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Please send comments, questions, letters, and newsletter submissions to
 Vincent M. Artman,
 GORABS Chair
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 or
 Maxim G.M. Samson,
 GORABS Secretary &
 Vice-Chair
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Dear GORABS Members,

On behalf of the GORABS Board, we hope that you will enjoy this Spring 2022 edition of the GORABS Newsletter. Once again, this year's AAG Annual Meeting, which was scheduled to be in New York City, is instead being held online. While we would love to have the opportunity to see you all in person, the realities of the pandemic make that impossible. Hopefully we'll be able to meet one another at the 2023 meeting, which is scheduled for Denver.

Please keep an eye out for announcements about these initiatives on our new GORABS webpage, which can be found at: <https://www.gorabsaag.org/>. You can also find us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag/> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/gorabsAAG>.

Best,

Vincent M. Artman, GORABS Chair, and Maxim G.M. Samson, GORABS Secretary & Vice-Chair

GORABS News

Please note the following GORABS-related information:

1. **Message from the Chair** (p. 2)
2. **2022 GORABS Annual Lecture** (p. 5)
3. **GORABS is Recruiting Members to Serve on the Board** (p. 6)
4. **Participate in our "Virtual Brownbag" Series** (p. 6)
5. **Upcoming AAG Sessions & Paper Presentations** (pp. 7-28)

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,

We are now heading into our third virtual AAG Annual Meeting! Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has coincided with my term as GORABS Chair, and I regret not being able to see you all over the past few years in person in Denver, Seattle, or New York. I do hope that you and your families, your friends, students, and communities have stayed as safe and healthy as possible in these difficult times.

Despite the challenges, GORABS continues to grow: we now have a total of 116 members, up from 112 in 2019 before the pandemic began. I take this as a very positive sign, alongside the addition of several wonderful new Board Members, that the topics that our group concerns itself with is becoming increasingly relevant and attracting growing attention from the discipline of Geography more broadly.

One consistent area of discussion (and, ultimately, agreement) among the Board over the past year was that we could be doing more to emphasize that GORABS is concerned not just with the geographies of religions, but of other belief systems, such as nationalism, as well. With one of the themes for the 2022 Annual Meeting being “Ethnonationalism and Exclusion around the World,” it seemed like a perfect opportunity to foreground this aspect of our work and demonstrate the growing relevance of GORABS to the study of geography in today’s world.

To that end, we are proud to feature Dr. Kristin Kobes Du Mez of Calvin College, the New York Times Bestselling Author of *Jesus and John Wayne*, which documents the imbrication and evolution of Evangelical Christianity and Christian nationalism in the United States since the middle of the 20th century. Though not a geographer herself, I can think of few better people than Dr. Du Mez to highlight the possibilities for new directions of researching to the geographies of religions and belief systems. I hope you will join us for this event.

In keeping with our “forward-looking” orientation this year, GORABS is also sponsoring another two sessions, on “New Perspectives in the Geography of Religion” and “The State of the Field,” respectively, both of which will feature insights from a diverse range of scholars about where the study of religions and belief systems is going and what some of the promising new areas of research might be. Details about all of these sessions can be found below.

In closing, I want to say that it has been my honor and privilege to serve as Chair over the last three years. As I prepare to step down and pass stewardship of GORABS into even more capable hands, I’d like to thank all of the GORABS members, and especially my fellow members of the Board, for their aid and support. It has been an unconventional three years, to say the least, but it is my sincere hope that I’ve left the group at least modestly better than it already was when I started.

Vincent M. Artman
GORABS Chair
02/14/2022

ESSAY

Spatial Aspects of Indigenous Death

Deondre Smiles

Department of Geography, University of Victoria

Greetings, GORABS members—my name is Deondre Smiles; I am an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria. I am also a citizen of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Finally, I have had the honour of serving as a GORABS board member over the past two years. I wanted to take some page space to share with you some aspects of my work that I think may be of interest, both to you as SG members, as well as for potential future directions of work in our area. A large portion of my work has centered around the ways that Indigenous death is viewed in both Indigenous and settler/non-Indigenous contexts, in a variety of settings.

One of these settings is in the medical field. There have been many controversies over the past decade or so surrounding the rights of Indigenous families to object to autopsies/invasive forms of death investigations on the grounds of religious belief. In a 2018 paper published in *Geoforum*, I covered one such incident in Northern Minnesota, where over one weekend, in two separate incidents, Indigenous families became locked in a struggle with a local medical examiner's office over attempted autopsies of their loved ones (Smiles, 2018). Though the families were able to win the release of their loved ones' bodies, there were broader lingering implications surrounding the ability of Indigenous communities in the state to object to autopsy based on religious or cultural beliefs that frowned on such practices, something that also similar relevance nationwide in a variety of cases, including instances of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people (MMIGW2) (Smiles, 2020).

Another setting is in the field of archaeology and anthropology. The recent publication of the book *Repatriation and Erasing the Past* by Elizabeth Weiss and James W. Springer sparked debates surrounding the ethics of exhumation and continued possession of Indigenous remains by educational institutions. Weiss and Springer argue that modern repatriation laws such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act represent an infringement upon academic freedom; Indigenous scholars, including myself, and allies, argue that repatriation laws are a necessary bulwark against generations of theft of Indigenous remains, as well as disregard for Indigenous lifeways and funerary practices (Halcrow et. al, 2021; Smiles, 2021).

How does these seemingly disparate threads connect to geographies of religion and belief systems? I argue that they do in two ways—first, disregard for Indigenous dignity in death in cases such as listed above renders the Indigenous body as a space of contestation, where Western science and disregard for Indigenous beliefs are placed on one side, with Indigenous ontologies and cultural beliefs placed on the other. Secondly, in cases such as the examples that center around archaeological controversies such as the ones outlined by critics of Weiss and Springer, spaces of Indigenous death, such as burial grounds or cemeteries, become enrolled in this contestation. While I do not wish to be prescriptive with Indigenous belief systems, as there is a multitude of Indigenous ontologies and lifeways in the U.S., let alone North America, or global contexts, it can easily be said that crass disregard for Indigenous belief systems related to dignity of the dead is crass disregard, no matter the specific cultural or geographic context.

In my work, I seek to make the intervention that Indigenous death is not an inert concept, and that the Indigenous dead still have political agency beyond the moment of death and cuts across multiple conceptions of space and place, whether it is through the resistance that they inspire when they are disturbed, or through the connection of how Indigenous communities care for the dead (alongside other broader cultural resource contexts), and how they

care for the living and more-than-human components of their environment, a major component of my ongoing research agenda.

As Geography continues to engage with Indigenous communities, spatial conversations such as the ones outlined become will become more and more prevalent, I believe. Being mindful of non-Western ways of relating to space, even in ways that we have typically defined space as being in Western educational structures, will be important in order to gain a deeper and more nuanced views of the varied geographies related to religion and belief systems and their interface with the concept of death.

Works Cited:

Halcrow, Siân, Amber Aranui, Stephanie Halmhofer, Annalisa Heppner, Norma Johnson, Kristina Killgrove, and Gwen Robbins Schug. 2021. "Moving beyond Weiss and Springer's Repatriation and Erasing the Past: Indigenous Values, Relationships, and Research." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 28 (2). Cambridge University Press: 211–20. doi:10.1017/S0940739121000229.

Smiles, Deondre, 2018. "'...to the grave...'-Autopsy, settler structures and indigenous counterconduct." *Geoforum* (91): 141-150. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.02.034>

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GORABS is pleased to announce that Dr. Kristin Kobes Du Mez present our 2022 Annual Lecture!

Author of the New York Times bestseller *Jesus and John Wayne*, Kristin Du Mez is a writer, speaker, and scholar who explores the intersection of religion, gender, and politics.

Her writing is described as "urgent and sharp-elbowed," and Du Mez does not refrain from presenting the hard truths that history has to offer Americans—and especially American Christians. Her unflinching

examination of the American church, however, is ultimately a call to confession, a call to lament, and a call to greater faithfulness.

An academic by training, Du Mez holds a Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Notre Dame, but she writes and speaks for popular audiences in an entertaining style that is equal parts winsome and hard-hitting.

Her bylines include The New York Times, the Washington Post, Daily Beast, Religion & Politics, Religion News Service, NBC News.com, Christian Century, and Christianity Today. Her work has also garnered extensive national and international attention, as a feature on NPR's Morning Edition, the BBC, and in national outlets in China, Japan, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Germany, and the Netherlands. She is a frequent commenter on religion and politics in the national media at outlets such as the Washington Post, Religion News Service, NPR, CBS, Newsweek, CNN, and the BBC.

As a speaker, she has appeared at colleges and universities across the country including the University of Notre Dame, Eckerd College, University of Iowa, Indiana Wesleyan University, Southern Adventist University, Dordt University, and at the University of Calgary. Her public speaking has also included Christian Feminism Today, Seattle's Crosscut Festival, Lenses Reframed (Cru national leadership), Newbiggin House (San Francisco), the University of Chicago's Martin Marty Center, and Johns Hopkins' Stavros Niarchos Foundation Angora Institute, to name a few.

