions in ways that are inseparable from the practices involved in the creative process itself. A five-minute preview of the film is available at [www.spiritualflavours.com](http://www.spiritualflavours.com).

## **Paper Session: Forest Management 3: Local Rights and Traditional Knowledge (12:40 – 2:20 in Bourbon Room, Astor, Mezzanine)**

### ***Revisiting Livelihood At The Sundarbans Forest: Intersectional Analyses Of Livelihood-Seeking Behaviours After Cyclone Aila***

**Authors:** Sajal Roy\*, *Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University*

**Keywords:** Sundarbans, Livelihood, Intersectionality, Cyclone Aila, Long-term

**Abstract:** The Sundarbans forest at the southwest coastal regions of Bangladesh is acknowledged as one of the most environmentally vulnerable zones in South Asia. The Bangladesh Sundarbans Forest adjoins numerous rivers and canals in the Bay of Bengal. This beautiful forest, a UNESCO heritage site, provides livelihood support to 3.5 million poor people. The forest-dependent in these regions are treated as 'marginalised social groups' on the basis of their socioeconomic status, religion, mobility, ethnicity and class-based relations. The earnings from their traditional livelihood in the Sundarbans Forest has been severely affected, and are being continuously affected for many decades by the threats of disaster events. Particularly, the cyclone Aila, which happened on 9 May 2009 severely displaced livelihood activities and livelihood resources of the forest-dependents in the Shyamnagar sub-district. This paper addresses the long-term (2009 to date) impacts of Aila on the traditional forest-based livelihood activities of two contrasting communities (Muslim and Munda community) in the villages of Kalinchi (with Munda community) and Shora (with Muslim community). The findings of this autoethnographic study suggest that post-Aila, there is an increase of mobility in each community, which assists inhabitants to explore other potential sources of livelihood. This include earning livelihood from the crab point (home-based crab nurturing point in the pond), gher (saline water fishing pond) and working at a brick field. The findings also indicate that intersectional dimensions of marital status, gender, religion, and class-relations of these communities shape their behaviours for the ownership of livelihood

resources.

## **Paper Session: Public Engagement As Purpose: Methods, Practices And Implications For Geographical Research 3 (12:40 – 2:20 pm in Napoleon A2, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

### ***Artistic Interventions And Public Engagements: Participatory Research With Faith Communities And Creative Professionals In West London***

**Authors:** David Gilbert\*, *Royal Holloway, University of London*, Claire Dwyer, *University College London, United Kingdom*, Nazneen Ahmed, *University College London, United Kingdom*, Laura Cuch Grases, *University College London, United Kingdom*, Natalie Hyacinth, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

**Keywords:** public engagement, art, religion, suburbs, architecture, London, collaboration

**Abstract:** This paper reflects on research undertaken as part of a project using artistic interventions to engage with different faith communities in West London. The Making Suburban Faith project has been organized around a series of collaborations between academic geographers, creative professionals and local faith communities. These have included an architectural project, a textile and embroidery installation, film-making, photography and music-making. In each there has been a different relationship between artistic project and community group, but also different forms of knowledge production. The paper evaluates the ways that artistic interventions can foster particular forms of engagement, facilitate participatory research on issues of identity, emotions and spirituality, and help explore what we describe as ‘devotional creativity.’ We also consider the different motivations and experiences of engagement for academics, creative professionals and the community groups, in what Marcus (2016) suggests may be ‘mutually challenging collaborations.’ The paper contrasts the forms of engagement, knowledge-production and mutual challenges in two of the Making Suburban Faith collaborations: Architectures of Shared Space, working with the architectural practice Magera Yvars and sixth-form school students and teachers from Brentside School in Ealing, and Fabric of Faith, working with the artist Katy Beinart and women from different Ealing faith communities to create the textile and embroidery installation ‘My life is but a weaving’.

## **Paper Session: Faith, Conflict And Care In Crisis And Disaster Recovery (2:40 – 4:20 pm in Napoleon B3, Sheraton 3rd Floor)**

### ***Coping, Caring And Believing: The Embodied Work Of Disaster Recovery Workers***

**Authors:** Christine Eriksen\*, *University of Wollongong*

**Keywords:** disaster, care, faith, coping capacity, Australia

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the affective and embodied experiences of care and self-care narrated by disaster recovery workers in Australia. By critically examining coping mechanisms and narratives of belief and doubt in self, others, nature and the supernatural, two different types of faith are revealed that enable recovery workers to adapt to and cope with disasters. Faith can be founded on or driven by group-identity that provides interaction, common purpose, relational support and collective strength to cope with adversity. Alternatively, faith can be something individual that is connected to a geographical place, (personal) philosophy, or religion, which provide clarity and inner strength that assist crisis response. Both result in spiritual and, often but not always, physical safe spaces – sacred spaces in both a secular and religious sense. These types of faith and safe spaces provide anchor points and purpose that foster compassion and care towards self and others. They also accentuate the individual and collective choices we face in terms of mitigating and adapting to changing

natural and political climates.

**Paper Session: Action, Ordinary Life, and the City D: Transportation Policy (2:40 - 4:20 pm in Poydras, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

***Changing Lanes: Mobility, Access, And The Right To The Streets In The Shaw Neighborhood Of Washington DC***

**Authors:** Rebecca Kukla\*, *Hunter College - City University*

**Keywords:** transportation, gentrification, Washington DC, bicycles, parking, identity, right to the city

**Abstract:** In October 2015, a town hall meeting in the Shaw neighborhood of Washington, DC drew over 300 citizens. At issue was a proposal to build a protected cycle track down 6th St. NW, along side of several African American churches, including the giant United House of Prayer. The meeting turned into a heated exchange, with members of the church who were concerned about losing parking spaces claiming that the proposed plan violated of their constitutional right to the free practice of religion, while bike commuters and accused the congregants of being suburbanites who were privileging personal convenience over safety and the environment. Each side accused the other of not ‘really’ being from the neighborhood. As of today, the proposal remains on hold. Using spatial data on commuting paths, traffic patterns, and migration into and out of the neighborhood, quantitative data on modes of transportation, and ethnographic and photo documentation, I examine this multidimensional conflict over ownership of what is arguably the most historically significant and quickly changing neighborhood in the city. The conflict over use of these streets concerns material access, mobility, and control, but it is also a vivid manifestation of a deeper conflict over the meaning of the neighborhood and who belongs in it. At issue is the need for transportation that work for the District’s exploding and shifting population, as well as the risk that a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood with rich significance for African American history is losing its identity as the heart of “Chocolate City.”

**Paper Session: New Cultural Geography in China-2 (2:40 - 4:20 pm in Balcony M, Marriott, 4th Floor)**

***Consuming Halal Food Outside From Home: Chinese Muslims’ Geographies Of Encounter In Urban Guangzhou***

**Authors:** Chen Liu\*, *Sun Yat-Sen University*

**Keywords:** geographies of encounter, equality, religion, Muslim, China

**Abstract:** This article aims to understand how Chinese Muslims negotiate their religious identities and how they are emplaced and displaced in urban Guangzhou – a global city with multiple religions and ethnicities in south China – through the lens of food consumption in public spheres. Based on narratives from both Chinese Muslims and non-Muslims, this research sheds lights on the geographies of encounters in public Guangzhou. Focusing on daily food practices of Chinese Muslims who are immigrated to Guangzhou from Islamic communities in northwest China consume food in the public, this research elucidates how Muslims use food to sustain their religious identities, how they manage their food practices when eating with Han Chinese and how such daily food practices exclude them from the mainstream Han Chinese culture in relation to wider socio-political issues. The key argument of this research indicates that public food spaces can on the one hand enable the social interactions between Chinese Muslims and non-Muslims, and on the other hand gain new meanings through the encounter of these two groups. This research contributes to the geographies of encounters through

an intersectional and interactional analysis based on both narratives from the majority and minority groups. Thus, this article not only provides an empirical case study which displays how Chinese Muslims are emplaced and displaced in the dominant Han Chinese social and cultural context, but also indicates that daily encounters in the public are multi-sited and are accomplished through the socio-spatial interactions of different bodies and practices.

### **Paper Session: Researching dis/articulations of Globalized Production (4:40 – 6:20 pm in Proteus, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**

#### ***Researching The De/Termination And Recuperation Of Value Through Plastic Recycling Networks In Calcutta, India***

**Authors:** Nicolas Schlitz\*, *Osnabrück University*

**Keywords:** waste, value, recycling, disarticulations, methods, methodology, calcutta, informal

**Abstract:** From an epistemological perspective waste can be understood as the „other“ of capitalist value. As such, the engagement with waste offers a specific perspective on uneven development and on a capitalist tendency to constantly re/create the own frontiers in order to ensure continued expansion and further rounds of commodity production. In fact, processes of wasting demarcate the discursive and corporeal boundary spaces and border lands of contentious endings. But, they also accommodate recurring beginnings and persistent resistances: retrievals, revaluations, renegotiations and re-establishments of conditions for social reproduction, always repeated with difference. The plastic recycling networks in Calcutta, India, constitute such a boundary space of beginnings and endings. Once the prosperous industrial hub of Eastern India and incubator of domestic plastic processing and recycling, this metropolitan region experienced the period of intensified integration into globalized production from the 1990s onwards as period of disinvestment. Transversal to this story of macro-economic decay, oscillating between the ‘metropolis’ and its ‘hinterland’, and shaped by hierarchies related to sex, caste and class, communal belonging and religion, the informalized recycling sector in Calcutta draws an odd picture of vibrant stagnancy. I reflect on the multiple borders and boundaries that enabled, impeded and shaped my attempt to research the destruction and recuperation of value from plastic waste. The appraisal of the determination of value, and in fact revaluation of used plastic materials through the multiple circuits of Calcutta’s plastic recycling networks necessitated above all an attentiveness to the multiple boundaries constituted by and articulated through informality.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11**

### **Paper Session: Race, Violence and Conflict (8:00 – 9:40 am in Napoleon D2, Sheraton 3rd Floor)**

#### ***Mapping Religious Conflicts In Rio De Janeiro, Brazil***

**Authors:** Sonia GIACOMINI\*, *Pontificia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro*

**Keywords:** Religious conflicts, Social Cartography; Ethnic discrimination

**Abstract:** Since 2009, I have been collecting data on diverse manifestations of religious intolerance in the city of Rio de Janeiro. In the 2012 AAG Annual Meeting I’ve presented a paper on the project Mapping Afro-Brazilian Religions in Rio de Janeiro, showing the geography of conflicts and attacks against the followers and sites of cult (terreiros). The 2010 Brazilian Census shed light on a new reality of the religious demography and



geography which still is subject to study by demographers, geographers, sociologists and anthropologists. One conclusion is already established: the deep changes in the Brazilian religious reality is at the origin of the increasing of the tensions opposing the followers of different religions. Nevertheless, also it is well known that different religious groups are differently affected and engaged in the conflicts. The paper offers a contemporary perspective of religious conflicts between two important religious segments: Afro-Brazilian religions and neo-pentecostal denominations. The mapping of religious conflicts in Rio de Janeiro in the last five years gives the empirical basis to our approach.

