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## NEWSLETTER CONTENTS

Page 1: Welcome

Pages 2–3: Message from the Chair

Page 4: Essay: Teaching Geography of Religions and Belief Systems; Thoughts on my First Course

Pages 5–6: 2023 GORABS Annual Lecture

Page 7: Announcements

Pages 8–39: Sessions and Papers at AAG 2023 Meeting

Pages 40–42: Minutes from 2022 GORABS Virtual Business Meeting



Please send comments, questions, letters, and newsletter submissions to either:

Max Samson,  
GORABS Chair  
[msamson6@depaul.edu](mailto:msamson6@depaul.edu)

Nathan Burtch,  
GORABS Secretary &  
Vice-Chair  
[nburtch@gmu.edu](mailto:nburtch@gmu.edu)

Dear GORABS Members,

On behalf of the GORABS Board, we hope that you will enjoy this Spring 2023 edition of the GORABS Newsletter. For the first time since 2019, this year's AAG Annual Meeting will be held at least partially in person – in Denver, the location originally planned for the 2020 conference – while a further contingent of AAG and GORABS members will be attending virtually. GORABS is duly delighted to be sponsoring a combination of in-person, virtual and hybrid sessions in order to facilitate as much conversation and learning about the geographies of religions and belief systems as possible. We cannot wait!

Please keep an eye out for announcements about these initiatives on our website, [www.gorabsaag.org](http://www.gorabsaag.org)

You can also find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag](https://www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag) and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/gorabsAAG>

Best,

Max Samson, GORABS Chair, and Nathan Burtch, GORABS Secretary & Vice-Chair

### GORABS News

Please note the following GORABS-related information:

1. **Message from the Chair** (pp. 2–3)
2. **2023 GORABS Annual Lecture** (pp. 5–6)
3. **GORABS is Recruiting Members to Serve on the Board** (p. 7)
4. **Participate in our “Virtual Brownbag” Series** (p. 7)
5. **Upcoming AAG Sessions & Paper Presentations** (pp. 8–39)

### GORABS Mission Statement

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

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

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear GORABS members,

It is with great pleasure that I can deliver my first pre-conference address as Chair knowing that, finally, we have the opportunity to meet again in person at the AAG Annual Meeting! It has been a long three years, with the 2020, 2021 and 2022 meetings all moved to a virtual format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and I do hope that you and your loved ones have remained as safe and healthy as possible during this challenging period. I find it strange to reflect on how quickly we have adapted to new ways of working and communicating over this time, and as a necessary adaptation to our changing expectations in this regard, the 2023 Annual Meeting will be held both in-person in Denver and remotely over Zoom.

Accordingly, and in hopes of accommodating as much of our community as possible, GORABS is sponsoring a mixture of in-person, virtual and hybrid sessions and events (and please note that even our in-person sessions will be streamed and made accessible to virtual attendees). After all, we know that we have an international membership and that not everyone has the possibility of traveling to specific conference locations in the United States, so we hope that the new functionality available to us will enable members across the world to come and check out some of what we have to offer.

Just in case you happen to need a little more convincing, I am excited to announce that our full day of activities on Friday March 24, 2023 has been awarded “Curated Track” status by the AAG, meaning that it is listed as a “must-see” program in the conference schedule. For a group of our relatively modest size, this is a very encouraging achievement, for it shows how the AAG recognizes the importance of what we do and the relevance of our subfield within geography. Our program, which uses “Sacred Spaces, Varied Voices” as its overall theme, is appropriately diverse and pertinent.

In particular, we are delighted to announce that our keynote speaker this year will be Dr. Priscilla McCutcheon, Assistant Professor at the University of Kentucky and, as of January 2023, AAG Fellow. Dr. McCutcheon’s lecture is titled “The Bully Pew, the Bush Harbor and the Brick: The Importance of Place and Landscape to the Black Church in the U.S. South,” focusing on the compelling radicalism and activism long present in rural Black southern churches. I am certain that her lecture will speak to the interests of all our members – and many other attendees at the AAG besides. I hope to see you either in-person or virtually at this event.

Accompanying Dr. McCutcheon’s lecture will be three GORABS-sponsored sessions, focusing on the knotty topic of sacred space. Across the two paper sessions, our presenters will be speaking about a variety of noteworthy issues and dynamics with respect to religions and belief systems, from Canada to Tibet and from Australia to Ukraine. Further, our panel session will aim to stimulate us all to broaden our understanding of sacred spaces, especially beyond the major world religions, to reflect on how we can ensure that historically marginalized perspectives are included and heard in our analyses, and to point to exciting new avenues for academic inquiry. I am sure that all three of these sessions will prove highly insightful, showcasing the valuable scholarship of both new and established researchers from across the world.

We are also sponsoring a virtual session on the following day, titled “Food Justice, Climate Justice, and Cultural Self-Determination.” In line with the Annual Meeting’s theme “Toward More Just Geographies,” this session will discuss the important issue of food justice and the associated challenges of climate change, self-determination, and cultural protection and resurgence.

I would like to take this moment to highlight our two awards, both of which include a financial component alongside the indisputable kudos of winning a GORABS commendation. Having not received any submissions to

meet our scrutineers' criteria over the past three years, we are hopeful (and optimistic!) that this year, we will be able to make an award.