Du Mez teaches at Calvin University and lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with her husband, three kids, and a dog named Paco.

Books:

Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation (Liveright, 2020)

A New Gospel for Women: Katharine Bushnell and the Challenge of Christian Feminism (Oxford, 2015)

THE DAVID E. SOPHER NEW SCHOLAR AWARD 2023

Description: The purpose of the David E. Sopher New Scholar Award is to promote intellectual inquiry 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 2022 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 2022 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Annual Business Meeting at the AAG event.

Requirements: The paper and application form must be submitted in rich text or Microsoft Word format by March 20, 2023. 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.

THE WILBUR ZELINSKY AWARD 2023

GORABS has recently inaugurated The Wilbur Zelinsky Award, which students can apply to upon submitting a session of papers to the AAG, having first taken out student membership in GORABS and received GORABS group sponsorship. This award was first presented in 2018. Applications are now open for The Wilbur Zelinsky Award 2023, whereby a certificate and \$100 will be given to the best session of papers that qualifies in the above categories.

GORABS IS RECRUITING

If you are interested in serving on the Board of GORABS, particularly if you are from a historically underreported group, please consider joining our group and becoming part of the Board. Your participation will help to strengthen our group and shape its direction going forward.

VIRTUAL BROWNBAG SERIES

With the “pivot to online” and the advent of Zoom, the Board has decided to inaugurate a new “Virtual Brownbag” series that will feature short lectures by geographers of religion, followed by discussion from attendees. We are particularly interested in featuring scholars from Latin America, Asia, or Africa who may not always be able to attend the AAG Annual Meeting, but who want to communicate their research to a wider audience. This should be an exciting new venture, and we hope that this series will help to keep us geographers of religion more connected over the course of the year.

Inquiries regarding the Sopher or Zelinsky Awards, about serving on the GORABS Board, or about participating in our “Virtual Brownbag” series may email any of the following officers:

Chair: Dr. Vincent Artman, Wayne State University, vincent.artman@wayne.edu

Secretary & Vice-Chair: Dr. Maxim Samson, DePaul University, msamson6@depaul.edu

Assistant Secretary: Dr. Nathan Burtch, George Mason University, nburtch@gmu.edu

List of GORABS-Sponsored Papers and Sessions

The 2022 AAG Annual Meeting will be utilizing Zoom meeting rooms that will be accessible through the AAG's Final Program Platform (<https://aag-annualmeeting.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/main/home>)

Please note that all times are in EASTERN STANDARD TIME (EST).

GORABS Annual Lecture: Kristin Kobes Du Mez

Day: 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 5:20 PM / 6:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 72

Organizer: Vincent Artman

Chair: Vincent Artman

Please join us for the 2022 GORABS Annual Lecture. In this talk, Dr. Kristin Du Mez, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Jesus and John Wayne*, will explore the intersection of religion, gender, politics, and the phenomenon of Christian nationalism.

GORABS Session: New Perspectives in Geographies of Religion

Session Type: Virtual Papers

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 02:00 PM / 03:20 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 11

Organizer and Chair: Vincent Artman, *Wayne State University*

Naturalism and Supernaturalism: A Conceptual Framework for Geography Explanation and Instruction.

Author: David Rutherford, *University of Mississippi*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems

Keywords: Religion, belief systems, naturalism, supernaturalism

Current scholarship in studies of religion recognizes a wide spectrum of faith systems that includes more than the major world religions. The discipline of geography has begun to recognize this change, and the traditional study of "geography of religion" has increasingly come to be known as the "geography of religion and belief systems." This paper conducts a brief review of the theoretical basis for this change, and then presents a conceptual framework that organizes religions and belief systems into the broad ideological categories of naturalism and supernaturalism. The paper demonstrates how this conceptual framework produces more coherent explanation and instruction of the conditions, the spatial patterns, and the processes of change and interaction present among religious and non-religious belief systems in the contemporary world.

The Climate Movement and Conservative Christian Groups

Author: Edward Hamilton Davis, *Emory & Henry College*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems, Environmental Justice, Human-Environment Geography

Keywords: Climate movement, environmentalism, Christians, United States

Ancient belief systems, at least some of their most recent proponents, continue to have major consequences in our industrialized world. For example, in spite of considerable scientific consensus in its favor, the US climate movement faces keen opposition from some conservative Christian groups. These groups have argued against climate protection by claiming, among other things, that 1) Earth might be destroyed, and perhaps as a punishment for humanity's sins, but Christians will be saved, 2) Earth is in God's hands and God would not allow its destruction, or 3) prioritizing Earth's survival distracts believers from the prime objective of saving souls. These arguments are expressed in many forms, and have contributed to a widespread skepticism toward the climate movement among millions of believers in the US.

However, since the 1990s a number of evangelical (conservative) Christians have joined the climate movement. The result is a more divided discourse on how Christians might relate to the movement. Indeed, some online activists are quoting even the late famous evangelist Billy Graham in rallying people to the cause of climate protection. This paper summarizes and compares public statements from within the two broad stances: Christians who are opposed to climate protection, and those who support it. The goal is to understand and relate alternative frames for the issue. The paper concludes by seeking ways climate movement leaders might convince conservative Christians to accept the urgency of protecting the climate.

Exploring the Geographies of 20th Century Conservative Political Thought

Author: Christian Sellar, *University of Mississippi*

Topics: Political Geography, United States, Europe

Keywords: Political geography, modernity, conservatism

Contemporary human geography tends to identify political conservatism with neoliberalism (Harvey 2005), populism (Casaglia et al. 2020), and ethnocentrism and racism (Schuermans 2013). More in general, conservatism is depicted as a negative backdrop against which to build the 'progressive' political agenda of the day (Springer 2021). However, this paper argues there is merit in analyzing 'conservative' intellectual traditions in their own terms, as epistemological and socio-political projects. It focuses on three among several 'conservative' intellectual traditions loosely grouped under the umbrella notion of 'traditionalism.' These intellectuals aimed at preserving pre-modern worldviews, notions of authority, and law against the onslaught of modernity in the United States, continental Europe, and part of the Muslim world. In so doing, it unveils the articulation between modernity, conceptualized as a world view based on enlightenment philosophy, positive science, industrialism, and mass democracy, and the place-specific sociopolitical institutions that pre-dated it, viewed in the eyes of the few who opposed it.

To achieve its goal, this presentation focuses on the 20th century, the period in which arguably modernity reached its peak. It compares how American traditionalists (Babbitt 1927, Kirk 1953), continental Europeans in the literature of the crisis (Spengler 1991, Hemming et al 2017, Guenon 2001), and Khomeini's philosophical work underpinning the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Khomeini 2015) conceptualized rights and sovereignty, the notion of work, , and the nature of knowledge. In so doing, it highlights the place-specific nature of the struggles leading to the diffusion of modernity within and without the western world.

A Post-Tsunami Sea Change? Towards Post-Secular Disaster Response in Indonesia

Author: Maxim Samson, *DePaul University*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems, Hazards, Risks, and Disasters, Development

Keywords: Religion, Post-secular, disaster response, tsunami, Indonesia

The role of religious actors in disaster response, an issue that is generally understood as being dominated by secular perspectives, is increasingly receiving attention. Surprisingly considering its likelihood to offer relevant insights, however, the concept of post-secularism has seldom been adopted as an analytical framework. In response, this paper adopts a Habermasian lens to examine the relationship between religious and secular actors in Indonesia with respect to the 2018 Sunda Strait tsunami. In particular, the paper highlights domestic faith organizations' contributions to the disaster response, alongside their struggles to legitimize their leadership potential. By demonstrating the existence of constraints on religious groups playing a consequential role in a public concern that would benefit from multiple perspectives and competencies, it exemplifies how Habermas' vision of a post-secular society is playing out in a disaster context and identifies areas in which collaboration between ostensibly secular and religious actors might be improved.

Lament as Transformation: Geographies of Grief and Ideological Change

Author: Michael P. Ferber, *The King's University*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems, Environment, Environmental Justice

Keywords: Geography of religion, lament, grief, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, climate change

Biodiversity loss, climate change, and growing social injustices inspire laments of deep grief, anguish, and loss in cultures worldwide. Distraught authors are working through pain, sorrow and suffering manifested in the environment due to anthropogenic processes and ideologies of imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and denial. The scale of global suffering and the extent to which it is realized in local contexts is considerable. Nonetheless, many contemporary religious congregations have lost what Christopher Wright describes as the willingness, the vocabulary, and even the capacity to engage in authentic lament. Writing primarily about oppressed peoples, Soong-Chan Rah describes this loss of capacity to lament in terms of a culture of celebration among globally elite religious communities who seek constancy and stability of the current social order rather than deliverance. Thus the language of celebration and praise dominates religious liturgy. Walter Brueggemann further expounds how ideologies supported by denial can be broken by reality associated with grief and disorientation, opening a way for a new orientation as hope overrides despair. Ideology provides a false consciousness, and grief-stricken lament can become a powerful tool to expose ideological disconnects between environmental facts on the ground and false consciousness. This paper speculates how lament can draw observers to pain, sorrow and suffering and thus evoke facts on the ground realism into contemporary orientations of celebratory denial.