### **Paper Session: Segregation and Population Mobility (10:00 – 11:40 in Jackson, Marriott, 5th Floor)**

#### ***Episodes Of Identity And Belonging Among Algerian Immigrants And Descendants In Paris, France***

**Authors:** Beth Nelson\*, *University of South Carolina*

**Keywords:** Racial, Ethnic, Religious, Identity, Belonging, Algeria, France

**Abstract:** This research explores episodes of identity and belonging among Algerian immigrants and their descendants in Paris, France. The connection between France and Algeria has a long history involving immigration, labor, violence, discrimination, subjugation, and in some cases, acceptance. This history defined particular groups along the lines of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and identity. Once exclusive, these groups have evolved in composition as generations of descendants continue to engage with French society. This research approaches the relationship between, among and across French and Algerian cultures in a modern context. Qualitative and demographic research techniques were used to study this social group to trace the evolution of existence of Algerians in Paris. Groups of Algerian immigrants and their descendants in France have changed regarding the composition, identity, sense of belonging and engagement with broader society. Racial and religious prejudices toward Algerians and their descendants have escalated with current tensions and anxiety over terrorism and other acts of violence. A combination of these fluctuating factors influence the identity and perceptions of Algerians in Paris and often blur one into the other. Accordingly, the ideas of identity and belonging occur in episodes, depending on multiple social features and influences. Understanding and engaging these episodes provide meaningful insight into the place of Algerians and their descendants both in Paris and in broader French society.

### **Poster Session: Human Geography Poster Session I (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Napoleon Foyer/Common St. Corridor, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

#### ***How Governments Categorize Arctic Peoples***

**Authors:** Olivia Napper\*, *George Washington University*, Timothy Heleniak\*, *Nordregio - The Nordic Centre for Spatial Development*

**Keywords:** Arctic, ethnicity, population, identity, census

**Abstract:** All the Arctic states attempt to categorize their populations based on some aspect of identity in population censuses, registers, surveys, and other government data collection efforts. These include identity according to race, ethnicity, ethnic origin, tribe, language, religion, nationality, citizenship, place of birth, national origin, place identity or other identities. The approaches that each Arctic state uses to classify the identities of peoples varies considerably and there have been significant changes in classification over time. Some of the current classification practices are a vestige of frontier times when data collection efforts

expanded to Arctic peripheries and first began to include Arctic natives or indigenous peoples. The purpose of this paper is to examine how the national statistical offices of the Arctic states categorize Arctic peoples, both currently and historically. This examination of identity in the Arctic in official government statistics reveals complex and contested portrait.

**Paper Session: Urban Parks & Green Spaces As A Panacea? Challenges and Opportunities For Urban Greening – 1 (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Balcony I, Marriott, 4th floor)**

***Beyond the Peace Lines - inclusivity and community understanding of parks/green infrastructure in Belfast Northern Ireland***

**Authors:** Ian Mell\*, *University of Manchester*

**Keywords:** Green infrastructure, community, segregation, parks, local government

**Abstract:** Public spaces in Belfast prior to the Good Friday Agreement were subject to extensive disruption due to ongoing sectarianism. The city was partitioned along ethno-cultural lines leading to socio-physical exclusion from sections of the city for Catholic, Protestant and non-denomination communities. The defensive architecture of the Peace Walls/Lines were the most prominent articulation of this division, and came to symbolise Belfast as a segregated and violent city. Contemporary evaluations of Belfast ask whether the city's regeneration, expressed through the Belfast Agenda, have redefined the city's landscape using its 'cultural legacies' to rebrand city as a city open for investment. This is timely as Belfast City Council are currently developing their strategic investment plan, the Belfast Agenda, of which parks are an integral part. Moreover, the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement provides scope to reflect on whether the interceding years have facilitated a more inclusive discussion, use and valuation of the city's parks. Within this discussion parks are one of the most significant and spatially diverse forms of public space, which have been largely overlooked in Belfast. The seminar will explore how these dynamic narratives reinforce these historical interpretations of 'landscape' in Belfast and asks whether parks can be conceptualised as apolitical and inclusive places.

**Paper Session: An Analysis of the Political, Economic, Social, and Religious Symbolism of Central Places in the Holy Land and the Impact of International Threats on Those Who Lived There (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Napoleon A1, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

***Gospel Writer's Reader Focus, Theme, and Mapping Regional Emphasis with City/Town Preacher-Points***

**Authors:** William Dando\*, *Indiana State University*

**Keywords:** Bible Geography, Cartography/Cartographic Analysis, Religion

**Abstract:** The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written to meet the needs of the expanding Christian Church. There were no written Gospels in the early days of the Church. Those who became members depended entirely on word-of-mouth testimony of the Apostles and their converts. All the Gospels bear a common theme: the life, work, message, and death of Jesus Christ. There are differences in the accounts of events, Jesus' teachings, and His miracles. It has been suggested that Matthew's Gospel was a product of Christians in Jerusalem, including Peter, James, and John. Luke, a friend of Paul's, researched and wrote his account by firsthand investigation. He was deeply interested in the "humane" aspects of Jesus' ministry. Mark

gleaned material for his Gospel from Peter. John's Gospel is different from the other three gospels. It was written more than forty years after the other three, and it was intended to show that Jesus was the son of God and He brought God into the life of humankind. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "Synoptic Gospels" because they give a basic identical portrait of Jesus. John's Gospel has little in common with the other three. The Synoptic Gospels describe a Galilean ministry and then a final journey to Jerusalem. John describes Jesus as going back and forth between all regions and Jerusalem.

**Paper Session: Young People as Agents of Decolonization: Activism, Friendship, and the Pursuit of Leisure – II (5:20 – 7:00 pm in Studio 6, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

***Of Mipsters and Model Citizens: The Politics of Muslim Youth Civic Engagement***

**Authors:** David Marshall\*, *Elon University*

**Keywords:** Civic engagement, youth, citizenship, public, Islam

**Abstract:** In response to a rising number of hate crimes against Muslims, the increased visibility of police violence against people of color, as well as a number of terrorist attacks and shootings, faith-based organizations and activist groups alike have called for greater civic engagement in general, and amongst Muslim youth in particular. However, there are divergent and contested understandings of what civic engagement should look like. Muslim youth engage in volunteer efforts aimed at improving the lives of others. They are also active in more disruptive forms of protest confronting racism and state violence. Likewise, Muslim youth have taken to social media to challenge longstanding negative portrayals of Muslims. While these youth activist trends challenge stereotypes and seek to create new forms of solidarity, they also raise questions about what constitutes appropriate forms of religiously informed activism. There is a tension between “showing a positive face” of Islam and striving for more transformative, even prophetic, forms of social justice. There is also a tension between challenging negative stereotypes and reinforcing youth niche-marketing practices. To what extent do these diverse forms of engagement confront or conform to existing race, gender, age and class-based inequalities within the Muslim community? Moreover, to what extent are these debates of concern to “average” Muslim youth who are neither civically engaged nor radicalized, and neither “on fleek” nor “woke”? This paper presents the early findings of a research project examining understandings of civic engagement and activism among Muslim youth and discusses methodological challenges and possibilities going forward.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 12**

**Poster Session: Human Geography: Rural, Tourism, Ethnicity, Identity, Migration, Hazards (10:00 – 11:40 am in Napoleon Foyer/Common St. Corridor, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

***Discontent with society leads to the development of Intentional Communities in the East Coast 1800-1899***

**Authors:** Alma Gutierrez\*

**Keywords:** geography, utopia,

**Abstract:** Utopian communes in its early periods came about from the common ideology of religion as well as

the common union of rebellion. Many fled the treacherous and ever evolving politics of Europe and sought refuge in the east coast of the United States. Being that the U.S. was also evolving politically during the 1800's many sought a place where they could call home, a place away from it all. Utopian communities began to sprawl and eventually took over most of the east coast. This project tracks the rise in popularity in utopian communities in the U.S. following post industrialization turmoil and war. Sequential maps reveal trends in the dis/appearance of these settlements. Results explain why these utopias flourished and diminish so easily.

### ***The Path to Prosperity: The Plight, Journey, And Settlement of the Chin People in North Texas***

**Authors:** Kaitlin Stewart\*

**Keywords:** Burma, Chin, Cultural Geography, Immigration, Myanmar

**Abstract:** This research details migration patterns of the Chin people, from Burma to the Dallas-Fort Worth Area. Two dictatorships pushed the Chin people from their home state in North West Myanmar. Today, the highest concentration of Chin immigrants reside in Texas. Three factors contribute to the immigration of the Chin people to the North Texas area. Research in state archives, U.S. government resources such as the state department, and extensive interviews within the Dallas-Fort Worth community, revealed further push factors including systematic oppression of the Chin people by the Burmese government, along with staggeringly low quality of life statistics. Additionally, political unrest and persecution drove the Chin from their homeland along a specific route through Burma to Malaysia. While enjoying temporary safe haven in Malaysia, families worked to fund travel to the United States and eventually joined the core Chin community in Texas. The Chin region in the United States will be mapped based on interviews in the Chin community and include the route which they took to prosperity. This formal and informal research occurred over a three-year period within the Chin immigrant community and included participation in cultural events, church services, and even family dinners. This project took on great personal meaning because I was included in their discussions in how they were assisted as immigrants, afforded diverse job opportunities, celebrated their Baptist religion, and discovered their close family ties in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area.

### **GORABS Business Meeting (11:50 – 1:10 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

**You are cordially invited to the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group Business Meeting! Details of a meal to follow.**

### **Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Ruby (40th) Anniversary Lecture Series: I (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

**Panelists:** Avril Maddrell, University of Reading; Paul Cloke, University of Exeter

**Organizer and Chair:** David Butler, University College Cork (UCC)

**Description:** In marking the Ruby (40th) Anniversary of our Specialty Group Foundation, the board of the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) have much pleasure in presenting this series of two panels, the first one of which addresses issues related to postsecularity. Dr. Avril Maddrell will present, 'Until death do us part'. Negotiating diversity in a post-secular deathscapes - a feminist perspective'. This paper begins by reflecting on the relationship between feminist geography and geographies of religion. It then explores the significance of diverse beliefs and worldviews and changing spaces and practices associated with death and remembrance, in Western societies which might be described as post-secular. Evolving deathscapes and associated practices are creating shifting and sometimes conflicting maps of 'sacred' places within the

context of simultaneously increasing religious diversity and secularised societies. What does this mean for socially and culturally inclusive societies?

This theme will be continued by our second speaker, Professor Paul Cloke, will speak on 'The hopefulness of postsecularity in the meantime(s)'. This paper traces the growing significance of postsecular partnerships between faith-motivated and secular groups and individuals in the provision of social care, welfare and justice. Drawing on our UK research into both service provision for homeless people and food banking, the paper questions orthodox critiques which position charitable agencies practising postsecularity as the little platoons of neoliberalism, implicated in governmental subjectification of the poor, and indulging in self-serving moral landscaping with marginalised and excluded people. Instead, it is argued that these spaces of care represent a potential articulation of particular ethical and political responses to welfare and social justice “in the meantime”. They promote spaces of in-common encounter and conscientisation, and open out liminal spaces of political and ethical contestation that can build vital bridges between care and justice in the wider welfare arena.