I would like to take this moment to thank those who have remained loyal members of GORABS during a three-year period in which our activities have necessarily been constrained by the pandemic, and especially to our Board Members, who contribute much of their energy and time to the smooth functioning of the specialty group. The past three years have both brought and magnified a range of unenviable challenges which many in our community have experienced personally, including Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine over a full year ago. As Chair, I want to express GORABS's sincere concern for the people of Ukraine, and invite members to donate to two nonprofit (501(c)3) organizations specifically suggested by our previous Chair, Dr. Vincent Artman: Emergency Resources for Ukrainian Scholars, and RazomForUkraine. I would also like to reaffirm here GORABS's commitment to amplifying *all* voices that risk being marginalized, so if there is any other organization you would like to recommend we foreground and support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

On a less solemn note, I would also like to welcome our new members: on behalf of the Board, we are keen to work with and learn from you, as we continue to grow our group and the subfield of geographies of religions and belief systems within the broader discipline. If you are even a little bit curious about shaping our future strategy and in the process the geographies of religions and belief systems, please do consider attending our Business Meeting at 4:30 pm MT on March 24.

To close, I wish to extend my particular gratitude to my predecessor, Dr. Artman, for his support as I have adjusted to my new position as Chair. Having steered our specialty group through an unprecedentedly challenging three years, you have set the bar high for future GORABS leaders, and I promise to all of our members that I will work my hardest to listen to and act on your comments, suggestions and proposals so that we may continue evolving the group in the future.

Max Samson

**ESSAY****Teaching Geography of Religions and Belief Systems; Thoughts on my First Course***Nathan Burtch, George Mason University*

In the Fall of 2022, I taught a course called Geography of Religions and Belief Systems for the first time. This special topics course was cross-level listed as an upper level undergraduate and graduate level course. In this essay, I will outline some of the successes and challenges of the course.

The course was organized into four sections. The first section set up refrains for future weeks by introducing concepts of religion, territory, and sacred spaces. The second section provided a week for the geography of each of the five major religious traditions. The third section focused on American religion and civil religion. The final section discussed non-religious belief systems and conspiracies. For more details of course organization, you can view the undergraduate syllabus at [https://science.gmu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/GGS%20399-001%20Fall\\_2022\\_N.Burtch.pdf](https://science.gmu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/GGS%20399-001%20Fall_2022_N.Burtch.pdf).

As a seminar class, there is weight on the students to fully participate to create a successful course. While the enrollment was small, there was an advantage to having this small, core group in creating a safe and cohesive space for conversation. Additionally, each student would submit three possible discussion questions prior to class, which I used to spur discussion during class. I believe this seminar structure was essential to the success of the course at this level. A mid-semester change that was successful was assigning a geographical conspiracy theory project rather than the religion/environment paper. This assignment asked students to both find a geographically-based conspiracy theory and invent another. In class we read each and discussed the structure for each in terms of plausibility. For each student pair we discussed, at least a third of the class could not identify which was “real”.

Many of the challenges in the course related to having too few weeks to cover all material of interest. In particular, prior to class I debated between having a session on religion in America or on indigenous faith traditions. I chose religion in America as it better aligns with my domain knowledge and to the flow of the class. But I felt there was a missing aspect when Shinto or local folk traditions were raised in class but without the depth of the five major traditions. It also felt as if putting indigenous traditions into one week was short shrift, akin to going around the world in 150 minutes. In the same vein, the topic of sacred space clearly could have its own full class, but this concept was sprinkled into many of the topics that followed. A final challenge was fully spatializing the non-religious belief systems section. While I found our class discussions engaging, having the consistent spatializing concept was weaker than in other sections.

I found the topic of American civil religion to be one of the most intriguing in the class. As we reviewed the syllabus during the first week, students asked what was meant by ‘civil religion.’ The topic served as an excellent shift away from religion and into belief systems as it straddles both so well. I thought this transition made the belief systems section more plausible as a fit in the class to the students.

The experience of this class was my highlight of the semester. I strongly encourage anyone reading this that has an interest in teaching the topic to try to do so! I, along with other members of GORABS with this experience, are happy to discuss our courses and help out the creation of more courses at colleges and universities in the GORABS theme.



**GORABS is pleased to announce that  
Dr. Priscilla McCutcheon will be presenting our  
2023 Annual Lecture!**

Priscilla McCutcheon is an Assistant Professor at the University of Kentucky in the Department of Geography and Associate Director of the African American and Africana Studies Institute (AAAS). She completed her MA and PhD at the University of Georgia and her BA with honors at Spelman College.

Much of her work has been with Black faith-based food programs and sustainable farms in the U.S. South. She recently completed a project on the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), a historic Black middle and upper middle-class organization that had a widespread hunger and health campaign during the Civil Rights and Black Power movement.

She is increasingly interested in Black spiritual and religious geographies and the ways in which the “spirit” is used to conceptualize space and place, particularly in the U.S. South. This includes a project on deathscapes that centers a Black cemetery in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

She, along with Dr. Ellen Kohl, is currently working on a project with Black church food workers in South Carolina, where they categorize their important, but often overlooked work, as food justice activism. She is also working on a project with Dr. LaToya Eaves where they detail the significance of the King James Version of the Bible to rural Black southerners. In 2023, Priscilla was named an AAG Fellow.