GORABS Business Meeting

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 7:00 PM / 8:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 61

GORABS Co-Sponsored Session: Geography of Religions and Belief Systems: The State of the Field

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 08:00 AM / 09:20 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 10

Organizer and Chair: Briana Meier, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Experts from the field will share opening comments, followed by an interactive discussion on the state of the field of the geography of religions and belief systems, including emerging subfields, concepts, and practices.

Panelists will start the session with brief introductory remarks within the following thematic areas: *The emerging subfield of sustainability within the geography of religions and belief systems, with special attention to the importance of the geographical imagination - our collective sense of place - in how religious groups conceive and practice sustainability;

*Concepts of “belief systems” that include religious and non-religious beliefs, including distinctions between Indigenous spirituality and “modern” secular societies.

*The rise in religious “nones” and what that means for the sub-discipline – this rise, rather than solely reflecting a decline in religious beliefs or spirituality, might actually suggest that our current definitions of religion may not fully capture modern religious expression; and

*The focus within political geography on Muslims in majority non-Muslim contexts, and the need to attend to Islamic perspectives and Muslims spaces beyond the West, including transnational expressions and practices of Islam.

Attendees will be encouraged to engage in a discussion with panelists following the opening comments from each of the panelists.

Panelists (P) and Discussant (D):

Edward Davis (P), *Emory & Henry College*; David Rutherford (P), *University of Mississippi*; Deondre Smiles (D), *University of Victoria*; David (Sandy) Marshall (P), *Elon University*; Caitie Finlayson (P), *University of Mary Washington*; Darrel McDonald (P), *Stephen F. Austin State University*

Other Papers at the New York City AAG of Interest to GORABS (February 2022)

Of Chakras and Shock-Troops: Insurrectionary Affinities to New Religious Movements

Authors: Carl T. Dahlman, *Miami University*; Carolyn Gallaher, *American University*

Topics: Political Geography, Religion and Belief Systems, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Far right, white supremacy, nationalism, new religious movements

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Friday 2/25/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM

Room: Virtual 37

Why are there affinities between elements of far-right movements and new religious movements, such as new age belief systems? Mytho-historical origins have played an important role within the imagination of authoritarian and fascist movements since the early twentieth-century. The search for purity in spirit and body suggests that far-right and new age belief systems share certain elements of a geographical imagination that may not be as divergent as commonly thought. We consider several explanatory hypotheses that might explain this affinity between movements that have historically occupied quite disparate positions in both cultural space and on the ideological spectrum. Through historical analyses and qualitative data exploration of contemporary online communities, we seek to understand the conceptual affinities between these groups in an effort to bring to the surface the geographical elements of their vision(s) of community and state. We consider that in addition to certain cognitive patterning, these movements also share an enormous reservoir of potentially sympathetic perspectives on the relationship between human society and their particular understanding of natural order. This allows for them to share in the geographical imagination of what Glack termed organicism and that descends genealogically from earlier strains of natural theology, through romanticism and late imperialism, and up to today.

Collisions at a Disciplinary Crossroads: Infrastructural Imaginaries and Geographies of Religion

Author: Isaiah Ellis, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems, Historical Geography, Geographic Theory

Keywords: Infrastructure, religion, geographies of religion, American South, geographies of religion and belief systems

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Friday 2/25/2022

Start / End Time: 02:00 PM / 3:20 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 27

This paper considers the role of geographies of religion and belief in shaping infrastructural imaginaries. Drawing on yet-untapped intersections between cultural geography and religious studies, as well as an original historical case study of roadbuilding and racial formation in the early-twentieth century U.S. South, this paper explores how Anglo-Protestant idioms of missionization, redemption, civilization, and moral improvement guided the social, cultural, and political dynamics of infrastructure development that shaped the South and the nation. It focuses especially on how the smooth surfaces of modern travel offered fantasies of freedom and mobility that connected white economic progress to divine providence while rendering Black southerners, especially convict laborers who actually built the roads, as aesthetic features of the New South landscape. This racialization of modern surfaces was not merely social and cultural, but also theological and spatial.

After elaborating this case study, I clarify the value of infrastructure as a new point of connection between geography and religious studies, drawing especially on recent monographs in religious studies on “infrastructured religion,” as well as influential infrastructure scholars’ deployment of concepts, intellectual traditions, and scholarly figures familiar in religious studies and cultural geography (Simone 2002, 2018; Larkin 2013; Günel 2019). The constructions of race embedded in American infrastructure shaped not only infrastructure development itself, including its uneven geographies of underdevelopment, but also American religious life. The paper points toward a new set of historical sites, method, and resources for the geographic study of religion.

Cathedral v. Mosque: Contestatory Urban Politics of Place in the Greek-Turkish Borderlands

Author: Alex G. Papadopoulos, *DePaul University*

Topics: Urban Geography, Political Geography, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Urban form, landscape, geopolitics, difference

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Friday 2/25/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 22

We explore the morphological transformation of two iconic monuments in the City of Didymoteicho in Greek Thrace – one Islamic, one Christian– as exemplary of borderlands geopolitics of difference and the intimate. Difference becomes the crucible on which institutional actors and subjects – in this case, Didymoteicho’s Muslim minority community – sort their relationship to state, nation, and civil rights. The Metropolitan Cathedral of Panagia Eleftherotra – Virgin Mary the Liberator (1992) contests the historical landscape primacy of the architecturally significant Grand Beyazit Mosque (ca. 1420) – the two structures defining the city’s skyline. The state of the Islamic monument undermines the minority community’s faith and trust in a fragile regime of cohabitation with the Christian majority, which is further complicated by the city’s situation on the geopolitically sensitive Greek-Turkish borderlands. The state’s restoration efforts have been tentative, insufficient, and ultimately failed. The Cathedral is as much an ecclesiastical as a political project. It represents a model of contestatory urban politics that instructs on how sovereigntist and “organic” politics of place are both entangled and competitive in the production of different versions of national statecraft and urban spaces with significant implications for the sectarian communities’ sense of belonging. For its part, the Cathedral project illustrates the limitations of the co-evolved State-Church-Military complex in the borderlands in managing (or mismanaging) the geopolitics of difference and the production of urban projects in the public interest.

Planning for Social Sustainability in Indian Cities: Lessons in Identifying and Designing Spaces of Co-Presence and Community

Authors: Jessica R. Barnes, *Northern Arizona University*; Amar Sawhney, *Miami-Dade College*

Topics: Urban and Regional Planning, Development, Urban Geography

Keywords: Informal settlements, social justice, spatial justice, co-presence

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Friday 2/25/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 75

One of the key aspects of sustainability is social sustainability, which emphasizes equity, social justice, and community resilience as a way to humanize cities by nurturing strong communities (Hemani and Das, 2016). High levels of spatial segregation based on caste and religion have been identified throughout many of the major cities in India, despite the notion that urbanization and economic development would erode the stigmas associated with caste. Such segregation fosters discrimination in access to education and job opportunities and dehumanizes others stoking tensions that can erupt into communal violence (Chatterjee, 2009). Rapid urbanization across India has resulted in the growth of unplanned settlements that are often spatially segregated by caste (Ganguly, 2018; Waghmore & Contractor, 2015; Webb, 2013; Vithayathil & Singh, 2012; Field et al, 2008). Co-presence consists of people of different identities sharing space as a means to gain knowledge about and acceptance of others – a counter practice to segregation (Legeby, 2013). We examine spatial segregation and co-presence in two cities in northern India: Chandigarh, the capital city of both Punjab and Haryana states with about 1 million people and Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh with about 200,000 people.

Sermon Maps: Towards a Womanist Spiritual Cartography

Author: Shaundra Cunningham, *University of Tennessee*

Topics: Black Geographies, Religion and Belief Systems, Cartography

Keywords: Religion, black geographies, emotional geography

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Friday 2/25/2022

Start / End Time: 5:20 PM / 6:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 47

This paper will explore the multi-faceted and complex ways that Black women engage with and encounter sermons. I'm curious about the emotional landscapes evoked in the midst of the sound, cadence, and content of the sermonic moment and thereafter. This paper will explore the work of sermons and the ways in which certain "earmarks" (Spillers 1971) proffer hope and sustenance, or not, in the midst of an unexplored micro-geography and the attendant "spirited landscapes" (Miles 2019, Morrison 1987) of listeners and congregants. What kinds of co-constitutive place-making and world-making unfold in response to the sermon? To explore these questions, I shall examine a creative visual method constructed for pandemic fieldwork.