### **Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Ruby (40th) Anniversary Lecture Series: II (3:20 – 5:00 pm in Astor Ballroom II, Astor 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

**Panelist:** Caroline Nagel, University of South Carolina.

**Discussant, Organizer and Chair:** David Butler, University College Cork (UCC).

**Description:** In the second part of this lecture series to celebrate the fortieth year of the establishment of The Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group (better known as GORABS), Professor Caroline Nagel presents 'Doing missions right': Development thinking and practice among American short-term missionaries'. There is a longstanding connection between international development practice and the activities of American Protestant missionaries; as development thought has shifted toward notions of 'sustainability', so too has the language of mission. Like their secular counterparts, contemporary Christian missionary organizations increasingly reject top-down, culturally insensitive models of development that are seen to create dependence on aid. Instead, missionary organizations aim to endow locals with the spiritual and material wherewithal to sustain material improvements over the long term. Myriad evangelical books (e.g. *When Helping Hurts* and *Toxic Charity*) elaborate on these ideas of responsible Christian development and provide biblical justification for continued Christian intervention in poor countries.

This paper explores these new theologies of development and the ways they are becoming incorporated into the vocabularies and activities of the millions of American Christians who venture overseas on short-term mission trips. Drawing on interviews with mission-trip organizers and participants, I examine missionaries' understandings of the 'right way' and 'wrong way' to 'do missions', and I consider the ways missionaries describe the changes they are—or should be—effecting in the communities they visit. Short-term missionaries, I show, are realistic about the limitations of their efforts, and they concede that mission trips typically benefit missionaries more than their hosts. Despite their self-criticism, however, missionaries continue to replicate the problematic power asymmetries that have long characterized both missionary and development projects. Following the paper, there will be a general discussion on all three papers from this panel series.

### **Paper Session: The Body, Political Violence And The Colonial Present 2 (3:20 – 5:00 in Iris, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**



### ***The Metaphysics of Islam Loving & Hating: Blasphemy, Drones and Lawful Violence***

**Authors:** Najeeb Jan\*, *University of Colorado*

**Keywords:** Political Islam, drones, Empire, biopolitics, political ontology, Foucault, Agambenn

**Abstract:** In this paper — which is centrally concerned with the decadence of modernity and the colonial present — I offer a comparative analysis of two forms of ‘lawful’ violence and excess that coincide within the juridical space of Pakistan. The killing of alleged ‘heretics’ under the blasphemy laws and the killing of alleged ‘terrorists’ through the CIA’s clandestine use of unmanned aerial vehicles, or Drones. The paper seeks to draw out the underlying juridico-political and ontological architecture of both forms of what critics argue are extra-judicial killings. We have on the one hand a form of technologically mediated death dealing justified by a liberal logics of security, and on the other, a form of killing that is valorized on the grounds of ‘protecting’ a religion of peace. Drawing on Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben’s analytic of modern biopolitical sovereignty, this paper suggests that an ontological mode of inquiry is essential for exposing structures of violence and power which implicitly govern ideologies otherwise seemingly distant from one another. By exposing the metaphysical homology between beheadings and drone strikes, the paper explores what appears to be radical indistinction between contemporary Islamic and Western legal regimes.

### **Paper Session: Everyday Urban Subjectivities Of Children And Youth In An Era Of Trump (3:20 – 5:00 in Napoleon D3, Sheraton 3rd Floor)**

#### ***Of Respectable and Safe Selfies: Exploring Girls’ Negotiations with Desire, Risk and Violence***

**Authors:** Sujatha Subramanian\*, *The Ohio State University*

**Keywords:** Girlhood Studies , Selfies , Online Spaces , Self Representation

**Abstract:** Selfies as a form of self-representation hold various meanings for girls- selfies allow them to express themselves, build friendships or nostalgically visit their pasts. However, most of these engagements of girls with selfies get lost in the din of the dangers posed by their participation in online spaces and their movements in offline spaces. Constructions of girls as being “vulnerable” and “naïve” are used to ascribe victimhood to them, and dictums such as “better be safe than sorry” abound. My paper draws from interviews with twenty girls based in India to understand how they negotiate both online and offline structures of control and violence that attempt to limit their self-expression in online spaces. The paper explores how complex intersections of class, caste and religion work to produce ideas of honour and respectability that restrict the scope of “respectable” self-representations available to girls. The paper also includes narratives of girls who, in response to the acts of disciplining and surveillance that serve to restrict their movements in online and offline spaces, have adopted creative ways of resisting such acts of control, challenging boundaries of appropriate femininity, sexuality and caste, thereby questioning the idea of girls as naïve and innocent. The paper argues that we need to advocate for a world, both online and offline, where girls have a right to the liberatory possibilities of risk, and can engage with subjectivities that disrupt the idea of respectability and honour.

### **Paper Session: Critical Perspectives on Mediterranean Cosmopolitanism: Geography, History, and the Material Landscape (3:20 – 5:00 pm in Balcony N, Marriott, 4th Floor)**

#### ***Cosmopolitanism-as-Geopolitics: Contesting the Building of the Athens Mosque***

**Authors:** Alex Papadopoulos\*, *DePaul University*

**Keywords:** cosmopolitanism, geopolitics, identity, religion, urban planning, Mediterranean, Greece

**Abstract:** Athens is home to a significant population of people who self-identify as Muslim: residential, immigrant, and refugee subgroups, which originate in Europe, West Asia, N Africa and in Africa's Horn region. They find few available services and appropriate spaces for religious worship in Athens, either at the neighborhood, the city, or regional scales. Small mosques, religious schools, and retreats, often unlicensed, and operating in defiance of zoning and safety regulations have organically proliferated in an effort to address demands for services and space. In this paper I explore the geopolitics of mosque foundations in Greece as a dimension of critical cosmopolitanism. In response to demands for appropriate regulation and licensure of a significant place of worship for Athens' Muslim population, the national state, the Prefecture of Attiki, and the Municipality of Athens have pursued different solutions to the issue. Once the decision was made that Athens should, and will, deliver a main mosque, the question of geography became paramount. Class-, ethnic-, racial-, and ideology-based backlash, translating into a NIMBY posture, undermined the project, derailing it for years, putting its character, its geographic location, and ultimately its feasibility, in doubt. The latest developments situate the proposed mosque in the Votanikos community area. It is now under construction and will be delivered to Athens' Muslim communities in 2018. The study of the Athens mosque project as an exemplar of cosmopolitanism-as-geopolitics furthers the conversation on reconciliation and confidence building in a Europe embattled by extremist views on religion, race, and migration.

## **Paper Session Religion and identity: perspectives on conflict and peacemaking in Eurasia (3:20 – 5:00 pm in Galerie 1, Marriott 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

### ***The Blurry Line Between Sacred and Secular: Putin's Neo-Tsarist Relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church***

**Authors:** Catherine Studemeyer\*, *George Mason University*

**Keywords:** Russia; politics; religion; nation building

**Abstract:** The Christian East secularized very differently from the Christian West. As a result, the contemporary politics of church and state in the Christian East operate in ways that are largely alien to Western frameworks within which the religious and secular are much more clearly delineated. Nowhere is the border between Christianity and state politics blurrier than in Vladimir Putin's Russia, where the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) enjoys a remarkably cozy relationship with the Kremlin. This paper investigates how Vladimir Putin, as both president and prime minister of the Russian Federation, has sought to remake Russia from the ashes of the USSR with a nation-(re)building project alluding heavily to mythologized glories of its Tsarist past. Putin's conservative politics and nation-building practices have been legitimated by the ROC, a cornerstone of Russian identity, and in return, the ROC has been able to exist (and thrive) in Putin's Russia. Based on this analysis, I argue that Vladimir Putin has politicized the ROC into a de facto instrument of the state and part of the "re-Russianization" of the country over the past two decades. In this way, Vladimir Putin is a successor to the Tsars much more so than a successor to any Soviet leader.

### ***Restoration and Revival: Landscapes of Change in Russian Religions since Communism***

**Authors:** Edward Holland\*, *University of Arkansas*

**Keywords:** Religion, Reconstruction, Buddhism, Russian Orthodoxy, Russia

**Abstract:** This paper theorizes the importance of reconstruction and restoration to cultures of religious practice and belief in geographic space. Since 1991, reconstruction has been used to mark Russia's religious landscape, most notably with the rebuilding of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior on the banks of the Moscow River. I

posit restoration of appropriated or disused buildings as a more complex phenomenon, one that involves the reclamation of spaces that served other functions during the Soviet period for the community of believers. To make this case, I draw on two sites of religious practice in contemporary Russia: Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg and Khosheutovsky Khurul in the region of Astrakhan. Appropriated for various uses—including a museum (Kazan Cathedral) and a meeting place and stable (Khosheutovsky Khurul)—these two sites underscore the connection between Russia's contemporary communities of belief and the pre-Soviet period. Making more tangible the relevance of restoration is the historical link between the Cathedral and the Khurul. Focusing on the latter building—the only Kalmyk Buddhist temple to survive the Soviet period—I document Khosheutovsky Khurul as a space of education and practice in both its pre- and post-Soviet instantiations, with these more recent functions only made possible by its survival and restoration.

### ***The Challenges Of Restitution Of Russian Orthodox Church Properties In Russia's Urban Spaces.***

**Authors:** Nathaniel Trumbull\*, *University of Connecticut*

**Keywords:** Russia, church, urban space

**Abstract:** The revival of the Russian Orthodox Church has been accompanied by strong state support in the cities of the Russian Federation. Yet that revival has also triggered protests and civil disobedience as traditional historical and cultural sites have reverted to management by the Russian Orthodox Church. The restitution law of the Russian Federation has been the justification for that reversion, but the law has been repeatedly challenged. Similarly, new construction of large numbers of churches has led to ongoing loss of recreational open space in Russian urban space. Such developments associated with the Russian Orthodox Church have led to a discrediting of the Russian Orthodox Church within certain circles of the Russian public. St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg and several green spaces in Moscow and St. Petersburg are examples of sites of ongoing confrontation and public conflict.

### ***The Discovery Of The Tomb Of Suleiman The Magnificent In Szigetvár (Hungary) And The Geopolitical Consequences***

**Authors:** Norbert Pap\*, *University of Pécs*

**Keywords:** religion, geopolitics, Muslim, Christian, pilgrimage, Hungarian, Ottoman

**Abstract:** Suleiman the Magnificent passed away 450 years ago (1566) in Szigetvár (Hungary) during the siege of the castle. Ottoman mausoleum (türbe) was built on the place of death as a symbol of the extension of darüislam. The burial complex became a pilgrimage place for the Muslim Ottomans. The town was called Turbek and demolished by the Christian troops at the end of the Ottoman rule of the area in 1692. A research team has identified the archaeological remains of the settlement since 2013. The discovery caused political tensions in Hungary because of the Hungarian national identity was born in the 16-17th century during the wars fought against the Ottomans. Political debates and the remembrance of the Ottoman conqueror have been joined to each other in recent years. The paper will emphasize the geopolitical significance of Szigetvár from different national point of views.