**Lecture title:** The Bully Pew, the Bush Harbor and the Brick: The Importance of Place and Landscape to the Black Church in the U.S. South

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row H, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

**Abstract:**

In this lecture, I look beyond the bully pulpit to the “bully pew” to discuss the radicalism occurring in rural Black southern churches, and the activism informed by these spaces. The bully pulpit, when used outside of politics and in discussions of the Black church, primarily focuses on Black male charismatic leaders. I turn to Black women and the Black working class, who largely comprise the pews of the church. First, I look at the accounts of spirituality and religion both in Harriet Jacobs narrative and in Fannie Lou Hamer’s speeches. In these firsthand accounts, we find a broad sweeping, critical, and at times radical message of freedom and liberation. These critiques use God and the church for liberation and strength while simultaneously questioning its limits. In the second portion of the talk, I turn my attention to the Black working class and their efforts in building the physical structures of the church as seen through the bush harbor and the brick. Monica White reminds us through Dubois

that the Black church was one of the first examples of cooperative economics. Further, rural Black people were deeply committed to what bell hooks describes as the “aesthetics of space.” In black churches, this meant building solid structures and a dogged effort to keep them standing. Finally, I reflect on W.E.B. DuBois’ observations in “Of the Faith of Our Fathers,” using Black geographic theories to provide much needed nuance to his study of rural Black Southern spiritual and religious expressions.

**Bibliography:**

DuBois, W.E.B. 1903. Of the Faith of Our Fathers in *The Souls of Black Folk*. Norton Critical Editions.

-----1907. *Economic Co-operation among negro Americans*. Atlanta: Atlanta University Press.

hooks, bell. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: New Press.

White, Monica. 2018. *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press.

### **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 2023 award is a travel grant of \$250. The recipient will also be given an official certificate at the 2023 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Annual Business Meeting.

**Disbursement:** A check will be disbursed to the winner at the 2023 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Annual Business Meeting at the AAG event.

**Requirements:** If you would like to apply, please send your paper abstract and either a script or slides via the contact form on our website ([www.gorabsaag.org](http://www.gorabsaag.org)), no later than March 12, 2023. The paper must subsequently be presented at the AAG Annual Meeting, although 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 GORABS Annual Business Meeting at the AAG event. GORABS reserves the right to not make an award in a given year.

### **THE WILBUR ZELINSKY AWARD 2023**

Students are encouraged to apply for the Wilbur Zelinsky Award upon submitting a session of papers to the AAG relevant to the geographies of religions and belief systems, 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 \$200 will be given to the best session of papers that qualifies in the above categories.

### **GORABS IS RECRUITING**

Particularly if you are from a historically underreported group, please consider joining our group and serving on our 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.

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

Chair: Dr. Max Samson, DePaul University, [msamson6@depaul.edu](mailto:msamson6@depaul.edu)

Secretary & Vice-Chair: Dr. Nathan Burch, George Mason University, [nburch@gmu.edu](mailto:nburch@gmu.edu)

Assistant to the Secretary: Dr. Briana Meier, MIT, [bkmeier@mit.edu](mailto:bkmeier@mit.edu)

## List of GORABS-Sponsored Papers and Sessions

The 2023 AAG Annual Meeting will comprise a mixture of in-person, virtual and hybrid meeting rooms. Virtual and hybrid sessions will utilize Zoom meeting rooms that will be accessible through the AAG's Final Program Platform (<https://www.aag.org/events/aag2023/>).

*Please note that the times displayed are MOUNTAIN TIME (MT).*

### GORABS Specialty Group Curated Track: Sacred Spaces, Varied Voices (3/24/2023)

*All the sessions constituting our Curated Track program will be taking place on Friday 3/24/2023. Sessions will be in-person unless otherwise marked. Please note that our in-person sessions will be streamed, so virtual attendees will be able to attend them through Zoom and ask questions via chat, as well as watch the recording afterwards.*

*Apart from our Business Meeting, all our sessions will be recorded and archived on the AAG's website until June 25, 2023*

#### **Description**

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

#### **Works cited**

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Understanding Sacred Space: Current Research & Future Directions 1

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 08:30 / 09:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row H, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

**Organizer and chair:** Max Samson, *DePaul University*

### **The Prism of Sustainability: Love, Generosity, Reconciliation and Stewardship as solutions to the conflicts inherent in development**

**Author:** Michael Philip Ferber, *The King's University*

**Keywords:** sustainability, economy, environment, justice, equity, development, religion, love

This paper will present an attempt to model a solution to the inherent conflicts of sustainable development. It is built atop the Planner's Triangle, which Scott Campbell developed as he wrestled with balancing social, economic and environmental sustainability in the context of urban planning. Between the economic, environmental, and social points of the triangle lie wicked conflicts forcing practitioners to consider how to grow an economy while protecting the environment (resource conflict), how to protect natural capital and social justice (property conflict), and how to foster economic growth while enhancing equity (development conflict). The triangle has been used in various fields for 25 years, but finding a sustainable middle remains elusive. The prism attempts to expand the triangle beyond individual conflicts and reframe it toward sustainability as flourishing by incorporating human dignity and ecological well-being through a lens of love. I attempt to accomplish this by reorienting the conflicts away from polarized nodes toward a common goal of flourishing through the extension of three new lines: generosity out of economy, reconciliation out of social, and stewardship out of environment. The prism metaphor interprets love as light that illuminates through the bottom of the pyramid toward the desired outcome of flourishing. This results in three new triangles extending above the original planner's triangle, each of which offers solutions to solve the inherent conflicts. While not a flawless formula, themes of love and lovingkindness reign supreme in every world religion and in most philosophies.