The Partial Secularisms of Singapore's Muslim Minorities: Authoritarian Space-Times and the State-Led Structuring of Citizenship at the Margins

Author: Orlando Woods, *Singapore Management University*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems, Cultural Geography, Political Geography

Keywords: Partial secularisms, margins, Muslim minorities, authoritarian space-times, Singapore

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 08:00 AM / 09:20 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 63

This paper argues that the secular should be understood as a partial construct that is selectively deployed by states and individuals to structure everyday encounters with difference. The partiality of the secular is most pronounced in Muslim minority contexts. In these contexts, the regulatory gaze of the state works through the space-times of the secular to structure both the terms of citizenship, and the terms of inclusion in society. These structurings reveal shades of (in)compatibility between the Muslim and non-Muslim self, and between Muslim citizens and migrants. They also emphasize the partiality of the secular in response to the authoritarian structuring of space. I illustrate these ideas through an empirical exploration of Singapore's Muslim minorities. In Singapore, the Muslim population is primarily Malay, but includes non-Malay cohorts as well. Of these, Bangladeshi migrant workers form an important minority as their visa status precludes them from becoming Singapore citizens, but also shields them from the secular structuring of the state. In the mosque, the interfacing of Singaporean Muslims on the one hand, and Bangladeshi Muslims on the other, can yield insight into the assertions of citizenship, and the negotiation of selfhood, that occur at the margins of a state-defined secular society.

Boundaries and Belonging: Different Lives of Muslim Youth in a College Campus, North India

Author: Manisha Priyam, *National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration*

Topics: Higher Education, Asia, Historical Geography

Keywords: Muslim youth, university violence, campus lives, mis-recognition, masculinity, Patna university

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 67

Students clash at the Patna College campus very often, and engage in violence on the university site. The issues of dispute are both sacred and profane, and arise as much from the ordinary, quotidian lives of students in the campus hostels, as from extraordinary moments of celebration of religious festivals. These students are residents of different hostels on campus. They are youth drawn to this historic public university, by their social imaginary of modern higher education, and their aspirations for future-making in a capitalist economy. This “great disembedding” of youth from erstwhile geographies characterized by hierarchical, pre-modern social structures and religiosity, is premised on principles of participation as equals, and anticipates secularization of beliefs and attitudes. However, there is a materiality to realizing youth aspirations—a local context in which students stay in hostels divided by religion and caste, and informal power and control creates imaginary boundaries.

The violence is passed off as lumpen youth groups clashing for power. Yet sighting of the ordinary lives on campus gives us an account of the segregation and boundaries within which Muslim youth must contain themselves. They belong to the campus, but with a difference. A complex matrix of the politics of mis-recognition, absence of state support, and exclusionary media helps script targeted violence and perpetuates their ghettoization. The campus assertions however have a distinct masculinity, as girls and women are missing in this discourse of violence.

Self-Making of Young Dalit Women: Becoming the Cultured and Mobile Ravidassia

Author: Sugandha Nagpal, *O.P. Jindal Global University*

Topics: Migration, Gender, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Youth, mobility, gender, religion, caste

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 67

Much of the work on religion and Dalits has examined religion as an important tool for claiming respectability among lower caste communities. But how young Dalits are using religion to engage in processes of self-making and mobility that moves beyond the goals of respectability to claim social distinction is relatively unexplored. In this paper, I examine how young Dalit women in Punjab are using religion and specifically, the idioms of a lower caste religious movement to cultivate mobile identities. These young women belong to the upwardly mobile Dalit community of Punjabi Chamars or Ravidassias. The economic mobility of this community is complemented by religious and social assertions of the Chamar identity through the transnational Ravidassia movement. I draw on the narratives of young women residing in a predominantly Dalit village, Chaheru in the Doaba region of Punjab. Chaheru has a strong migration culture and young women from upwardly mobile families pursue a college education with the aim of study-based or marriage migration. But, despite the prevalence of mobility imaginaries linked with migration to Europe and North America, young women are rarely able to move away from the village. In response to their immobility, as young Ravidassia women wait to move away, they construct mobile identities by establishing their distinction from the rural space and affinity to the urban middle classes. An important aspect of cultivating these mobile and urban identities is claiming cultural sophistication by drawing on awareness and knowledge of the Ravidassia movement.

Risky 'Rono' (King): Interpreting Shamans and the Shifting Geographies of Youth Aspirations in Neoliberal Gujarat

Author: Mona Mehta, *Ahmedabad University*

Topics: Urban Geography, Political Geography, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Shamans, youth aspirations, shifting livelihoods, neoliberal economy, Gujarat, India

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 67

'Maldhari' or pastoral communities in Gujarat face a serious erosion of their traditional livelihoods given the depletion of grasslands and the poor economic returns on rearing livestock. Maldhari youth with limited educational and social capital must navigate the precarious neoliberal economy and survive the shifting geographies of occupations and urbanization they inhabit. It is not a coincidence that in the midst of this socio-economic flux has emerged the tremendous popularity of modern day bhuvras or shamans beyond their traditional ritualistic roles as mediators between the human and spiritual realms. Many 'bhuvras' have achieved Rockstar fame as performers whose music videos and songs have attracted millions of views on social media. This paper examines the phenomenal popularity of shamans as role models for maldhari youth not just as spiritual healers in the traditional sense, but as innovative interpreters of changing lifestyles and occupations who articulate community pride, risk taking and daredevil masculinity. It ethnographically explores the circulation and reception of popular shamans among young audiences, and interprets their communicative speech acts reflected in super hit songs such as 'risky

rono' (king), ritual performances, speeches and social media posts. The ability of 'bhuvras' to seamlessly navigate tradition and modernity, embrace the consumerist good life and operate in the urban informal economy offers important insights into the ways in which youth may cope with the risks and challenges of the neoliberal economic landscape.

We Ran up the Girnar: The Spatial Rescue of Masculinity in Western India

Author: Leya Mathew, *Ahmedabad University*

Topics: Gender

Keywords: Masculinity, religion, South Asia, consumption

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 67

Drawing on an ongoing ethnography of educated youth in the western Indian state of Gujarat, this paper considers the extraordinary affordances of Mount Girnar for the display and reclamation of masculinity. Girnar is mall, temple, and trekking trail, all at once. At 3500 feet, Mount Girnar is the highest peak in Gujarat. Like many other peaks in the region, Girnar too is a pilgrimage site, dotted with Hindu and Jain temples. The peculiar convergence of social spaces—that of conspicuous consumption, religious piety, and physical prowess—into one physical space created unusual affordances for whom Radhakrishnan and Solari (2015) call “failed patriarchs.” Scholars have noted that the bulk of economic growth in South Asia has comprised of feminized work, that is, underpaid, undervalued work that extends cultures of servitude (Bardalai, 2021). For educated youth, doing masculinity has become especially fraught with workplaces denying them recognition and respect and world class consumption spaces exhorting expression and assertion. Srivastava (2020; 2021) has elaborated the significance of religious spaces in reconciling some of the contradictions of doing masculinity in contemporary India. At Girnar, the modernities of consumption, the transcendence of the sacred, and the sheer physicality of the masculine were on full display. I suggest that a spatial analysis of masculinity allows us to see how young people work out the energies and suspensions of capitalism (Xiang, 2021).

Geopolitics and the Weaponization of Culture: From British-Sponsored Jewish Zionism (1809-1947) to American-Sponsored Islamic Jihadism (1979-Present)

Author: Mohamed Elyassini, *Indiana State University*

Topics: Middle East, Political Geography, Military Geography

Keywords: Geopolitics, culture, Palestine, Israel, Zionism, Jihadism

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 5:20 PM / 6:40 PM

Room: Virtual 68

This paper examines the strategic deployment of culture in the service of geopolitics. It draws upon geopolitics and geopolitical economy to critically review the genesis and development of British-sponsored Jewish Zionism (1809-1947) and American-sponsored Islamic Jihadism (1979-present). It tones down the loud cultural explanations of these ethno-religious movements and highlights their geopolitical nature as cost-effective government strategies. Encouraged by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and Palestine in 1798-1799 and Napoleon's Jewish Sanhedrin in Paris in 1807, the British

established the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews in 1809 as a keystone in the process of deploying East European and Russian Jews to create a “geopolitical” Jewish entity in Palestine as the shortest route to British India. Following in the footsteps of the British and under the influence of the State of Israel, the Americans deployed North African and West Asian Muslims to Afghanistan to ultimately force the Soviets to lift their ban on Soviet Jewish emigration. The paper argues that Zionism and Jihadism pervert Jewish and Islamic teachings and attempt to delegitimize the current and much more authentic Islamic Jihad by the Palestinians, the Lebanese, the Syrians, the Iranians, the Yemenis, the Iraqis, and their allies. It concludes that geopolitics—not culture—is more appropriate for explaining Zionism and Jihadism and their most remembered Frankenstein’s monster-style blowback terrorist attacks by the Irgun Jewish Zionists against their former British sponsors on 22 July 1946 and by the al-Qaeda Muslim Jihadists against their former American sponsors on 11 September 2001.

https://www.indstate.edu/cas/sites/arts.indstate.edu/files/Faculty/melyassini/Geopolitics%20and%20the%20weaponization%20of%20culture1_0.pdf

Critical Topographies of Agency and Resistance: Women Practicing Islamic and Traditional Visual Arts in Istanbul