### ***Green Spaces For The Dead: The Aesthetics Of Russian Cemeteries***

**Authors:** Mikhail Blinnikov\*, *St. Cloud State University*

**Keywords:** biodiversity; cemeteries; cultural landscapes; necrogeography

**Abstract:** There is an old tradition in geography of studying landscapes of the dead, namely cemeteries. A number of approaches can be used, including toponymic, GIS, and cultural interpretation. Perhaps because of their distinct focus on the afterlife as understood by the Orthodox theology and the unusual, layered history of

the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods, Russian cemeteries represent a curious and underexplored subject for such analysis. This paper aims to present some common themes for the exploration of the aesthetics of existing Russian cemeteries, both urban and rural, and suggests some future avenues for research. Of particular interest is the role cemeteries play in sustaining biological diversity in densely populated parts of the country and their evolving forms in preserving cultural meaning in the morally relativist landscape of post-modernity

**Organizer/Chair:** Vincent Artman, Wayne State University.

**Paper Session: Latin America: Politics, Economies, and Planning (5:20 – 7:00 pm in Muses, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**

***Assertions of Cultural/Agricultural Indigenous Spaces: Yachay Wasi School in Quito, Ecuador***

**Authors:** Elizabeth Heilman, *Michigan State University*

**Keywords:** Cultural Geography, Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples, Latin America, Religions & Belief Systems

**Abstract:** This paper provides a case example of how the Quichuan Yachay Wasi School has created an extensive rural Kichwa space as well cosmopolitan global connections right within the urban capital city. Warmth and ancestral teachings are learned in the fields, so grounds include sizeable fields, a greenhouse, a pond, and diverse animals reflecting integrated life in a village. The urban school's educational objective, "Ishkay Yachay", is based on the desire of surrounding indigenous community to teach a combination of both modern and traditional knowledge. This school teaches Quichuan language and culture and includes extensive aesthetic and nature-based education. Empirically, the paper draws on four months of ethnographic fieldwork studying the expression of the Pan Andean concept of "Good Life" which is "Buen Vivir" in Spanish, and Sumak Kawsay in Quichua. This concept is also validated and institutionalized through the Ecuadorian constitution. The lived expression in this school and in various institutions in nearby Quito is compared with the constitutional and philosophical expression. The constitutional imaginary has been created by mainly mestizo men who have dominated Ecuadorian politics throughout the past decades; this school is founded by an indigenous woman. I explore the tensions in the uses of this Andean Quichua philosophy with postcolonial education scholarship in critical theory; global and multicultural education; and environmental education.

**Paper Session: Nations Beyond Nationalism 1: Structures of Nation-ness (1:20 - 3:00 PM in Galerie 3, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

***Long Before Indonesia: Territorial Rights, Nationalism, and Marine Protected Area Zoning in the Waters of East Nusa Tenggara***

**Authors:** Florence Durney\*, *University of Arizona*

**Keywords:** Indonesia, traditional marine tenure, identity-making, nationalism, highly migratory species

**Abstract:** Indonesia's national motto is 'unity in diversity'. This concept tenuously holds together a people spread across 17,500 islands who speak more than 300 different languages, adhere to different religions and traditions, and rely on hugely diverse environments. The tension between embracing diversity and the creation of a coherent nation is present in many discourses across Indonesia, but it has recently risen to the forefront of the conversation about the designation of marine protected areas (MPAs) in Eastern Indonesia, in relation to a

territorial dispute between a group of traditional whalers and the creation of a large MPA in the Savu Sea. Residents of Lamalera, in southern Lembata, are the last large marine prey hunters in Indonesia. Commercial whaling has been banned nationally since the 1980's, and some of the other species that Lamalerans hunt have been placed on endangered species ban lists. Lamalerans have refused plans for an MPA in their own waters on the basis that it would 'kill their culture, and therefore themselves', but have seen shrinkage of their historical hunting territory as neighboring districts have adopted MPAs to protect these species. Provincial and national plans for marine conservation continue as well, meaning that the issue remains active and unresolved. Using a mixed methods approach of interviews, oral histories, participant-observation, and participatory network mapping, this study explores how different parties have positioned themselves within this conflict, focusing on how the concepts of traditional culture, marine tenure, and participation in the nation are deployed.

### **Paper Session: Nations Beyond Nationalism 3: Producing Identity between Scales (5:20 - 7:00 PM in Galerie 3, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

#### ***"Am I Kyrgyz First, and Then Muslim?": Theology and the Imagined Community***

**Author(s):** Vincent Artman\*, Wayne State University

**Keywords:** religion, nationalism, Islam, nation-state, Central Asia, identity

**Abstract:** Religion has often been understood as one of the symbolic bases upon which nationalism is constructed. According to some accounts, by providing a common myth-symbol complex, collective memories, and sacralizing narratives, and by fostering the perception of enduring communal ties, religion is one of the primary building blocks of national identity, even in secular states. However, the relationship between religion and national identity is substantially more complex than this, and the imagined national community is often predicated upon particular theological perspectives. The interactions between theology and nationality, however, have not always been sufficiently scrutinized. This paper uses an ongoing controversy over veiling in Kyrgyzstan as a frame through which to examine the relationship between religion and national identity. In Kyrgyzstan, anxieties about the veil are connected with fears of creeping "Arabization" and a concomitant undermining of national traditions. The paper argues that such anxieties operate simultaneously in the national and religious registers, suggesting that theology is not only connected with national identity, but is also a crucial site of contestation over the terms of nationalism itself.

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 13**

### **Paper Session: Gender, Women, and Livelihood (8:00 – 9:40 am in Muses, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**

#### ***Consuming High-Rise Living: The Minds Of Young Women In Neo-Liberal Mumbai***

**Authors:** Ramya Ramanath\*, DePaul University

**Keywords:** Gender, Youth, Consumerism, Mumbai, Slums, Slum Resettlement, India

**Abstract:** Media reports since publication of India's 2011 census discuss its new standing as the world's youngest nation. Depiction of the use of cell phones, choices in fashion, food, movies, and music—all serve as an index of India's youthful persona. Scholars have noted that these imageries draw attention to a monolithic middle-class Indian identity and call for alternative narrations that bring complexities of gender, class, location, religion, and caste into constructions of a globalizing India. I embrace these complexities in my analysis of a key, but yet-to-be-examined signifier of young India—its high-rise, high-density residential apartments and their consumption by young adult women aged 18-25. Unlike its shorter predecessors that housed the city's



lower, middle and upper-class residents, it is Mumbai's slum dwellers that are the more recent owners of high-rise apartments. I will examine how young women brought up in the city's slums, experience and express their transition into formal housing. I present results from both their retrospective analysis of life in the slums and real-time analysis of life in high-rise housing. Their experiences challenge representations of slums as distanced from nature and therefore not ideal for young people to grow up in and the concomitant representation of high-rises as the antithesis of community. I demonstrate the agency of young adult women by considering the ways in which they carry along older forms of gendering and create a sense of inclusion for themselves, put up with and/or resist exclusionary processes— as citizens and consumers of the world's youngest nation.

### ***South Korea's Local Context on Infertility Problem***

**Authors:** Jean Young Kim\*, *University of Texas - Austin*

**Keywords:** Gender and nation, Reproduction, Infertility, South Korea, Assisted Reproductive Technology

**Abstract:** The local contexts regarding infertility vary around the world. Depending on local situations, which include religion, women's social status, fertility rate and medical service, subjective meanings and experiences of infertility can be different. Moreover, the approaches to the fertility/infertility problem is intimately related to nationalist projects. Therefore, it is crucial to understand infertility from a local perspective. Much research has been done on infertility in various regions, but less has been done on infertility in East Asian contexts. In this paper, I examine how the issue of infertility has been depicted in the South Korean society. As the marriage and fertility rates drop rapidly, South Korea confronts the crisis of population decline where infertility becomes a social issue. I examine different perspectives toward the infertility by studying government policy papers, infertility clinics' flyers and newsletters, patients' personal blogs and online forums. I consider the government, medical community and patients as the main agents who have different interests toward infertility problem. The Korean government approaches infertility through a countermeasure to solve the low fertility rate. Many fertility centers emphasize their superior medical techniques, which can lead to patients' happiness. Patients, who are mostly women, express hardships anonymously through online forums and personal blogs. All three agents commonly regard infertility as something to be overcome with the help of advanced assisted reproductive technologies.

### **Paper Session: Producing comparability in geographical research: intellectual and practical considerations (10:00 – 10:20 AM in Proteus, Sheraton, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor)**

#### ***'Doing' comparative research in South Asia and positionality of the researcher: Reflections on fieldwork from Dhaka and Mumbai***

**Author(s):** Shreyashi Dasgupta, *University of Cambridge*

**Keywords:** Comparative Urban Research, South Asia, Methodology, Positionality, India, Bangladesh

**Abstract:** There is a substantive literature on comparative work from various epistemological standpoints in urban studies (Robinson 2014, Scott and Storper 2015). The idea of comparative urban research seeks to transcend the boundaries of a single-city perspective. But as McFarlane (2010) points out that comparative work has often been understood in relation to cities between the Global North and Global South but a more postcolonial debate considers comparativism as a research and mode of thought. At the core of the 'doing' comparative urban research entails the challenge of the researcher. However, scanty literature focuses directly on the process of producing South-South comparability, positionality, methodologies and ethical dilemmas of

the ethnographic self. In this presentation, I will explore two important questions – First, what does it mean to be a South Asian researcher doing comparative contemporary urban research in South Asia? I will elaborate this by unpacking the connections between South Asian cities from two neighbouring nation-states, look at the process of comparative research once the historical place has geographically moved beyond a single city, nation-state or region (Kenny and Magdin 2015). Second, I will address the impact of insider-outsider positionality on collected data. I will elaborate this by highlighting the ethnographic self, issues of intersectionality between caste, religion, migrant and a researcher trained in the UK doing research on South Asia. To advance my arguments, I will make use of interviews and observational data gathered to understand the influences of the identities and geographies of the researcher on their work.

## **Paper Session: Identity and Place I: Spaces of Identity Politics (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Grand Ballroom A, Sheraton, 5th Floor)**

### ***Identity Politics and the Sustenance of Africa's Predatory States***

**Authors:** Gashawbeza Bekele\*, *Tennessee State University*

**Keywords:** Identity Politics, Ethnic politics, Africa

**Abstract:** African societies, like those of any other regions in the world, organize themselves politically by social dimensions such as ethnicity, language, religion, and gender. Hence, a good understanding of the ways in which people in Africa mobilize and act collectively in political circles are central to our understanding of how predatory states in Africa gain, consolidate, and sustain power. This research addresses the central question of how identity politics in general and ethnic identities in particular are defined, pursued, and manipulated for political gains by Africa's predatory states. By drawing examples from several African predatory states and examining state-society relations in Africa from a historical perspective, it elucidates the ways in which identity politics has been used as a tool to mobilize groups of people, and thereby consolidate and sustain political power. Even though ethnic identity remains an important tool to sustain power by Africa's predatory states, I argue that its significance may become very limited, as individuals possess multiple identities in an era of globalization and as liberal democracy takes root in Africa.