### **The Greening of Evangelicals: Caring for Creation Instead of Subduing It?**

**Authors:** Attie Marshall, *University of Oklahoma*; Randy Peppler, *University of Oklahoma*

**Keywords:** Evangelicals, environmentalism, Creation Care, messaging strategies

The first author was driving up I-35 in Oklahoma recently when something caught her eye. Picture a billboard image of cute barnyard animals frolicking in a pasture, topped with a pastel rainbow over a cloudless blue sky, and a message that read something like, "Don't eat us! We're God's Creation too!" complete with a laundry list of supportive Bible verses for the viewer to look up at their own discretion. In that moment, it struck her that she might have stumbled upon something different. The world of Christian plant-based diet advertising is likely niche, and the message felt at odds with the general attitude of most residents of the state regarding meat. So called 'green' advertising has been around for decades in the secular world, but not necessarily connecting Christianity with environmentalism.

The interaction between humans and other species has long been a topic of theological contention. American historian Lynn White Jr. famously pointed in 1967 to Christianity's interpretation of the Creation story in the Book of Genesis as the basis for modern day ecological degradation, with subsequent countering articles written by Christian scholars, all raising the question of humanity's positionality within the wider ecological system.

Here, we will briefly look at different perspectives within Christianity on natural resources, biodiversity, climate, and environmentalism in the modern context from dominion-themed environmental subjectionism to stewardship-themed "Creation Care", including a look at faith-based environmental messages and communication strategies, and connections being made between this seemingly pro-Earth turn and the long-standing pro-life movement.

### **The World is a Mosque: Muslim Perspectives on the Place and Purpose of Mosques in Chicago**

**Author:** Osama Amer Abdl-Haleem, *University of Kentucky*

**Keywords:** Mosques, Places of Worship, Community, Hospitality, Inclusion, Social Spaces, Chicago

This paper examines the relationship of Muslim community members to their mosques and asks the question of what mosques mean to the people who build, fill, and attach to them. Substantial research has been done on mosques around the world. But that research has seldom focused on the perspectives of the people making use of the mosque. This paper attempts a depiction of mosques in the United States as they are understood and made use of by the people closest to them. Why do Muslims in secular countries continue to build mosques and make them the centers of their communities? What roles do American mosques play in the varied lives of their remarkably diverse congregants? And what potentially new models of social space might we take from mosques and other places of worship functioning in a putatively secular state?

To answer these and other questions, I interviewed fifty participants on their experiences with mosques in the greater Chicago area, a city with a rich history of Muslim communities. Numerous perceptions of mosque spaces vied for dominance in the relationships my participants described to me. Mosques were "places of worship" and "neighborly gathering," "safe spaces," and "second homes." They were also "political venues," "places of judgement" and "communal conflict." I have sought to explain these apparent dichotomies within a framework of theoretical and political hospitality. And I have taken away from this endeavor a stronger understanding of inclusion, community, and the meeting of personal and social spaces.

### **"You come to the church, you know you'd be cared for": the spatial aspects of the interaction between the Church and civil societies in Ukraine and Hong Kong**

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

**Keywords:** church, religion, protests, Hong Kong, Ukraine, interviews, qualitative, cultural geography, secular, social movements

#### **Abstract**

In 2013, members of the Ukrainian civil society came together in order to protest police brutality and to make their social dreams of democracy, rule of law and justice come true. In 2014, a similar event occurred in Hong Kong, where, united by the social dream of the rule of law and democracy, the most unlikely of allies joined forces in order to protest the unjust and undemocratic changes to the electoral system. In both places the Catholic churches took an active part in resistance, joining the protesters on the streets and providing them not only with spaces for prayer but also with spaces for expressing their secular social dreams.

Through a series of in-depth interviews with the participants of the social movements in Hong Kong and Ukraine and the clergy of local Catholic churches, we explore the spatial aspect of the symbolic exchange between secular dreaming and the sacred spaces. We argue that while the clergy members took to the streets and joined the protestors, the process went in other direction too: the buildings of the Churches opened their doors and provided a safe space and a place of expression of ecumenical (or even secular) social dreams. The religious activists then were able to incorporate this sacred space that became open to them in the midst of the protests into their further social dreams.