Author: Hulya Arik, *University of Toronto*

Topics: Feminist Geographies, Middle America, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Agency, resistance, Muslim women, political Islam, Middle East, gender, Islamic visual arts, creative industries, feminist geopolitics

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Saturday 2/26/2022

Start / End Time: 05:20 PM / 06:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 12

Agency and resistance have been key entry points in critiquing the Western colonial discourses and a geopolitical order based on whether or how much ‘Muslim women’ are oppressed. While these concepts have been central to anti-colonial and feminist scholarship that ‘writes back’ to the empire, as well as the multi-scalar feminist geopolitical analysis of the imagined geographies of the Middle East, they nonetheless have remained as controversial place holders in liberal political discourses that seek to humanize the ‘other’ and integrate them into modern, liberal secular subjectivity (Bracke 2008). In this paper, I explore the temporally and spatially variegated formations of agency and resistance as materialized through the lived experiences of women who practice Islamic and traditional visual arts in Istanbul. This art scene has emerged as a product of political Islam and in reaction to the legacy of Western-oriented secular cultural politics in Turkey. From the mid-1990s onwards, efforts to revive art forms such as calligraphy, miniature and illumination evolved into a complex creative industry. From the grassroots of political Islam, women artists play a key role in the alignment of Islamic and traditional visual arts with the dominant Islamist Turkish nationalist discourses. Yet their struggle to navigate the patriarchal religious nationalism alongside their aspirations to be creative reflect immensely on the internal dynamics of Islamism in Turkey. In this paper I reflect on my ethnographic fieldwork with women artists to understand the complex formations of resistance, agency and gender within seemingly rigid and conservative frameworks.

Space, Place, and Music: New Currents in the Geography of Music and Sound 1

Organizers and Chairs: Arun Saldanha, *University of Minnesota*; Rashad Shabazz, *Arizona State University*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 08:00 AM / 09:20 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 24

Though geographers have been doing research on music for decades, there has recently been a flourishing of new perspectives emerging between cultural geography, popular music studies, and sound studies. This series of panels builds on the momentum at previous AAG meetings to create community and exchange. “Space and place” are more than just the “where” of music’s production and consumption. When we listen to music, broadcasts, or other organized sounds we’re hearing how history, migration, power, industry, race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, climate, language, and a host of other social, environmental, and cultural factors give rise to a particular kind of sound. No musician or listener lives outside these forces, and the experiences of music and sound in turn help shape these contexts. Music is spatialized, and this collection of panels brings that idea into focus.

Panelists:

Rashad Shabazz, *Arizona State University*; Sandra Jasper, *Humboldt University Berlin*; Peter Ekman, *University of Southern California and the Berggruen Institute*; Luke Leavitt, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Space, Place, and Music: New Currents in the Geography of Music and Sound 2

Organizers and Chairs: Arun Saldanha, *University of Minnesota*; Rashad Shabazz, *Arizona State University*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 25

Though geographers have been doing research on music for decades, there has recently been a flourishing of new perspectives emerging between cultural geography, popular music studies, and sound studies. This series of panels builds on the momentum at previous AAG meetings to create community and exchange. “Space and place” are more than just the “where” of music’s production and consumption. When we listen to music, broadcasts, or other organized sounds we’re hearing how history, migration, power, industry, race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, climate, language, and a host of other social, environmental, and cultural factors give rise to a particular kind of sound. No musician or listener lives outside these forces, and the experiences of music and sound in turn help shape these contexts. Music is spatialized, and this collection of panels brings that idea into focus.

Panelists:

Luke Hington, *University of Wisconsin-Madison*; Kahina Meziant, *Northumbria University*; Leonieke Bolderman, *University of Groningen*; George Henderson, *University of Minnesota*

Sustainability in the Name of God? A Geographical Research Agenda on the Role of Religions in Agro-Food Sustainability Transitions

Author: Shadia Husseini de Araújo, *University of Brasília*

Topics: Agricultural Geography, Religion and Belief Systems, Environment

Keywords: Religion, agriculture, food, sustainability transitions, geography, environmental ethics

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 15

Interdisciplinary scholarship agrees that religions play a crucial role in both confronting the contemporary environmental crisis and working towards a sustainable planetary future, particularly in the realms of food and agriculture. However, the question of how religious environmental ethics are, can, or should be translated into sustainable agricultural practices has been a matter of intense and controversial debate. Although geographical voices have been largely absent from this debate, I argue that geography has much to contribute. Based on a review of contemporary research and thought on this topic, I outline current debates, present research gaps and propose an agenda for geographical engagement with religions' roles (and their limitations) in agro-food sustainability transitions. I show that such engagement is especially fruitful when adopting a relational space perspective that sheds light on (a) assembled spaces as contexts enabling, promoting and/or limiting possibilities to act upon religious environmental ethics through sustainable agricultural/food practices, as well as on (b) the ways of how religious (together with other) agents transform and (re)assemble spaces.

The Peace Mission Movement's Communion Table

Author: J.T. Roane, *Arizona State University*

Topics: Black Geographies, Feminist Geographies, Food Systems

Keywords: Black geographies, Black ecologies, Africana Religions, food, urbanism

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 40

I historicize the efforts of Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement, examining the ways that ordinary members fashioned insurgent modes of social belonging wherein they defied segregation and began to articulate a new vision of the future based in peace. Collectively, members of the Peace Mission remade property as a collective asset, disarticulating it from blood and familial transmission, as well as from race. They embraced asexuality and proposed a non-reproductive future, that while not queer in the sense of (openly) embracing same-gender sex or love, queered/queried the horizon of reproduction, growth, and profit championed by dominant urbanists including planners, politicians, and police. I center my examination of the group after it shifted center from Harlem to Philadelphia in the early 1940s. I focus on the group's "Holy Communion" viewing these regular feasting rituals as enactments of earthly satiation giving material substance to more abstract notions of peace centered by Divine. Feasts held together materially each outpost of the organization, constituting the infrastructure for the group's "heaven on earth." Attending to the archived menus, I decenter Father Divine's charisma, drawing out the quotidian efforts of Black migrant women who used the communion to shape visions of peace through the practice of commensality. Critically, through the communion table, and its aesthetic of abundance, these women transposed and adapted the ethos of plotting and the Black commons from rural communities and mill towns in the South, creating novel forms of collectivity and substantive belonging against a backdrop of urban enclosure and atomization.

Space, Place, and Music: New Currents in the Geography of Music and Sound 3

Organizers and Chairs: Arun Saldanha, *University of Minnesota*; Rashad Shabazz, *Arizona State University*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 11:20 AM / 12:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 8

Though geographers have been doing research on music for decades, there has recently been a flourishing of new perspectives emerging between cultural geography, popular music studies, and sound studies. This series of panels builds on the momentum at previous AAG meetings to create community and exchange. “Space and place” are more than just the “where” of music’s production and consumption. When we listen to music, broadcasts, or other organized sounds we’re hearing how history, migration, power, industry, race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, climate, language, and a host of other social, environmental, and cultural factors give rise to a particular kind of sound. No musician or listener lives outside these forces, and the experiences of music and sound in turn help shape these contexts. Music is spatialized, and this collection of panels brings that idea into focus.

Panelists:

Arun Saldanha, *University of Minnesota*; Christina Zanfagna, *Santa Clara University*; Eric Sarmiento, *Texas State University*; Mandy Truman, *Texas State University*; Teresa Abbruzzese, *York University*; Elijah Leotaud, *York University*

Presidential Plenary on Resurgent Ethnonationalism: The Politics of Purity in a World of Difference

Theme: Ethnonationalism and Exclusion Around the World

Organizer and Chair: David Kaplan, *Kent State University*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 12:50 PM / 2:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 54

This special plenary panel on Resurgent Ethnonationalism: The Politics of Purity in a World of Difference describes and analyzes new political movements based around more exclusive forms of national identity. Nationalism relies on the conception of a shared community, even if that community is fictional. There must be something that binds together a group of strangers. Often characteristics such as language, or religion, or a shared heritage apply, but there are many instances where a self-described nation includes members who do not easily fit into the boxes.

Ethnonationalism is tied to a nationalist political project that perceives a nation along ethnic lines. Ethnonationalists insist that the nation has an impermeable “cultural” identity (as defined by the ethnonationalist) and those outside of this identity can completely assimilate, leave, or suffer a decline in rights. Ethnonationalism animates politics in many countries. India contains a form of strident Hindu nationalism that is antagonistic to Muslims, Sikhs, and others who are considered outsiders. China has clamped down on its Muslim Uighur population in Xinjiang. In European societies, ethnonationalism has emerged as a key organizing principle among many right-wing populist parties. The exclusionary far-right movements in the United States today have a long provenance, from the anti-Catholic “Know Nothing” party of the mid-nineteenth century to the anti-black and anti-Semitic Ku Klux Klan established in the early twentieth century.

Panelists, all of them engaged public scholars, will participate in a conversation regarding ethnonationalism around the world. We will discuss how ethnonationalism manifests itself in different societies, whether it can coexist with civil society and cultural diversity, points of comparison and contrast among ethnonationalist movements, how ethnonationalism is expressed in attitudes and policies, and the future of this trend. This timely topic will also be represented by numerous sessions at the Conference under the theme of Ethnonationalism and Exclusion.