## **Paper Session: Governance, Rights, and Justice in Water: New Ideas and Realities (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Maurepas, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

### ***Turning to Traditions: Cultural-Religious Articulations of Water's Value(s) in Struggles for Justice***

**Authors:** Christiana Zenner Peppard\*, *Fordham University*

**Keywords:** water, right to water, environmental justice, water justice, religion and geography

**Abstract:** Social and environmental justice activisms regarding fresh water in the twenty-first century have increasingly turned to religious and cultural value paradigms that challenge basic presuppositions of late capitalist political economies. The appeal of these movements is not merely in the opposition to hegemonic forms of globalization; it is also a positive construction about the kind of thing that water is understood to be, the values that it carries, the relations that it facilitates, and the human obligations that follow. This chapter will examine three recent paradigms for considering the language of water's value through the vehicle of legal rights since 2010: (1) mni wiconi and intersectional advocacy at Standing Rock; (2) the achievement of rights for the Whanganui in Aotearoa (New Zealand); (3) the endorsement of rights to water and the primacy of

indigenous knowledge posited by Pope Francis. The chapter will draw out overlapping insights from these endeavors while also delineating necessary humilities for white, western scholars (such as myself) or institutions (such as the Catholic Church) that wish to examine, support, and integrate value paradigms of first peoples with regard to fresh water in the twenty-first century.

## **Paper Session: Religion and The Creation Of Space Or Place (1:20 – 3:00 pm in Studio 9, Marriott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

### ***Jazz, Religion, And The Construction Of Radical Place Meanings***

**Authors:** Edward Davis\*, *Emory & Henry College*

**Keywords:** music, religion, revolution

**Abstract:** *Spirits Rejoicing* (2015) by Jason C. Bivins reinterprets American religious history in light of the destabilizing power of jazz. He argues that we may define much of the practice of both religious experience and jazz music as "spirits rejoicing" - something at once orderly and chaotic, stable and unstable. For example, Charles Mingus wrote jazz compositions that not only drew widely from church influences, but also sought to break down the conformist tendencies of religious beliefs. Singer Abbey Lincoln spoke often of how African spirituality was at the root of her music, and its liberating and democratic power were both deeply personal and political. Geographers have much to gain from applying Bivins' ideas about jazz music and religion. Place meaning, for example, is the product of both ritual and improvisation, both serious structure and playful creativity. We can secure solidity for a space through the use of ritual in both religions and jazz performance. We can dissolve previous place meanings and construct new ones through improvisational practices. But if we speak of such powers, the obvious question is, can a community use this for significant political power? Can jazz music or religion really be revolutionary? In any way that matters? This paper relates Bivins' analysis of jazz and religion to the work of historian Cornel West on race and democracy. The goal: to see if religion and jazz music, as conceived by Bivins, are compatible with a post-colonial understanding of American society and the construction of radical place meanings.

### ***Place, Identity and Justice in the Jewish Food Movement***

**Authors:** Steven Silvern\*, *Salem State University*

**Keywords:** food movement, Jewish, cultural geography, identity, place, food justice

**Abstract:** The last twenty years have witnessed the emergence and growth of "the food movement" that aims to transform the industrial food system, supporting the growth of locally sourced and organically grown produce and animals. Much of the geographical and agro-food studies literature is silent on the relationship of the food movement to ethno-religious groups and ethno-religious community identity formation. Missing is attention to how ethno-religious communities engage in sustainable and food justice activism and how ethno-religious identities are both expressed and are constructed in relationship to the food movement. In particular, there has been little attention to how the American Jewish community engages with the food movement and constructs Jewish identity in relation to food sustainability, the geographical scale of sustainable food production and consumption, and food justice. The aim of this presentation is to explore the American Jewish community's engagement with the food movement. I historically and socially contextualize what is called the "Jewish Food Movement," identifying historical antecedents, key actors and organizations. I examine the Movement's sustainable and food justice discourse, elucidating how place, Jewish identities, and food justice are constructed by the Movement in relation to "traditional" Jewish concepts of social and economic justice, place (localism/globalism) and both traditional and secular discourses of sustainability and food justice. My project seeks to create a productive dialogue and engagement between critical food studies, people-

environment and place studies in geography, and the study of place, environment, and Jewish identity formation in Jewish studies.

### ***White, Black, and In-Between: Italian-American Women Religious and an Integrated Sacred Space & School***

**Authors:** Katie Berchak-Irby\*, *River Parishes Community College*

**Abstract:** Cabrini High School in New Orleans, which houses the city's St. Cabrini shrine, was one of the first New Orleans area Catholic schools to integrate. The school was founded by and is operated by the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, an order started by Italian-American St. Frances Cabrini. The order was warned against integrating the school by people in the archdiocese and community. Nevertheless, the sisters saw integration as a social justice issue that had to be addressed no matter the risk to the order or school. Many of the order's sisters and school's students at the time were of Italian descent and remembered when they, their parents, or their grandparents occupied a space between white and black in the racial milieu of New Orleans society. Today, Cabrini High's student body has one of the largest percentages of black students among the private high schools in the Greater New Orleans Area aside from the city's older historically black Catholic high schools. At times over the years, this has been a strength and weakness for attracting a student body large enough in size to keep the school open. This paper discusses how integration was and is "integrated" into Cabrini High's identity and physical spaces, such as the St. Cabrini Shrine, and what the legacy of integrating the school earlier than others in the area has meant and means for the school. It also explores the common experiences between so-called "white ethnics" and blacks in New Orleans.

### ***The Therapeutic Dutyscape of Seventh-Day Adventist Hospitals***

**Authors:** Nathan Burtch\*, *Towson University*

**Keywords:** Religion, health, dutyscape, context analysis

**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to investigate the intersections between religious duties, health care provision, and spatial manifestation. In particular, this research investigates the religious duty of health in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination within the context of Adventist hospitals. These intersections form the creation of dutyscapes, or landscapes of religious duty. Through the use of a context analysis of YouTube videos created by various Adventist health care organizations, codes and categories are organized, showing that hospitals are places in which institutional religious duties are practiced, manifesting therapeutic dutyscapes and religious spaces.

**Organizers:** Nathan Burtch & Edward Davis.

**Chair:** Nathan Burtch

## **Paper Session: Value-Based Praxis in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Action for Social and Environmental Equity II (3:20 – 5:00 in Napoleon A2, Sheraton, 3rd Floor)**

### ***Scaling up CPBR: Defining Communities of Interest, Rather Than Place, to Address Nationwide Environmental Justice Issues***

**Authors:** Christine Hawn\*, *University of Maryland - Baltimore County*, Dillon Mahmoudi, *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*, Caren Cooper, *North Carolina State University*

**Keywords:** Citizen science, environmental justice

**Abstract:** Mainstream environmental movements use large-scale contributory citizen science projects to collect environmental data to assess climate change, pollution, and land degradation. These data are used to identify patterns and create adaptive solutions to these problems. However, the vast majority of people that contribute to these fine scale, nationally relevant data sets are white, affluent, and well-educated. The relationship between race and environmental exposure has been confirmed in numerous studies. Independent of class, communities of color in the United States experience a disproportionately higher exposure and risk to commercial toxic waste and air pollution. Outside the United States, research demonstrates that vulnerable populations - along various intersections of identity such as race/ethnicity, religion, and gender - not only shoulder a disproportionate share of environmental issues, but also lack recognition and voice in the many decisions that affect their lives. These global and pervasive patterns of inequitable distribution of environmental risk require multiple spatial scales of analysis toward environmental justice. Using data from the ACS 2011-2015, the EPA, and Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network, we analyze both the distribution and potential impacts of uneven and unequal environmental monitoring locations. Our results show that solutions to environmental problems at large scales are missing the data from vulnerable populations who are most likely to experience higher exposure to environmental risks. We build on our analysis to argue that in addition to traditional CPBR, defining communities as communities of interest, rather than communities of place, to address nationwide environmental justice issues.

## **Paper Session: Entrepreneurial urbanism 2.0: Local and comparative perspectives (3:20 – 5:00 pm in Bacchus, Marriott, 4th Floor)**

### ***Buddhist Entrepreneurialism: When Urban Aspirations Meet Religiosity***

**Authors:** Junxi Qian\*, *The University of Hong Kong*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurialism; religion; cultural economy; China

**Abstract:** While culture-based development/regeneration and religious commodification are both well-established fields of inquiry, there is relatively rare dialogue between these two strands of theses. Indeed, studies on religious commodification has been largely focused the entrepreneurial mindsets of religious establishments and actors at the micro-level of day-to-day practices, offering limited consideration of the relationships between the increasingly discernible commodification of religiosity and the broader political economic conditions of capitalist societies amidst neoliberal transition and the entrenchment of entrepreneurial urban governance. Despite the potential dissonance between the transcendent, other-worldly pursuits of religions and the utilitarian, entrepreneurial and development-oriented logics of market economy, religions in post-reform China, particularly, Buddhism, Taoism, and folk beliefs have been targeted by the entrepreneurial urban state and involved in large-scale projects of building, developing and marketing, conditioned on massive investment of funding and people's spending. Notably, recent developments tend not to treat religions merely as "traditional culture" to be gazed remotely, but spiritual resources that modern people keenly pursue for negotiating fluid modernity and rapid social change. This presentation draws from two Buddhism-based mega-projects in transitional China – Ecological Tourism Industrial Park of the Sixth Patriarch's Hometown in Yunfu, Guangdong Province and Niu-Shou Mountain Cultural Tourism District in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. This presentation asks two questions: (1) how the allegedly anti-market impulse of spiritual pursuit turns out to feed into highly pro-market, entrepreneurial mega-projects; (2) how the repackaging of religiosity as a sellable commodity gives it a re-invented ontological status, different from what is practiced on a mundane basis.

## **Paper Session: Spaces of Consciousness 3: Ordinary Extraordinary (3:20 –**



## **5:00 in Studio 10, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

### ***A World For Spirit: Unconscious Communication And The Creation Of A Space For Affectual Forms***

**Author(s):** Steve Pile, The Open University

**Keywords:** unconscious communication, affect, affectual forms, religion, spirituality

**Abstract:** Communication with the dead, of the kind witnessed every week in Spiritualist services across the English-speaking world, presents a significant challenge for both secular and Christian ways of understanding the world. The challenge is to understand why the extraordinary practice of spirit communication is routinely experienced as successful. Indeed, the "miracle" of talking with the dead is experienced as mundane and ordinary. To understand this, I focus on three factors that are key to the success of spirit communication: first, is the interaction between spirit, the medium and the congregation; second, is the transfer and production of ideas unconsciously between all concerned, through emergent affectual forms; and, third, is the production of a world for affect grounded in an everyday affectual infrastructure. Taken together, we can see that the extraordinary world of spirit communication works because it relies upon the ordinary miracle of unconscious communication.