### **Immigrant religions as part of the post-secular landscape in Czechia**

**Author:** Tomas Havlicek, *Charles University, Department of Social Geography*

**Keywords:** Immigrant religions, post-secular landscape, driving forces, Czechia

The Czech religious landscape after 1989 is thus shaped on the one hand by internal driving forces within religious structures, such as de-traditionalization or pluralization, and on the other hand by external driving forces outside religious institutions, such as post-communist transformation, suburbanization, increasing immigration, ageing population, etc. The external influences characterizing post-secularism in Czechia were presented mainly through the example of immigrants from Vietnam, Korea and Ukraine. These are minority communities with different developments. Immigrants from Vietnam came to Czechia during the second half of the 20th century at the invitation of the communist government and their immigration continued in the post-communist period. Similar to the situation among Buddhists, there has been a significant revival among the Vietnamese minority Christians in Czechia in recent years. On the other hand, immigrants from South Korea came to Czechia only in the post-communist period, primarily as Christian missionaries and as employees of Korean economic entities. Also, the Korean Christian community is very homogeneous and sometimes closed due to the language barrier. The ongoing military conflict in Ukraine since February 2022 has caused and will certainly continue to cause the arrival of more than 400 000 Ukrainian immigrants. What role do Czech churches play in this current situation? How can their approach be understood in the context of post-secularism? The general result of the present paper will also outline the transformation of the religious landscape through immigration. It also points to the growing trend towards a post-secular society and landscape through the immigrant religions.

## Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) Annual Lecture:

**Priscilla McCutcheon**

**Title:** The Bully Pew, the Bush Harbor and the Brick: The Importance of Place and Landscape to the Black Church in the U.S. South

**Keywords:** Black church, U.S. South, Black geographies, Black religious geographies, religion, spirituality

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row H, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

**Organizer:** Max Samson, *DePaul University*

### Abstract:

In this lecture, I look beyond the bully pulpit to the “bully pew” to discuss the radicalism occurring in rural Black southern churches, and the activism informed by these spaces. The bully pulpit, when used outside of politics and in discussions of the Black church, primarily focuses on Black male charismatic leaders. I turn to Black women and the Black working class, who largely comprise the pews of the church. First, I look at the accounts of spirituality and religion both in Harriet Jacobs narrative and in Fannie Lou Hamer’s speeches. In these firsthand accounts, we find a broad sweeping, critical, and at times radical message of freedom and liberation. These critiques use God and the church for liberation and strength while simultaneously questioning its limits. In the second portion of the talk, I turn my attention to the Black working class and their efforts in building the physical structures of the church as seen through the bush harbor and the brick. Monica White reminds us through Dubois that the Black church was one of the first examples of cooperative economics. Further, rural Black people were deeply committed to what bell hooks describes as the “aesthetics of space.” In black churches, this meant building solid structures and a dogged effort to keep them standing. Finally, I reflect on W.E.B. DuBois’ observations in “Of the Faith of Our Fathers,” using Black geographic theories to provide much needed nuance to his study of rural Black Southern spiritual and religious expressions.

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White, Monica. 2018. *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press.

## Understanding Sacred Space: Current Research & Future Directions 2

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 1

**Organizer and chair:** Max Samson, *DePaul University*

### Shrines Under Siege: Spatial Temporalities of Sacred Space in Occupied Palestine

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

**Keywords:** Sacred space, Palestine, oral history, memory, religion, Islam, decolonial methods

This paper presents findings from a project employing family-based oral history interviews to document and analyze the intergenerational memories of shrines and other sacred sites in the northern West Bank of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These intergenerational narratives reveal the ongoing and continuous spatial restrictions imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank, as well as the ongoing spatial-temporal desecration of the cultural landscape in Palestine. At the same time, these oral history narratives, rooted deeply in the physical terrain of the surrounding environment and in the deep time of religious folk memory and the cyclical temporalities of seasonal change, also provide a unique vantage point from which to approach sacred space in Palestine. This vantage point, the paper argues, is one that sits outside of the linear chronologies of geopolitical conflict and beyond the contemporary lines of territorial division. As such, this paper makes a case for intergenerational oral history interviewing as a decolonial geographic research method. In doing so, this research seeks to highlight and contribute to the efforts of Palestinian organic intellectuals engaged in the work of preserving and reviving folk religious memory and resacralizing heritage sites as a means of treating the spatial-temporal traumas of ongoing partition, colonization, and occupation.

### “We Still Have the Land, Right?”: Catholic Social Teaching, the Pandemic, and Ecological Spaces

**Author:** Ben Szoller, *University of Waterloo*

**Keywords:** Roman Catholicism, Catholic social teaching, COVID-19, ecology, homelessness, food, migration

This paper explores the mechanisms, both theological and practical, by which three Roman Catholic ecological training sites across Canada engage with justice issues surrounding land, shelter, and food, all of which were catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To do so, this ethnographic project considers how leaders and participants at each site articulate Catholic social and ecological teaching according to their unique local needs, regional histories, and political climates. The findings draw primarily from interviews and observations conducted between Fall 2021 and Fall 2022, but also from recent Catholic documents and local historical accounts. Highlights include a spiritual retreat centre repurposed to shelter the homeless, increased demand for agricultural training and community gardens at religious sites, and one monk’s campaign for climate refugees.

Such cases bring to the fore perennial conversations about the public and private, secular and religious, and the organizational partnerships which are—increasingly—at their core. Sociologists of religion Robert Orsi and Nancy Ammerman provide the theoretical heart for the project, and are expanded through the work of José Casanova to demonstrate how regional, micro-deprivatizations might shape conversations around religion and the public sphere in Canada more broadly.