This Presidential Plenary will begin with a short introduction by Dave Kaplan followed by a roundtable discussion among all the panelists. Audience participation will be welcomed at the end of the plenary.

Introducer and Moderator: David H. Kaplan,

Panelists:

Cynthia Miller-Idriss. Professor of Sociology and Education at American University. Her interest is primarily in far-right extremism, especially in Germany. Author of several books, including *Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany*.

Andreas Wimmer. Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. He has expertise in race, ethnicity, and nation-building. Author of several books, including *Ethnic Boundary Making and Nation Building*.

Samuel Goldman. Associate Professor of Political Science at George Washington University. He studies political theory, religion, and politics and is also the executive director of the John L. Loeb, Jr. Institute for Religious Freedom. Author of *God's Country: Christian Zionism in America and After Nationalism*.

Caroline Nagel. Professor of Geography at University of South Carolina. She has written extensively on immigration, transnationalism, multiculturalism and Islamophobia. Several articles on these topic in *Space and Polity*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Colonialism and Religion in the Development of Taiwan: Monumental Religious Architecture as a Proxy for Historic Settlement Growth and Urbanization

Authors: Scott D. Kirk, *University of New Mexico*; Chung-Ching Shiung, *National Cheng Kung University*; Amy Thompson, *University of Texas at Austin*; Christopher Lippitt, *University of New Mexico*

Topics: Historical Geography, Migration, Behavioral Geography

Keywords: Taiwan, Historic Settlement, Archaeology, colonialism

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 2:00 PM / 3:20 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 49

While present day Taiwan is very different from mainland China, its historic settlement can largely be attributed to the rather informal colonization of the island by a seafaring people from Fujian. This settlement – focused on the southwestern shores of the island – brought with it forms of monumentality that can still be seen today, principally in the form of monumental religious architecture (MRA; i.e., temples, churches, etc.). In this paper, we demonstrate how MRA can be used to map the colonial settlement of an ethnically Han Chinese population in the modern metropolitan areas of Tainan and Kaohsiung between the 16th and 18th centuries, and the urban development that occurred thereafter. Using a pilot study dataset of more than 700 data points with known foundation dates, we illustrate microregional patterns in settlement

development over time using kernel density analysis of time-binned MRA. This allows us to evaluate the relationship between density of MRA and population expansion. We then compare results from the late 18th and early 19th centuries to historic maps as a means of accuracy assessment, demonstrating a close spatial relationship. This study lays the foundation for future work on cultural and environmental impacts influencing the development of cities.

“We Can Provide for the Public Through Our Own Networks:” Sikh Infrastructures of Care in Delhi’s Second Wave of Covid-19

Author: Asha Marie Kaur Sawhney, *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*

Topics: Asia, Hazards, Risks, and Disasters, Urban Geography

Keywords: Covid-19, infrastructure, health, India, disaster mitigation, infrastructures of care, space, Sikh, infrastructural violence, social movements, service

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 2:00 PM / 3:20 PM

Room: Virtual 32

During India’s second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, Sikh institutions in Delhi distributing oxygen cylinders, building hospital beds, and providing rations for hundreds of thousands of covid affected residents, brought Simone’s (2004) notion of people as infrastructure to life. The everyday ‘urban specialists’ (Hansen and Verkaaik 2009) organized by Sikh religious institutions and non-governmental organizations provided oxygen to tens of thousands of Delhiites who had been turned away by hospitals. While the media covered these acts as valorous but fleeting acts of humanitarian spirit, this paper seeks to explore how these vital infrastructures forged across Delhi’s fragmented urban landscape, when combined with the physical spaces of Sikh worship (gurdwaras), crystalized into a cogent publicly available socio-material infrastructure of care. Undoubtedly, the emergence and visibility of such hybrid infrastructures responds to acts of infrastructural violence by the state (Rodgers and O’Neill 2009), such as the police repression during Delhi’s 2020-2021 farmer’s protests and the state’s refusal to build oxygen reserves for Covid-19 patients. But these infrastructures do not emerge spontaneously. Relying on participant ethnographic research and building on Bayat’s (2009) notion of the quiet encroachment of the ordinary, I argue that they instead rest upon continual acts of *sewa* (service), which craft dense social infrastructures across Delhi’s urban landscape, and which find material expression in Sikh gurdwaras during times of crises.

Sacred Space/Contested Place: Intergenerational Memory of Joseph’s Tomb and the Everyday Geographies of Peace and Violence in Palestine

Author: David (Sandy) Jones Marshall, *Elon University*

Topics: Political Geography, Cultural Geography, Middle East

Keywords: Peace, violence, memory, families, youth, settler colonialism, Palestine

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 03:40 PM / 05:00 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 7

Feminist approaches to the study of peace and conflict emphasize peace as necessarily plural, situated, and contested. This analytical and methodological focus on the intimate spaces of peace and violence is well suited to the highly fractured political landscape of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, with its topographies of graduated sovereignty and highly

localized flash-point areas around settlements, checkpoints, and segments of separation wall. However, there is a risk that the broader spatial-temporal context of settler-colonialism in Palestine is lost with a small-scale focus on sites conflict or everyday spaces of peace. One such site is Joseph's Tomb in the northern West Bank. Revered by Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Samaritans, this site has historically been regarded as an example of inter-religious coexistence in Palestine. Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, however, the site has witnessed frequent clashes between Palestinian youths and Israeli soldiers. These clashes, as well as the imposition of walls and checkpoints around the site, has led to the violent erasure of Palestinian folk memory and religious traditions associated at the site, particularly those of women. This paper argues that inter-generational oral history interviewing with Palestinian elders, youths, and families, helps to situate the everyday experiences and memories of Joseph's Tomb, in times of peace and conflict, within a broader spatial-temporal geopolitical context. Moreover, this paper contends that such intergenerational encounters themselves constitute a form of care and resistance that mitigates against the violent erasure of memory of the site.

“They May Dance in the Manner of White people:” Indian Residential Schools’ Assimilation Through Sport and Student Resistance

Author: Alexandra Louise Giancarlo, *University of Calgary*

Topics: Indigenous Peoples, Recreational and Sport Geography, Ethnicity and Race

Keywords: Residential schools; Indigenous cultural practices; race and racialization

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Sunday 2/27/2022

Start / End Time: 5:20 PM / 6:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 78

To missionaries charged with “civilizing” and Christianizing Indigenous children to attempt to fit them for Canadian settler colonial society, every aspect of Indigenous life needed to be dismantled and replaced with practices that cultivated Euro-Christian dispositions. The Department of Indian Affairs’ officials, and their missionary counterparts who administered Canada’s Indian residential schools, took steps to promote “modern” and “civilized” physical activities such as organized sports to inculcate Western values of individualism and, later, of cooperation and democracy (Forsyth 2020). In this, their efforts largely mirrored overseas colonial missionary sport programs. Because many traditional physical cultural practices were associated with Indigenous spirituality, such as the dancing present at pow-wows and potlatches, they were particular targets for elimination.

This presentation builds on the foundational work of Forsyth and others by examining heretofore little-used primary source material from missionary agencies and contemporary observers of the school system to consider the connections between religion, civic recreation enthusiasts, and the forced remolding of Indigenous physical cultural practices. I examine how government officials, and the religious orders who were responsible for the day-to-day management of the schools, used sports to subtly enact power upon the bodies of Indigenous children to mould them for modern-industrial Canadian society. Foregrounding student responses, this work also draws on oral testimonies, photographs, and other non-traditional archives to foreground students' adaptive and creative resistance strategies to this attempted cultural suppression.

‘Social Dreaming’: The Desired Picture in Geographies of Activism in Hong Kong and Ukraine

Authors: Halyna Herasym, *University College Dublin*; Justin Tse, *Singapore Management University*

Topics: Socialist and Critical Geographies, Geographic Theory, Human Rights

Keywords: Activism, critical geography, geographical imaginations, social dreaming, everyday life

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 9

Activism is often described as action that arises from the gap between existing realities and desired futures. We explore the activist geographies that arise from this ontological crack by exploring two cases, one in Ukraine and another in Hong Kong, where social movements since 2014 can be described as enacting what we call a ‘social dream’ for a just society that is not yet in existence. The word ‘dream’ is poetic in both of the sites we examine; in Ukraine, the ‘dream’ refers not to visions of the night but rather to desires that are actively awakened, whereas in Hong Kong, a ‘mongseung’ 夢想 evokes an image that arises from the heart. Working from preliminary data from qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted in both places in 2021, our argument is that activists tend to attend to the material spaces of their everyday lives as they describe their social dreams, but that the geographical vision that they present is in fact a desired ideal picture that we term the ‘social dream’ itself. This material draws from interviews with secular participants in social movements in societies that have been influenced by Christian -- Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant -- narratives but may include other social dreaming materials as well. Our work intervenes in critical geographies of social movements by calling for attention not only to the motivations for activist practices, but to the geographical imaginations that inform them.