## **Paper Session: Geographies of Religious Experience And Perception (3:20 – 5:00 pm in Studio 9, Marriott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

### ***Creating Cities of Sanity: Using the Mandala Principle as a Urban Planning Tool***

**Authors:** Guillermo Estrada-Rivera\*, *Naropa University*

**Keywords:** Urban Studies, Buddhism, Mandala, Gentrification, Topophilia, Buddhist Studies

**Abstract:** This research parts from the premise that aspects from "Urban" and "Buddhist Studies" can inform each other. The intention of creating functional systems within cities points to a goal of connection and efficiency. This interconnection can be studied from the Buddhist perspective using the "mandala principle". The mandala is usually recognized as a symbol that recreates cosmological and ecological systems within Buddhist and Hindu cultures. These symbols point towards an idea of synchronicity that can be used to work with city management. The methodology of this research is based on the integration of social and religious commentary with qualitative sources. This multidisciplinary approach explores subjects that relate to concepts specifically associated with the "Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism". The mandala principle is used as a lens to study the emergence of a city and its functional development in relation to the human perception of it. The integration of the mandala in Urban Studies is possible through "Yi-Fu Tuan's" concept of "Topophilia". This concept of topophilia relates to the emotional value and the perception of space; a perception that varies with instances of "gentrification" and "urban revitalization". The inclusion of the Buddhist mandala provides a different vocabulary and perspective on how the development of urban spaces can be perceived and how that perception can be transformed. The research concludes with a suggested new perspective on how to approach city planning based on a horizontal or flat model inspired by the mandala instead of a hierarchical one.

### ***Being Moved – Sensational Forms from Revival to Popular Culture***

**Author(s):** Sandra Wallenius-Korkalo\*, *University of Lapland*

**Keywords:** religion, embodiment, sensational forms, performance

**Abstract:** This paper looks at how cultural products make sense of, and are involved in mediating emotional embodied practices of a Christian religious group. Laestadianism, a Lutheran revivalist movement, known for its conservative values, and large families, is prominent in Finland and can be found also elsewhere in northern

Europe as well as the United States. Historically, the practice of 'liikutus', literally 'being emotionally moved' has been typical in Laestadian services. Religious sermons often provoked powerful emotional and corporeal reactions: people cried, rejoiced, shouted, jumped, and fainted. Today, the practice is largely frowned upon in official religious settings. However, emotional religious forms have not completely disappeared. This paper takes an example of a theatre performance portraying Laestadians to discuss the ways in which fictional representations provide templates as well as sites of religious practices, gestures, and emotions. The paper applies Birgit Meyer's concept of 'sensational forms' in tracing religious styles in the performance. Sensational forms address and involve participants in a specific manner and induce particular feelings as well as particular kind of excitement. Sensational forms in the play are materialized in a corpus of hymns, collective prayer, and in a similar habitus of a body and style of dress. The performance also participates in the making of religious identities and the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion of the group.

**Keywords:** religion, embodiment, sensational forms, performance

### ***Gendered Geographies of Muslims in Moscow, Russia***

**Authors:** Meagan Todd\*, *Indiana University*

**Keywords:** Muslims, Russia, gender

**Abstract:** My paper will explore the gendered dynamics of Muslim publics in Moscow. My findings are based off ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews conducted in 2013 and 2015. Although the Russian state tends to view Islam through a bifurcated lens of "official" Islam (associated with Hanafi Sunni Islam and Sufi orders) and "non-official" Islam (associated with Salafism), Muslim identities do not map easily onto these lines. This is especially true in Moscow, which attracts a large number of Muslim migrants from throughout Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. My paper explores how Moscow's Muslims form new social and civil society groups in Moscow. In my talk, I will focus on the formation of Muslim women's centers. Moscow's Muslim women are increasingly engaging and shaping their Muslim identities at women's centers. These women's center tend to form along interethnic lines and appeal to an international Muslim identity. They interact with and comply, but do not rely, on "official" Muslim spiritual boards or state power structures, showing evidence of an independently organized Muslim civil society. These centers are notable forms of religious civil society organizations in Russia, as NGO activity in general and women's NGO activity in particular have been reduced following restrictive NGO legislation. I will explore their strategies for success amidst Russian suspicion of NGO activity and how their international focus challenges traditional conceptions of Islam in Russia. This paper will contribute to understandings of the growth of civil societies and the transformation of minority religious groups within Russia's managed democracy.

### ***The Rivers in Hindu Sacred Geography.***

**Authors:** France Azema\*, *EHESS*

**Keywords:** Geography, religion, India

**Abstract:** In India, the mythology of the Hindu tradition flows inseparately together with the sacred topology of the land. Rivers are goddesses and their flows, holy water. Water is of special importance in Hinduism. Apart from its life-sustaining properties, holy rivers are used for devoutness. Bathing in the waters of a sacred rivers are believed to absolve all sins. Ganga is the holiest of the seven rivers and purifies the bathers as her waters are said to be the liquid embodiment of the Shakti, the energy of life of the God. The holy rivers carry a big cultural and religious significance for Hindus. The rivers are a part of a living sacred geography that Hindus hold in common. The rivers as goddesses are not considered apart from the land in which they flow and they are the pattern of the symbols that this land embodies. This paper deals with the mythic image of the world viewed by Hindus and the biological and organic vision that this express. The cult of the nature and especially

the cult of the water refer to archaic roots of human beings. It describe how the geography of India comes to life for Hindus; how the land is the mother of all Hindus and its rivers its vital energy. Thus, the reference to the geographical unity of a mode of traditionalist legitimation serves here as an instrument of delimitation of the religious object.

***Muslim Students' Religious and Cultural Experiences in the Micro-Publics of University Campuses in NSW, Australia***

**Authors:** Kevin Dunn\*, *Western Sydney University*, Adam Possamai, *Western Sydney University*

**Keywords:** Religion, university, micro-public, Muslims

**Abstract:** Although there is much research about the growing ethnic and religious diversity on university campuses across the world, relatively little is known about the religious and cultural experiences of Muslim students on university campuses in Australia. We focus upon the micro-publics of university campuses to investigate these experiences. We draw upon an analysis of a survey that was completed by 324 Muslim students who were studying at universities in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. Our analysis points to the diversity of the Muslim student population and their commitment to diversity on campus. In these ostensibly secular environments, religiosity was not curtailed. Discrimination was reported within an education setting, and there were concerns about haram activity (alcohol consumption). Despite the divisive power of religious belief there was broad acceptance with sharing space. A pro-diversity sensibility has emerged within these post-secular micro-publics.

**Organizer/Chair:** Nathan Burch, Towson University.

**Paper Session: Faith, Place and Material Culture: Geographies Of Material Religion (5:20 – 7:00 pm in Studio 9, Marriott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

***Ealing's Via Dolorosa: Performing Religion In Suburbia***

**Authors:** Claire Dwyer, University College London; Nazneen Ahmed, University College London; David Gilbert, Royal Holloway

**Keywords:** Religion, public space, suburbia

**Abstract:** This paper draws on on-going field work in West London to offers an analysis of the ways in which different kinds of 'performance' marked variously as 'religious' occur within the same suburban locality in 'public space'. The paper's key focus is on two religious processions: the annual Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' procession organised by a group of local Christian churches, which has recently been re-worked as the 'Ealing Passion', and the annual 'Chariot Festival' organised in August by a Shri Kanaga Amman Hindu temple whose participants are predominantly from the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. These two contemporary processions are analysed as examples of the extension of sacred or religious space beyond designated congregational spaces which work to sacralise suburban space and to make visible religious identities. The paper explores the intersections of religion, place and space in the re-working and re-making of 'ordinary' spaces into sacred places through a lens which acknowledges the sedimented histories of faith shaping the assumed secularity of suburban streets and parks.

***Hospitality, Material Culture And Encounter: Connections Between Jewish, Christian And Muslim Homes In London Today***

**Authors:** Emily Harris\*, *Queen Mary University of London*

**Keywords:** London, home, religion, interfaith, material culture, museum

**Abstract:** This paper will focus on the home as a site of everyday connection, hospitality and encounter between Jewish, Christian and Muslim residents in London today. Drawing on recent fieldwork, the paper will outline the home as a space of religious belief, practice and material culture, exploring the interfaith significance of this in relation to the role of homemaking and hospitality practices across a range of spaces. Outwith formal interfaith work, encounters between people of different religions occur as part of everyday life in the home, street and neighbourhood. I will examine the role of food, material culture and dialogue in these encounters, as well as the ordinary, small-scale adjustments made to accommodate visitors of other faiths at home. These instances often go unnoticed in accounts of contemporary religion, and can contribute both to wider understandings of religion in London today, and the role of religion at home. I will also outline more formal examples of interfaith dialogue at home, setting out the shared importance of hospitality, curation and adaptation in these contexts. Bringing together geographies of home, material culture and everyday religion, this paper will outline a new understanding of domestic space as co-constructed through a diversity of encounters, material cultures and hospitable practices in the context of contemporary religion. Lastly, I will consider public engagement in reference to a collaborative exhibition at The Geffrye Museum of the Home, discussing the role of religion, hospitality and material culture in the museum.

### ***The West London Islamic Centre: Tracing The Making Of Everyday Muslim Space***

**Authors:** Nazneen Ahmed\*, *University College London*, Claire Dwyer, *University College London*, Laura Cuch, *University College London*

**Keywords:** geographies of religion, material culture, architecture, creativity, Islam, mosques

**Abstract:** Mosque building in Europe has predominantly been researched in relation to the politics of inclusivity as it manifests through negotiations of the planning system, and external debates between mosques and other actors within the planning system. What has been overlooked, we argue, are the creative elements of mosque building and the more everyday elements of making Islamic space, and the resultant aesthetic and affective qualities of Muslim places of worship. We highlight these elements through our ethnographic research which records a moment of transition for one mosque in West Ealing, London as it undergoes a major redevelopment project from humble, adapted warehouse to an ambitious, purpose-built building. Though architecturally ordinary, the structure of the warehouse mosque was made sacred, numinous, even beautiful through various everyday forms of making and doing, including the stitching of silk table covers for classes, and acts of collective worship and learning. Interviews with the architects and developers for the new mosque reveal the creativity and innovation in the design and planning of the new building, reflecting the mosque's younger members' aspirations for a sustainable, impressive mosque and community centre embedded in its locality. A comparison of the two building projects signals two different creative approaches to the making of mosques and suggests that both everyday forms of creative making and architectural creativity are important to the production of British Muslim sacred space.