This research is timely, particularly in the context of the AAG's 2023 call to examine “the spatial dimensions, scope, and scale of racial and social justice,” a theme Catholic social thought itself attends to through its principles of integral ecology, subsidiarity, and dignity of the person—all discussed here.

### **In-betweenness along the henro michi: The bounded and boundless spaces of the Shikoku Buddhist pilgrimage**

**Author:** Jesse Rouse, *Coastal Carolina University*

**Keywords:** sacred space, Buddhism, inbetweenness

From Buddhist temples to scenic beach and mountain views, the 88-temple and 1,200 kilometer pilgrimage around the island of Shikoku sits between and within sacred and secular spaces. For centuries Japanese Buddhist pilgrims have visited sites that are attached to the memory of Kōbō Daishi located primarily along the periphery of the island. Today pilgrims, henro, from around the world and from a number of religious perspectives traverse the island through a variety of modes of transportation, each looking for something personal from the pilgrimage. Research from over the last century has discussed the religious, cultural, economic, and tourism impacts on the identity and economy of the communities that the pilgrimage passes through.

It is that aspect of passing through, however, that is the focus here. While the sacred places along the pilgrimage are the destinations, henro spend significantly more time in the spaces between temples. These liminal spaces that wind through cities, fields, along highways, and up (and down) mountains are where the pilgrim, on a sacred journey, intersects with secular spaces of the local communities. In this presentation, the spatial and cultural in-betweenness of the henro michi will be highlighted through examples along the pilgrim's way.

### **Link to the Rhythm of the Sacred Place---A Case Study of Errand Boy Project under a Sacred Mountain in Tibet**

**Author:** Mingyuan Duan, *Beijing Normal University*

**Keywords:** Sacred place, Mobility, Post pandemic era, Sense of time

During the pandemic and post-pandemic era, many people chose to visit sacred places by remote means, but some scholars have questioned their authenticity. This study draws on the concept of existentialist authenticity to argue that the alteration of people's sense of time can be one manifestation of the authenticity of remote visits to sacred sites. Employing participant observation and auto-ethnographic methods, the author focuses on the online interactions between quarantined people in Shanghai and Tibetan volunteers in the "Errand Boy" project, and analyzes the comments in the live stream. This study argues that the rhythms of Tibetan sacred places can be linked to the Shanghai participants' sense of time in three ways: the possibility of wish fulfillment predicted by the laws of natural cycles, the sense of stability established by the social network of slow living, and the transcendent spiritual power of timelessness from the sacred mountains. In the post-pandemic era, changing one's sense of time has important implications for curbing the anxiety caused by uncertainty and mobility constraints.

## The Role of Rhythmical Pattern Body Movement in ANZAC Commemoration and Site Connotations

**Author:** Stephanie Alexandria Parker, *Australian National University*

**Keywords:** ANZAC, Australian War Memorial, commemoration, dance, video, rhythmical pattern body movement

This studio practice investigated the role that rhythmical pattern body movement has in communicating connotation in a commemorative environment to an attending audience. The project's inspiration was the Australian War Memorial's (AWM) daily Last Post Ceremony (LPC), which transmits the Cult of Anzac.

There is an interactive relationship in an environment between architectural structures and people. Stephens argued that architectural structures act as focus points that transform and communicate knowledge by bodily affecting moods, feelings and emotions. Kelly theorised that performances allow for the 'correct' knowledge or belief to be transmitted orally, which can be mnemonically associated with specific locations in the environment to give purpose. However, the role of the performance element of rhythmical pattern body movement is unknown.

For this exploration, the principle instrument was me using my Hilal Dance practice, which was recorded through performance autoethnography and video.

Through my Anzac Parade, Wreath-Laying video series and art exhibition, rhythmical pattern body movement communicated a commemorative meaning that modified sites' significance. Combined with the ceremonial object—the red poppy wreath—this significance is translated through movement quality and rhythm to provide solemnity and gravitas to the remembrance of sacrifice and hope for the future. Through the repetitive red poppy wreath-laying performance and the LPC, the exhibition explored the idea of how not only a particular commemorative connotation is given to a space but also this performance's frequency has religious associations. The project demonstrated how rhythmical pattern body movement communicates connotations in a performance.

## Understanding Sacred Space: Current Research & Future Directions 3

**Session Type:** Panel

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row H, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

**Organizers and chairs:** Max Samson, *DePaul University*; Caitie Finlayson, *University of Mary Washington*

**Agenda:** Panelists will each have 5 minutes to discuss a topic related to their own research or to explore possible future directions with regard to geographies of religion, followed by comments from our discussant. We will then welcome questions from our audience during an open discussion.

**Panelists (P) and discussant (D):** Caitie Finlayson (P), *University of Mary Washington*; Ed Davis (P), *Emory & Henry College*; Max Samson (P), *DePaul University*; Catherine Carter (P), *Senior/Stand-alone Geographer*; Dominic Wilkins (P), *Syracuse University*; Michael Ferber (D), *The King's University*

## GORABS Business Meeting

**Hybrid session:** Both in-person and virtual attendance

**Date:** Friday 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row J, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

**Organizer and chair:** Max Samson, *DePaul University*

### GORABS-Sponsored Session (3/25/2023)

#### Food Justice, Climate Justice, and Cultural Self-Determination

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** Saturday 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 04:30 / 05:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 18

**Organizer and chair:** Briana Meier, *MIT*

#### Description

This session features practitioners and scholars whose work examines culturally and locally situated themes of food justice and the associated challenges of climate change, self-determination, and cultural protection and resurgence.