Polish Womens Strikes Back: Spatialities of Protest Against the Anti-Abortion Law

Author: Tomasz Sowada, *Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*

Topics: Women, Qualitative Research

Keywords: Geography of protest, strike, woman, abortion

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 9

The verdict of the Polish Constitutional Court of October 2020 led to a significant tightening of the abortion law in Poland, making abortion illegal even in the case of severe fetal defects. This was met with a sharp reaction and numerous protests under the slogan of the Countrywide Women's Strike.

The aforementioned wave of contestation was an opportunity to look at the spatialities of protest in time of COVID-19 pandemic. The specificity of the protests aroused research curiosity, which led me to ask several research questions:

1. How are protesters using space during the pandemic?
2. How are new technologies used during the protest and how do they affect its spatialities?
3. What is the awareness of the opportunities and risks associated with the use of mobile devices during the protest?

In order to obtain answers to the research questions posed, I conducted a preliminary exploratory study. It took the form of an in-depth interview with five participants of the protests organized as part of the National Women's Strike.

Based on the results of the study, I will present the spatial behavior of protesters resulting from the epidemiological threat and the use of mobile devices. I will also refer to how the use of mobile devices affects the sense of security of protesters and what are the strategies for minimizing the risks associated with it.

Subjectivity, Space and Muslim Women's Narratives in India

Author: Wajiha Mehdi, *University of British Columbia*

Topics: Feminist Geographies, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Muslim women, subjectivity, Islam, violence, resistance

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 09:40 AM / 11:00 AM (EST)

Room: Virtual 9

Islamophobia manifesting in the form of mob lynching, communal violence and procedural erosion of citizenship for Indian Muslims is mapping geographies of violence altering how Muslims conceptualize their everyday mobility and lives in India. Based on ethnographic research with Muslim women from Aligarh in the backdrop of Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, this article traces how women's narratives of displacement, exclusion from citizenship and search for belonging allow reinscribing subjective spaces and reimagining ideas around belonging and citizenship. One way in which violence takes place at the intersection of gender and sexuality is through multiscalar modes of spatial displacement (McKittrick 2006). Among the studies that look at how violence is embedded in the everyday, Das (2007) and Hammami (2015) writings focus on narrative as forms of renegotiation of violence in everyday. This project conceptualizes narratives as offering a critical starting point to understand power, subjectivity and belonging. In mapping how subjective spaces are extended by discourses (Kirby 1996, Foucault 1982, Mohanty 1995) often placed within an Islamic discursive tradition (Asad 1986), this project focuses on understanding interconnections between narratives by Muslim women and spaces of erasures, oppression and resistance.

The Return to Marriage Diversity: A Genealogy of the Historical Diffusion of Heteronormative Marriage

Author: Thomas Stieve, *University of Arizona*

Topics: Sexuality, Historical Geography, Gender

Keywords: Heteronormative marriage, marriage diversity, diffusion, genealogy

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 11:20 AM / 12:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 56

Since the 2000's, the debate in favor of same-sex marriage has emerged in most countries, as 30 countries have legalized this form of marriage and dozens more deliberate the issue (Freedom to Marry, 2021). However, the global discussion continues to frame same-sex marriage as a historical aberration, stating that marriage institutions have never officially sanctioned these relationships. I argue that the present global movement for same-sex marriage is not a recent invention, but a return to the historical norm of marriage diversity. With this presentation, I accomplish two goals. First, I demonstrate

how historically many cultures worldwide accepted marriage diversity by allowing different forms of gender and same-sex unions within this institution. Second, I analyze the process by which marriage based exclusively on unions of people of the opposite-sex diffused from the Holy Land thousands of years ago replaced much of this diversity. By conducting a geographic investigation of its cultural diffusion, I emphasize how heteronormative marriage diffused throughout the world through the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as the socio-economic impact of Western colonialism. Changing governmental, religious and educational structures during this process dramatically transformed local societies and marriage institutions, forcibly aligning them with cultural heteronormativity. Local marriage diversity, such as simultaneous maintenance of a legal same-sex union along with an opposite-sex marriage in the Roman Empire, marriages with third and fourth genders among tribes in the Americas, and female same-sex marriages in Africa, were eliminated and knowledge of them suppressed.

Re-Placing Theological Knowledge Production

Author: Emma Lietz Bilecky, *Princeton Theological Seminary*

Topics: Agricultural Geography, Religion and Belief Systems, Soils

Keywords: Food and faith, land use, soil care, religion and geography

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 05:20 PM / 06:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 4

The Farminary at Princeton Theological Seminary is one of several farm-based programs housed at theological institutions, seminaries or divinity schools, and among a growing number of religious, or faith-based, organic and/or regenerative farms emerging from diverse faith traditions and within what is sometimes called the “food and faith” movement (Treyz & Lietz Bilecky 2021). As a “living lab,” the Farminary is a site of theological and agricultural knowledge production, where agricultural space, wisdom and praxis are shaped and informed by scriptural texts and ecumenical traditions. Additionally, the program seeks to train and equip students to implement similar projects focused on food production on under-utilized land owned by religious organizations, a vast asset for supporting many kinds of community-based initiatives, revitalization, or to meet land access needs for under-resourced growers. While the Farminary has demonstrated commitment to building local, regional and institutional partnerships within the food and faith landscape and developed novel ways of thinking and caring with damaged and degraded soils (Puig de la Bellacasa 2014, Krzywosynska 2020), as both a form of and resource for chaplaincy (ministerial work at the nexus of life and death), I discuss limitations in pedagogy and scalability traceable to its disciplinary identity. I ask what questions and futures theological inquiry makes possible in and through food production. I suggest resources and practices that might guide these living labs in land use decision-making, as they seek to repair both physical landscapes and the theological language that has shaped them.

The Pagoda of the Gods: A Case for Indigenous Karen sacred sites as Special Cultural Zones along Thailand's borders

Authors: Lilly Zeitler, *Penn State University*; Suwichan Patthanaphraiwan, *Srinakharinwirot University*; Benjamin Fairfield, *East-West Center*

Topics: Indigenous Peoples, Cultural and Political Ecology, Asia

Keywords: Indigenous co-management, Indigenous rights, Indigenous culture, state-Indigenous relations, displacement, settler colonialism, political ecology, cultural ecology, territoriality, polycentric governance, relational ontologies, spirituality, nature-culture binaries, nature-society dichotomies, Special Economic Zones, capital, neoliberal, natural resource management, common pool resource management, the commons, forest enclosures, exclusionary forest policy, participatory mapping, participatory action research

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: Monday 2/28/2022

Start / End Time: 05:20 PM / 06:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 32

Indigenous co-management strategies are increasingly nested into state policies and institutions and within polycentric governance models to cultivate an enabling environment for Indigenous rights and culture. Indigenous Karen activists in Thailand are advocating for the integration of co-management strategies in the forestry and natural resource management sectors through the designation of 'Special Cultural Zones.' The Thai government, aiming to bolster trade and investments, has instead designated 10 Special Economic Zones (SEZs), without acknowledging the pre-existence of Indigenous peoples and lands. Our participatory mapping exposes the spatial conflicts between Indigenous and state actors' claims to and conceptualizations of place in these border regions. SEZs intersect with sites of notable cultural significance, such as Kho Pho Lu (Pagoda of the Gods), a sacred site for Indigenous Karen in the Mae Sod/Tak region. Through detailed ethnographic and interview findings, we celebrate the resilience of these sacred sites and embedded ritualistic place-making practices that have persisted despite a historical legacy of settler colonialism and Indigenous displacement. Our case study contributes to understandings of Indigenous relational ontologies, which dissolve the nature-culture binaries that are used to justify neoliberal prioritizations of economic capital. We question assumptions underpinning the uneven valuation of economic, natural, social and cultural capital, and propose the adoption of 'Special Cultural Zones' to promote Indigenous well-being and the preservation of biocultural diversity. We hope to ignite a new valuation system for Indigenous Karen territories that expand from myopic fixations on economic capital to encompass cultural capital and the spiritual dimensions of culture.

Crafting Black Ecologies 1: Makings

Theme: Climate Justice

Sponsor Groups: Black Geographies Specialty Group, Latinx Geographies Specialty Group

Organizer and Chair: Naya Jones, *University of California Santa Cruz*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Tuesday 3/1/2022

Start / End Time: 11:20 AM / 12:40 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 2

How has crafting been a site of Black ecological knowledge(s)? How has the making and use of everyday tools, art, sacred and ritual objects, and material structures not only required ecological knowledge but cultivated the same? For this panel conversation, we approach these questions from the crossroads of black ecologies, critical studies of craft and material

culture, and art-based methods. Inspired by recent articulations of craft in broad terms, we understand craft in its more conventional definition, such as applying and learning skills through manual and/or embodied manufacture, such as quilting, as well as digital craft, architecture, and the (re)making of material landscapes (Editors 2017). We seek to approach Black material culture beyond essentialist readings of blackness, retentions (alone), and place. What are the implications of environmental injustice and climate change for land, plants, and other life that render Black craft possible? What are possibilities, given the intimate relationships that Black material culture often maintains with “more-than-human” life, including ways of knowing that understand nature as agentic? We are also deeply interested in how we come to this work. Many of our panelists are Black artist-scholars, makers, or critical planners who bridge theory and practice. We explore what possibilities emerge - in theory, method, and practice - from approaching black ecologies through a critical frame of craft and material culture.