### ***The Question of Sewage on No. 5 Road: Postsecular Ontologies And Interreligious Collaboration On Post-Agricultural Land In Richmond, British Columbia***

**Authors:** Justin K.H. Tse\*, *Northwestern University*, Claire Dwyer, *University College London*

**Keywords:** religion, theology, postsecular, ontology, sewage, suburb

**Abstract:** The posthumanist philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2008) has theorized the 'postsecular' as faith in the vitalism of matter to overcome the colonization of the Anthropocene; in this sense, nonhuman material is agentic. But can this theorization of postsecularism actually be operational within geographies of religion? We

consider the case of the suburban space of No. 5 Road, where a sewage line had to be built on post-agricultural land across a 3-km stretch of road with over 20 religious institutions. The story is that the building of this sewage line – and then contestations among faith communities over a perpendicular one to it – is one of the few examples of meaningful interreligious cooperation. But does this mean that the shit, as it were, is a placemaking agent? Through interviews and a review of planning documents, we argue that human consciousness matters in the politics waged over this sewage line and that this suggests that religious concerns even about the most vulgar material matters require personal decisiveness. In so doing, we push back against attempts in geographies of religion to incorporate the posthuman into the theorization of the postsecular, contributing also to conversations in social and cultural geography about whether matter can be agentic without the influence of personal human consciousness.

**Discussant:** David Gilbert, Royal Holloway, University of London.

**Organizer:** Claire Dwyer.

**Chair:** Justin Tse.

## **SATURDAY, APRIL 12**

### **Paper Session: Gendered Infrastructures 1: Exploring Dialectics Of Form, Space And Identity (8:00 – 9:40 am in Zulu, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**

#### ***Infrastructure Of Insecurity: Women's Experiences Of Sanitation In Urban India's Informal Settlements***

**Authors:** Kathleen O'Reilly\*, *Texas A&M University*

**Keywords:** Sanitation, gender, India, open defecation, security

**Abstract:** The problem of open defecation in India has attracted much attention, but research focusing on the provision of urban sanitation infrastructure often overlooks the social marginalization that infrastructure represents. This paper explores how sanitation infrastructure reproduces gender inequalities, in part because it is imagined as a neutral space. The paper draws on research in Pune and Jaipur (India) in informal settlements, where a variety of sanitation infrastructure has been built and rejected by users. It offers evidence of slum-dwelling women's experiences of harassment and violence related to inadequate facilities. In addition, it explores the strategies that women adopt to minimize risk and stress. An examination of experiences of sanitation-related violence against women shows the connections between slum geographies, the surrounding built environment, available sanitation infrastructure, and unequal intra-slum relationships (e.g., caste, religion, class). Intersecting identities shape women's experiences of sanitation-related violence, and affect women's ability to meet their sanitation and hygiene needs. While urban sanitation in Pune and Jaipur does not meet women's needs across all castes, the chances of collective action to address sanitation needs are compromised by tensions between groups in the slums. Additionally, the threat of resettlement weakens the ability of communities to demand sanitation services from urban governments. Drawing these threads together, sanitation infrastructure is shown to represent gender inequalities, caste tensions, and experiences of powerlessness of the urban poor.

### **Paper Session: Gendered Infrastructures 3: Exploring Dialectics Of Form, Space And Identity (2:00 – 3:40 am in Zulu, Sheraton, 8th Floor)**



***Violence Against Women In Indian Urban Public Spaces – Studying The Impact And Interconnectedness Of Socio-Cultural Gendered Norms And Urban Infrastructure On Women’s Safety And Mobility***

**Authors:** Ritwika Biswas\*, *Temple University*

**Keywords:** Women, urban public space, identity, violence, Intersectionality, accessibility, Infrastructure, India, global South, feminist geography, urban geography, urban planning.

**Abstract:** The recent increase of violence against women in Indian city spaces has focused attention on sexual violence as an important factor affecting women’s access to urban public spaces. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the interconnectedness of urban infrastructure and different socio-cultural gendered norms and their relationship to women’s vulnerability to sexual violence and unequal access to public spaces of Kolkata, India. In doing so, this research also seeks to provide empirical evidence that documents how gender intersects with other forms of identity (religion, class, caste, age) and power to determine accessibility to urban public spaces; and what shapes women’s strategies to access public spaces, given the threat of male violence. Using mixed methods of data collection like in-depth interviewing, key informant interviewing, focus group discussions and visual methods, the study explores how urban infrastructural set up like the transportation system, sidewalks, placement of public toilets, street lighting, forms of surveillance ties into notions of safe and unsafe spaces, and affect women’s accessibility in the public spaces. By examining the issue from a postcolonial, feminist geographic perspective, the research aims to move beyond a primary focus on violence against women as limiting women’s mobility to analyze the interconnectedness among socio-cultural gendered norms and urban planning, that in the first-place leads to such violence and limited accessibility to urban public spaces. Drawing from postcolonial and intersectionality theories, the research will integrate a global South perspective, thereby broadening feminist theories of urban space and planning.

**Paper Session: Breaking Boundaries From Bottom To Top: Critical Approaches To Migration I (10:00 – 11:40 am in Studio 4, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

***Places of Worship and the Spatial Integration of Immigrants in New Destination Cities: Case Study the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area***

**Authors:** Michelle Brym\*, *the University of Central Oklahoma*

**Keywords:** Immigration, Ethnic Geography and Cultural Geography

**Abstract:** This research focuses on the new types of communities that immigrants establish in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, a non-gateway city in the under-researched destination of the U.S. Southwest. Places of worship have been identified as important meeting spaces in immigrant communities that are often otherwise unnoticed in the suburbs where they reside (Jones-Correa 2008). Although geographers have not paid much attention to the relationship between religion and immigration (Holloway and Valins 2002) this study seeks to understand how immigrants use religious spaces as they construct communities and contribute to the development of a translocal environment (Allen and Cochrane 2007). The variety of places of worship founded by recent immigrants and their spatial distribution make visible the plurality of communities newcomers form in an urban area. Interviews with foreign-born members of the Chinese Methodist community and the Islamic community provide different perspectives on the role of religion in the functional integration and the spatial mobility of immigrants within the city.

***Redeeming Neoliberal Biopolitics Of Migrants: Christianity And Migrant Workers in Shenzhen, China***

**Authors:** Quan Gao\*

**Keywords:** biopolitics; migrants; Christian migrant workers; China

**Abstract:** This paper explores the connections between Christian theo-ethics and China's emerging neoliberal forms of biopolitics imposed on rural-to-urban migrants. The economic and political reform since the late-1970s has enabled millions of migrant workers from rural areas to become the key actors in China's integration into global economy. Yet, extant scholarship on rural-to-urban migrants in China placed much emphasis on condition of uprootedness and deprivation amidst China's neoliberal shifts, relatively less attention has been paid to migrants' agency of re-solidifying and their negotiation with both the state's regulatory power and global capitalism regime. Using the illustration of the Christian migrant workers who working in manufacturing factories in Shenzhen, this article shows how Christian theo-ethics can open up political and ethical spaces that cut against the domination of neoliberal biopolitics including factory labour regime, deprivation of urban citizenship and the corporeal politics of quality(suzhi). This paper is interested in the ways in which religious practices enable rural migrants to manoeuvre local cultural resources to generate spaces of negotiation in response to neoliberal values and capitalist exploitation. It contributes to foregrounding new avenues for postsecular approaches studying the geographies of religion, migration and neoliberalism.

**Paper Session: Race, Class, and Watershed Politics in the City III: Urban Flows of Water, Affect, and Power (2:00-3:40 pm in Studio 7, Marriott, 2nd Floor)**

***“Please, You Have To Take Care Of The Rivers”:* Motivating Factors for Inter-Racial Grassroots Activism In A Portland, Oregon USA Watershed**

**Authors:** Erin Goodling

**Keywords:** urban rivers, Portland, political subject formation, organizing, urban political ecology

**Abstract:** Drawing on three years of ethnographic research with the Portland Harbor Community Coalition (PHCC), this paper analyzes the motivations of grassroots activists working together in an inter-racial coalition for a robust urban riverine Superfund Site cleanup in Portland, Oregon USA. When investigating the someones engaging in the somethings, urban geographers tend to either implicitly follow Castells' assumptions that activists are fully formed – as opposed to ever-changing, evolving, and learning – political actors (Rutland, 2013), and privilege identity-based categories (e.g., race, gender, religion) in explaining activists' politicizations (Kallio, 2014). On the contrary, my research highlights the politicization process for agents of progressive urban change, showing how a suite of motivations, ranging from personal relationships with other participants to concerns about a specific social/environmental justice issue, has prompted people from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds to join PHCC. At the heart of nearly all members' involvement, however, is also a deep sense of connection to the Willamette River, and rivers of the world, generally. Foregrounding activists' shared connections to urban watersheds sheds new light on inter-racial grassroots movements for more just urban sustainabilities, with a focus on how difference and solidarity interrelate to contest environmental racism.

**Paper Session: Tourism: Motivations and Choices (4:00 – 5:40 pm in Bayside A, Sheraton, 4th Floor)**

***Factors Influencing Destination Image: Religious Visitors' Perception on Buddhist Mountains***

**Authors:** Keji Huang\*, Sun Yat-Sen University, Philip Pearce, James Cook University

**Keywords:** Destination image; Buddhist mountain; visitor perception; influencing factors

**Abstract:** Traditional religions has been gradually influenced by economic development and destination evolution. Many religious sites, for example Buddhist temples in China, are being converted from religious to touristic function. An increasing number of people, including both secular tourists and loyal pilgrims, are motivated to visit Buddhist mountains every year. It is therefore necessary and meaningful for this study to understand visitors' perception on these religious sites. Two rounds of semi-structured interviews were conducted at Chinese Four Great Buddhist Mountains in 2014 and 2016 to study visitors' perception on these mountains' images. Fourteen visitors participated in the first fieldwork, which were used as tentative analysis. And sixty ones were interviewed in second fieldwork for further in-depth analysis. The tentative analysis showed that destination images of Buddhist mountains could be divided into four types: sacred with high spiritual values, cultural with long histories, attractive with natural features, and commercial with shops and restaurants. Further interview analysis found that these types of destination images were influenced by diverse factors. The main strengthening factors were strong religious atmosphere, attractive natural environment, inner belief, and other visitors' and staff's behaviors. The critical weakening factors were commercial activities, unmatched modern buildings, environmental pollutions, and religious staff's secular behaviors. The findings of this study provide a contribution to both literature and practice by clarifying the influencing factors of visitors' perception on Buddhist mountains and generating insights for religious sites to improve destination brand image.

## Minutes of GORABS Annual Business Meeting for 2017

The annual business meeting of the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) specialty group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) was held The Hynes Convention Center, Boston MA on Saturday, 8th April, 2017, commencing at 11.50AM

**Present:** David J. Butler (DJB), chair and acting secretary; David Rutherford (DR), treasurer; Justin Tse (JT), immediate past chair; Darryl McDonald (DMD), past chair; Ed Davis (ED), past chair; along with new members, Meagan Todd, Emma DeVries, Maxim Samson, Nathan Burch, Caitie Finlayson and Damola Osinulu.

### I. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting was called to order by the chair, DJB, who welcomed the attendance at the annual business meeting, and invited any apologies to be registered. Eight were received, namely, from our secretary, Vincent Artman (VA); Michael P. Ferber (MPF), past chair; Betsy Olsen (BO), past chair; together with ordinary board members: Richard Scriven (RS), Tom Christofel (TC); and Richard Dodge (RD). Apologies were also received from our annual lecturer, Stanley H. Brunn and panel contributor, Adrian Ikahiv.