#### Trust Practices in Alternative Food Networks: Participatory Observations from an Ecological Farmers' Market in Hefei, Anhui, PRC

**Author:** Walter Poulsen, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

**Keywords:** Trust, Food Safety, China, Alternative Food Networks, Resilience, Ethnography

Ensuring food safety is a key priority in food systems. In China, faith in the ability of the industrial food system to deliver safe food has been shaken over the past several decades by the several high profile incidents of food contamination. Consumers and producers have developed novel approaches to mitigate this perceived risk. The purpose of this paper is to establish grounds for further research into the topic of trust dynamics within alternative food networks (AFN) in China. Through interview and participant observation methodologies, I examine the performance of trust in consumer/producer relationships among participants of the Anhui New Farmers Farmers' Market (安徽新农民农夫市集) in Hefei, Anhui and explore discursive and material elements at play in these interactions. I find that participants position themselves in proximity to the rural romanticism, epitomized by the agritourism farms, and in opposition to discourses of modernization and entrepreneurialism. Within this context personal trust, face to face relationships, and direct experience are valued over institutional certification. This paper extends understanding of the role of material and discursive factors in economic transactions within food systems. It also has practical implications for increasing food systems resilience in China.



**Ceremonies for Climate Justice: A case study of the Snake River to Salish Sea Totem Pole Journey****Author:** Briana Meier, *MIT***Keywords:** Justice, climate change, environment, spirituality, Indigenous, sovereignty, self-determination, ceremony, salmon, orca, solidarity

This paper discusses the 2022 Totem Pole Journey as a case study of Indigenous led climate justice work grounded in ceremony, spirituality, and cross-cultural solidarity.

**Panelists:** Kelly Beym; Briana Meier; Daniel Yonto; Walter Poulsen

## Other Papers at the AAG 2023 Annual Meeting of Interest to GORABS

### **Agricultural materialities, food safety and spirituality in Kuching, Malaysia**

**Author:** Melody Lynch, *McGill University*

**Keywords:** Urban agriculture; food safety; heavy metals; feminist political ecology; spirituality

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row J, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

In Asia, many urban dwellers have begun growing their own foods, motivated by increased cynicism about industrial food systems and anxieties over pesticides in conventional agriculture. Unfortunately, many urban cultivators are unaware of potential trace metal contamination and are undertaking urban agriculture with varying degrees of information available on associated health risks. Often people think of pollution as an environmental concern before considering it to be a health concern. Yet, we are being born with organic pollution in our bodies, and pollution is the leading environmental cause of death and disease globally. Through interdisciplinary investigation, I apply mixed methods including ethnography, soil and plant tissue analyses, and GIS to trace heavy metals from sources of contamination, through urban soils and plants and into the bodies of urban citizens. My research takes place in one of Asia's leading WHO-designated Healthy Cities – Kuching, Malaysia, which is an ethnically diverse city home to Chinese, Malay and Indigenous groups. Drawing from urban and feminist political ecologies and critical physical geography, I contextualize heavy metal toxicity within historical processes of urbanization and colonialism, and investigate how food safety risks might vary across intersectional lines of ethnicity, class, gender, and generation. I also examine how the materialities of plants translate to spiritual, religious, and cultural meanings that contribute to individual and community wellbeing. Centering the body and mind in this research clarifies otherwise obscured interrelations between our bodies, our foods, and our environments.

### **Selling Billiken: Stakeholder Views of An American God in Japan**

**Author:** Ricardo Nicholas Prozano, *Wakayama University*

**Keywords:** Pilgrimage, Religion, Billiken, Commodification, Religious Tourism

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 9, Sheraton, Concourse Level

Western scholars and theologians have long debated the appropriateness of commodifying religious places, icons, and rituals. However, these concerns are Eurocentric in nature, as in South and East Asia religion and commerce have long been intertwined. This paper focuses on Billiken, a god located in the Tsūtenkaku Tower in Osaka. Created as a good luck charm invented in the United States, Billiken has been added to the Seven Gods pantheon. However, outside of Osaka, Billiken is not considered a god to which people make a pilgrimage. Interviews with local stakeholders show that while Billiken has found a home in Japan, he is still regarded as foreign and has a different character than other gods in Japan. Additionally, he is seen as a symbol or mascot of Osaka's popular culture in part because of his potential for commodification and use as a trademark of the Tamurakoma manufacturing and merchandising company. This case study illustrates the need to both be cognizant of cultural differences in relation to religion and commodification and to be open possibilities of the hybridization of religion in a globalizing world.