Panelists:

Jennifer Steverson, *Independent Scholar & Multimedia Artist*; Ayana Omilade Flewellen, *University of California Riverside*; Ayana Omilade Flewellen, *University of California Riverside*; Morgan Vickers, *University of California Berkeley*

Crafting Black Ecologies 2: Landscapes

Theme: Climate Justice

Sponsor Groups: Black Geographies Specialty Group, Latinx Geographies Specialty Group

Organizer and Chair: Naya Jones, *University of California Santa Cruz*

Session Type: Virtual Panel

Day: Tuesday 3/1/2022

Start / End Time: 2:00 PM / 3:20 PM (EST)

Room: Virtual 15

How has crafting been a site of Black ecological knowledge(s)? How has the making and use of everyday tools, art, sacred and ritual objects, and material structures not only required ecological knowledge but cultivated the same? For this panel conversation, we approach these questions from the crossroads of black ecologies, critical studies of craft and material culture, and art-based methods. Inspired by recent articulations of craft in broad terms, we understand craft in its more conventional definition, such as applying and learning skills through manual and/or embodied manufacture, such as quilting, as well as digital craft, architecture, and the (re)making of material landscapes (Editors 2017). We seek to approach Black material culture beyond essentialist readings of blackness, retentions (alone), and place. What are the implications of environmental injustice and climate change for land, plants, and other life that render Black craft possible? What are possibilities, given the intimate relationships that Black material culture often maintains with “more-than-human” life, including ways of knowing that understand nature as agentic? We are also deeply interested in how we come to this work. Many of our panelists are Black artist-scholars, makers, or critical planners who bridge theory and practice. We explore what possibilities emerge - in theory, method, and practice - from approaching black ecologies through a critical frame of craft and material culture.

Panelists:

Danielle Purifoy, *The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*; shah noor hussein, *University of California Santa Cruz*; Jennifer Blanks, *Texas A&M University*; Tianna Bruno, *University of Texas at Austin*; Danicia Malone, *Temple University*

Minutes from GORABS Annual Business Meeting, April 2021

The annual business meeting of the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) specialty group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) was held virtually on Friday April 9, 2021, 6:15–7:30 PM (ET)

Present: Vincent Artman (VA), Chair; Max Samson (MS), Secretary & Vice-Chair; Ed Davis (ED), Ordinary Board Member; Steven Silvern (SS), Ordinary Board Member; Briana Meier (BM), Ordinary Board Member; Deondre Smiles (DS), Ordinary Board Member

Apologies: Nathan Burtch (NB), Assistant Secretary; David Butler (DB), Immediate Past Chair

Minutes recorded by Max Samson

I. Introduction by VA

- Thank you to everyone for being here.
- Thank you to ED and SS for putting together the session on their book *Religion, Sustainability & Place: Moral Geographies of the Anthropocene*, and also to BM for speaking as part of it.

II. VA's feedback from the Chairs Meeting

- This year there are 963 sessions, 2,933 abstracts, and 5,019 participants. Considering that 7,000 to 8,000 sounds like the typical number of participants, attendance is down, but not drastically.
- There are going to be some new criteria for determining the “health” of specialty groups or for petitioning for new groups to be created, but the AAG have been quite vague about this so far, so we will need to keep our ears to the ground. It sounds like having 100 members will be something they are looking for, although this may not be a hard limit. We have somewhere around 84 members according to the AAG website, but in reality we are probably somewhere in the 70s, so this requirement may not be great news for us. However, we do a good job of providing annual reports (it sounds like a lot of specialty groups do not) and in terms of our health, we are active in organizing sessions and fieldtrips and on occasion giving out awards, so we should have nothing to worry about, as these are other aspects the AAG are considering. There were some questions as to what these new criteria will mean for smaller groups; the AAG said they are not meant to be punitive or prescriptive, but rather a dialogue whereby we discuss what we can all do better.
- The AAG will also be introducing a new AAG database and platforms. There will be a new website that is single sign-on as opposed to materials being spread across a number of places. A new web portal should make transactions easier, and there will be more members-only material. This should all be rolled out over the next few months.
- There will be no more limits on how many specialty groups a member can join.
- There sounds like there will be more opportunities for enrichment funds for 2022 for keynote and plenary speakers. More information will be provided in the future; again the situation is a little vague at the moment.
- There are lots of new sponsorships coming to the AAG experience soon, with the new digital platform.
- There will be more funding for COVID rapid-relief programs, to increase eligibility, collect more data and help departments do more recruitment and retention, even if the details are still quite vague.
- A revised statement of ethics is coming out soon.
- The AAG is being held in New York next year, and earlier than usual.

III. Elections

- We discussed what to do with respect to board members' terms, including VA, MS and NB, at our meeting last week. VA asks if the attendees would like to shuffle the positions. ED expresses a willingness to change them around. VA and MS are happy either way, and NB had expressed willingness just to serve. ED reminds that DB suggested keeping the positions as they are in this challenging year, and so proposes keeping the positions the same for this year. SS seconds the motion.
- VA: Our treasurer David Rutherford is not here today but we have not spent any money since two years ago, as we have not given any awards and Ken Foote did not seek any honorarium for the annual lecture.

IV. Awards and related activity

- VA: With awards being important according to the Chairs Meeting, we do need to make sure to give awards in the coming years. Part of the issue was that fewer papers were submitted this year and we advertised less than usual in any case. Therefore, a priority for us as a group is to spread the word, especially as there were a lot of religion-related papers and sessions that took place this year and yet did not have the GORABS affiliation. We need to get those folks into our sessions and into our award programs, and into our business meetings for that matter. With the AAG getting stricter about specialty groups, we need to bring them into our sphere of influence. We can see that questions of religion have a lot of relevance to geography and there is serious geographical work being done on these issues, but we need to build more bridges to embrace these researchers and their work. Ken Foote's annual lecture was well-attended and there are some very big names in geography who do related work, but there seems to be some sort of barrier in how the geographies of religion are perceived. ED and SS had the only GORABS session this year.
- ED notes that the challenge seems to be that we are perceived as a subunit, whereas urban or cultural geography, for instance, are perceived as bigger groups, and lots of people seem to just become part of those groups.
- SS asks whether the AAG is able to advertise our awards and so forth to graduate programs. VA responds that this can only be done through reaching out to the AAG Knowledge Communities, but this is a very time-consuming process, even if it works. There is not a single button and in many cases it is just a matter of emailing each of the chairs of the committees and asking them to relay the information.
- VA asks DS as Chair of the Indigenous Peoples specialty groups for insights. DS agrees that AAG meetings are generally very vague, and suggests that finding time to meet and have food together, even virtually rather than in person, can be helpful in order to participate in more extensive conversations. Curating a session together and providing a safe space for people to share their work would be a good way forward. The Indigenous Peoples specialty group have banded together with a few other specialty groups in recent years, are discussing questions regarding diversity, have grown closer together, and are now collaborating a lot and promoting each other's sessions. VA has been retweeting the Indigenous Peoples specialty group's posts and we are seeking to increase our collaboration.
- ED notes that this is what we were talking about last year: contacting people far in advance and looking to find partnerships. It seems like there is a higher percentage of sessions grouped by the AAG this year, perhaps because individuals submitted their papers without doing so as part of a specific session.
- VA agrees that we need to reach out and be active, rather than hoping that someone else will contact us, which happens sometimes, but is an unreliable "strategy," especially considering the lack of Sopher and Zelinsky nominees. We also need to emphasize that we are not the same as the Bible specialty group, actually being much broader, being about belief systems widely construed. We are a very big tent and people should feel very welcome coming to us, proposing ideas or agreeing to work with us. It seems like we are fighting against a perception of who we are and what we do.

V. The future

- ED shares that Mike Furber is working on a book on lamentations in the context of climate change, such as regarding the fact that people are mourning for environments. It sounds like a very exciting project, and one that is very different. He used to be part of GORABS and we do not want to lose the chance to become part of this edited collection opportunity. The call for papers should be distributed very soon.
- VA notes that the earlier we can start thinking about the 2022 annual lecture, the better. Ideally by our next meeting or via email we can have some suggestions for our next speaker.
- VA: we have thrown around the idea of a brown bag series a few times and it has gone nowhere so far. We are still enthusiastic about the idea but it requires a degree of effort. However, if anyone has any ideas as to speakers, perhaps one per quarter, that would be great. ED suggests a talk on Vine Deloria or Winona LaDuke. BM offers to share relevant information.

VI. Any other business?

- On ED's suggestion, we check in on each other and introduce our work and current status such as regarding employment.
- ED, reiterated by SS, mentions that working on the book was a great experience and it would be great to involve everyone in a book project in the future.

Meeting adjourned.