Copies of last year's minutes had been previously circulated; copies of the 2017 business meeting agenda were then circulated by DJB amongst the attendance for consideration.

DJB then called upon the attendance to introduce themselves and sign the attendance sheet, giving their electronic contact details; this done, the floor was opened for the discussion of issues pertinent to GORABS.

The minutes of the 2016 GORABS business meeting were passed unanimously.

### II. The David E. Sopher Young Scholar Award

Claire Bolton, for her paper entitled 'Good Gentrifiers?: How Faith-Based Newcomers and Long-Time Residents Navigate Development on Atlanta's Southside'; unfortunately she was unable to attend either of our Saturday events, the annual lecture or annual business meeting, having already booked flights home for the Friday, and her award will be presented to her separately.

This year's winner was

In line with recent year's successful advertisement, we had three good applications, which is ongoing vindication of our approach in not only advertising, but also inviting, graduate student applications. The thanks of the Board was expressed to our treasurer, DR, for his printing of the award certificate and organization of the check.

### III. Election of Officers

It being an interim year, all of the principal officers were mid-cycle and no election is required before 2018. They all signaled their satisfaction in continuing in office for a further year.

In the Ordinary Board, several vacancies were available for filling; firstly, the Graduate Student positions, of which there is a maximum of two: two worthy applicants allowed their name to be put forward – Maxim Samson and Emma DeVries, and these were passed unanimously.

As DMD, JVH, and ED are mid-term in their GORABS service as ordinary board members, the filling of these positions does not arise until our 2018 Business Meeting.

For the vacancies created by the completion of a cycle of two years by RS, TC and RD, the meeting was informed that RS was willing to continue for another two-year cycle, where he would help as best he could from Ireland, such as co-adjudicating The Sopher Award, as he has done the past few years. Two additional candidates being present in the room, willing to have their names added, was moved by DJB, seconded by DMD, that Richard Scriven (RS) be continued and that the names of Nathan Burtch (NB) and Meagan Todd (MT) be added to the GORABS Board. This resolution was passed unanimously.

#### **IV. The Robert H. Stoddard Senior Scholar Award**

Our current holder, Professor Stanley D. Brunn, was appointed to the position of GORABS Senior Scholar a year ago and his first duty occurs at this conference – the delivery of the 9th Annual GORABS Lecture. He was unable remain with us for the Board Meeting, but all agreed that his paper was well delivered and illustrated; the panel of discussants were excellent, whether in the room, or having sent in their responses; and the whole exercise was very worthwhile. Professor Brunn is more than willing to assist GORABS in whatever way he can be of benefit in the coming period of years, which is very good news as we have a number of very significant anniversaries pending during 2018.

In 2017, it was decided by the Board that Stanley Brunn would hold The Stoddard Award until such time as a successor is appointed to the position; this has already been informally the position; such that opportunities for GORABS-Brunn cooperation have commenced at this AAG 2017 in Boston, and continue for perhaps a few conferences. The recent Brunn magnum opus, *The World Religion Map*, should feature with an ‘Author meets the Critics’ session, or sessions, at New Orleans next April and, indeed, we should liaise with Stan as to ideas he himself may offer GORABS for consideration in 2018 and subsequently.

#### **V. Financial Report for the year 2016-17**

The financial report of our treasurer, DR, reported a \$3,051.88 balance in our account, as at February 28, 2017 (a decrease of \$99 on this time last year).

As noted last year, our funds are now, in common with all other AAG specialty groups, held with the AAG. We were the last speciality group to do so, with our account held through Carol Prorock’s auspices as a former GORABS treasurer, which was the best way in an era when AAG bureaucracy was less manageable. It has now much improved, such that this development is the preferred methodology.

Current expenditure continues at from two to three potentially annual awards of \$250 each, namely, The GORABS Lectureship (annual); The Sopher Junior Scholar Award (annual); and, The Stoddard Senior Scholar Award (occasional). Last year, we had all three awarded; this year, only the first two are awarded.

Our 2015-16 AAG dues cheque amounted to \$328, which would appear to be our annual income. We have received \$306 over the same period 2016-17. It was acknowledged we need to increase our membership, so as to be able to maintain our awards in a sustainable way, as our income currently covers slightly more than 60% of our annual outlay.

Nevertheless, as TC had suggested at our 2016 meeting, in light of our still considerable funds, we should make some additional junior scholar awards, conditional on membership, which could increase dues and GORABS



interest. The Sopher Award is already covered sufficiently; the annual lectureship is, however, only 20% covered; Stoddard is only an occasional award and is not of financial concern to us.

The 2016 business meeting inaugurated 'The Wilbur E. Zelinsky Award', to incentivize early career graduate students, conditional on their first taking out GORABS student membership, following which they would submit a paper proposal in response to an advertisement in connection. It was intended this be launched last autumn for this AAG 2017 at Boston, but we would not look to autumn 2017 for AAG 2018, New Orleans. Again, while the amount is small, and need not be expended annually, there may be a sponsorship need, over time.

As was moved at the 2016 business meeting by DJB, rather than have several \$75 dollar awards, a single \$100 dollar award be granted the best session organizer(s) and advertised in Autumn 2017 on our Facebook page, Website, AAG Communities and in our own academic networks and circles. Applicants, having taken out GOARBS student membership, would apply to us in accordance with the general AAG session deadline or extended deadline; we would then have Oscar Larson edit the session electronically and for print format as 'The Wilbur E. Zelinsky Award Session'. Last year, DMD approached his College Dean, which has resulted in The GORABS Annual Lectureship 2016 cost of \$250 being entirely covered, at no cost to GORABS, for which our grateful thanks. This could be of use to GORABS in the future for any of our awards.

Again, in closing the treasury report, it is worth remembering DR previously noted the significance of the AAG Enrichment Fund, which waives AAG dues such that we are now being actively encouraged to have non-geographers speak to us as Annual Lecturer. It was agreed that we would continue to exploit this avenue to the best for GORABS.

## **VI. GORABS website**

The website is now WordPress, an development undertaken by JT during AAG 2015; the migration of the old website is largely complete, maintaining all of its content (which JT has copied). Any board will be able to update the website, with login and password to be supplied us by JT – Facebook page will be treated the same, so that we can coordinate all together and post items of interest. We are still transitioning and JT was thanked for his role here, by those in attendance.

Our new website address is [aaggorabs.wordpress.com](http://aaggorabs.wordpress.com) which entitles us to free web hosting. JT has downloaded all past newsletters and will work on the remainder of the website shortly.

## **VII. AAG 2017 Conference Report**

In Autumn 2017, the semi-annual GORABS newsletter will issue, following the conference. The newsletter that issued prior to AAG 2017 proved both useful and effective, and was managed between VA and DJB, for which many thanks.

DJB audio-recorded the Stanley Brunn (9th Annual GORABS) lecture (as also several in previous years) and perhaps these could be made available on our website, even if only in a members only section. Food for thought, certainly, along with the upload of photographs of the lecture and award recipients. the GORABS Annual Lecture, from which he will do up a report. This could form part of the population of our new website with data materials.

All Board members should search out material for website and newsletter – particularly new bibliographical material of use to researchers and news of inter-AAG events, articles and photographs of interest.

We should seek a report on every paper session from a participant (volunteer officers or participants to seek these) to add to our online and newsletter compilations. This is as agreed since 2010, that our postconference newsletter should include a list of all sessions and a summary of the papers delivered at the annual conference, together with anything of GORABS interest.

This year, we had a respectable three-GORABS-sponsored paper sessions, which is a good yearly average.

### **VIII. The Ninth Annual GORABS Lecture**

As earlier advised, our 9th Annual Lecture was given by Professor Stanley D. Brunn (University of Kentucky) on Sanctuary and Refugees in Europe. The attendance was much better than it had been in recent years, and was thought to have been our second best ever, with up to 30 persons present at some point, and an average of low-to-mid-twenties throughout. This is vindication of having the lecture mid-morning, with an adjacent GORABS annual business meeting in the same room, to maximize retention of attendance at both events.

DJB's photos and audio notes can be uploaded, and any other notes will be gratefully received from the attendance.

A significant anniversary will be reached, near year, at AAG2018 New Orleans, with our 10th Annual GORABS Lecture in what is the 40th year of GORABS, our Ruby Anniversary Year. It is therefore important to plan immediately for our guest speaker would could be, inter alia, and in no particular order, Professor David Livingstone; Dr Patricia Ehrkamp; Dr Betsy Olsen; Dr Linda Woodhead. Harriet Hawkins (UK) is a fifth possibility.

### **IX. Joint Keynote Address and/or Annual Field Excursion**

Last year (2016, San Francisco), there was a Joint Keynote Session held by GORABS with the China Geography Specialty Group. It was proposed, in 2017 by JT, following on from this successful connection, to continue this initiative, potentially with Political Geographies specialty group. Talal Asad would be a great speaker. Another possibility would be with the Ethics, Justice and Human Rights group; which would be very useful. While it was not an initiative brought to fruition in 2017, it is hoped 2018 may well be possible.

At AAG 2016 in Chicago, there was, for the first time in many years, a GORABS-sponsored Field Excursion, courtesy of RD. In 2017, we had an involvement with the China Geographies field walk in ChinaTown, San Francisco. We could potentially link to another group for AAG 2018 in New Orleans and it was agreed to further look into this, being a city with much GORABS potential.

It was agreed by the attendance that Ed Davis and Nathan Burtch would form a Field Sub-Committee, to look at what can be managed in time for the relevant AAG2018 advertisement deadlines. It must be borne in mind that only AAG attendance is qualified to attend fieldtrips, and these are subject to minimum recruitment.

### **X. Any Other Business**

The replacement for our GORABS online journal, that is, a twice-yearly or quarterly e-bulletin, has not yet been commenced and a board volunteer will be sought during Summer 2017 to commence this in Winter 2017 to complement our ongoing newsletter. Both have continued potential, subject to us all getting news items to help populate our website, increase Facebook traffic and, thereby, membership.

On these, and all other matters, the committee will be liaised electronically in the coming months, by DJB.

With regard to our Ruby Anniversary Year (2018) and, indeed, the significance of our ten years of GORABS annual lectures, it was proposed that a publication be attempted, whether in connection with Progress in Human Geography (edited volume) or elsewhere.

Another worthy proposal was a 'Dialogues in Human Geography' focus on the Stanley D. Brunn paper, along with 7 responses.

It was also suggested that AAG2018 could potentially feature a 'Pedagogies of Teaching Geography of Religion and Syllabi' and, indeed, some of our membership who teach such modules would be prepared to share their notes and files with GORABS members who would be prepared to open up similar modules at their own universities, in order to grow awareness of, and thereby strengthen, our sub-discipline.

There being no further business, the 2017 Annual GORABS Business Meeting closed at 12.55 p.m.

*Chair*

.....

*Secretary*

.....