**(Re)Mapping Native Denver****Authors:** Isaac Rivera, *University of Washington*; Viki Eagle, *UCLA***Keywords:** Indigenous Peoples' Self-Determination, Counter-Cartography, Decolonization**Session Type:** Paper**Date:** 3/23/2023**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)**Room:** Denver, Sheraton, I.M. Pei Tower, Mezzanine Level

Settler imaginaries are realized in material space through settler science regimes, organized through the institutionalization and disciplining of knowledge practices to perform, mediate, and maintain settler order. We trace the making and unmaking of settler imaginaries in Denver, Colorado, and how Denver's Native community refuses otherwise. We situate the ether that surrounds the making of the (Re)Mapping Native Denver art exhibit, including generations of resistance by Denver's Indigenous communities, the spatialization of urban settler colonialism by institutions of knowledge, and our commitment to honoring Indigenous protocols. In doing so, we argue that the curations assembled enact an Indigenous politics of refusal, one where each curation (re)maps a Native Denver. More than an art exhibit featuring the sacred stories by Denver's Native community that stood as a site of public facing education, (Re)mapping Native Denver dismantles the logic and power that sustains the settler imaginary. We demonstrate the potential and necessity of Native assembled counter-cartographies—forming a relational assembly of maps that no technology can break.

**Between Emancipation and Captivity: The Decolonised Jackson's Park of Kumasi****Author:** Ahmed Badawi Mustapha**Keywords:** Decolonise, emancipation, Kumasi, park, captivity**Session Type:** Virtual paper**Date:** 3/23/2023**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)**Room:** Virtual 1

This paper explores the Jackson's Park of Kumasi, as a stark reminder of the brutal realities of colonization through its historical root yet, arguably, a space for healing in diverse ways through its current intricate usages. This would be done through an analysis of archival documentations and the current daily activities in and around the park. The then British governor of the city sought to construct a recreational park that would be named after him as 'the Jackson's Park'. During the early days of the park, it served as a stadium. The park has now transformed remarkably as a public space for multiplicities of activities. There is a small mosque to its left corner where Muslims observe their daily prayers. There are coconut peddlers and artisans around the park. The forecourt of the park is used for diverse activities like public preaching by both Christians and Muslims, wedding events and funeral ceremonies. Some people just come to the park for fresh air or wander around. The documented history of the park and the current usage present an interesting contrast of how that park is presently emancipated yet remains in colonial captivity. The name of the park was officially changed to the 'Jubilee Park' after it was renovated for the celebration of Ghana at 50 independence celebrations in 2007 to signal its emancipation from its colonial past. Yet, the locals still refer to it as Jackson's Park and remembers every bit of the parks genesis and history.

**Vernacular geologies and sustaining hope in uncertain times****Author:** Mabel Denzin Gergan, *Vanderbilt University***Keywords:** Geology, himalaya, race, oral history, uncertainty**Session Type:** Paper**Date:** 3/23/2023**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)**Room:** Granite A, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Akin to charismatic, endangered megafauna, the Himalayan region with its snowy peaks, glaciers, and high-altitude lakes, occupies a central place within apocalyptic forecasts of a ruinous future wherein climatic instability and rampant infrastructural development are set to destabilize regional ecological and geopolitical security. Decolonial critiques of the climate apocalypse as an impending threat, point to how Indigenous communities see themselves as 'post-apocalyptic survivors' (Whyte 2018) who have survived successive waves of colonization and state-building projects including climate mitigation and conservation programs. Extending these critiques to the "ecologically fragile" and "sensitive frontier" region of the Eastern Himalaya in India, this paper examines how Indigenous Lepcha relations with rocks, hills, mountains, lakes, and rivers present an important critique of the universalizing logics of linear time embedded in narratives of climate crisis and Hindu nationalist development projects (Longkumer 2021). Lepcha oral history, myths, and prophecies are replete with stories of past geological events and landscape transformations such as floods, earthquakes, often narrated as contests between Tibetan Buddhist gurus and Indigenous ritual specialists, traced in hillocks and mountains. Drawing on the growing literature on geological materiality, territorial politics, and racialization (Clark 2008; Yusoff 2018; Quintana-Navarrete 2020; Marston and Himley 2021), I suggest these vernacular geological histories offer crucial insights into how Indigenous communities through a range of material and political practices that interpret the earth and its signs, sustain hope in uncertain times.

**Borders Under God's Hands: The Lives of the Exiled Gülen Movement Affiliates in Athens****Author:** Huzeyfe Kiran, *The Chinese University of Hong Kong***Keywords:** migration, Gulen Movement, religion, Greece, exile, Turkey, smuggling**Session Type:** Virtual paper**Date:** 3/23/2023**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)**Room:** Virtual 11

Inspired by the ideas of the Muslim scholar Fethullah Gülen, a fraternal civil society movement called the Gülen Movement (GM) grew and became a significant influence and power in Turkey. Facing persecution by the Turkish government after the 2016 coup attempt, GM affiliates became one of the many displaced groups of people who, despite the pushbacks, attempt to cross the Meriç/Evros river-border or the Mediterranean Sea to flee to Greece. Given the highly unfavorable refugee policies of the Greek government, many choose to move on in their migration journeys to other European countries. To be able to do so, they have to deal with smugglers and illegal border-crossing attempts at Athens' airport. Based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Athens, this paper looks into how these movement affiliates understand and experience illegality in their border-crossing and human smuggling experiences. Many would regard God as an active agent who ordains success or failure in each attempt. By reflecting on and relating to the Prophet's experience of migration and the Quran, these movement affiliates' displacement is understood as a divine form of migration (hicret) and worship. What kind of illegal border-crossing practices and ideas does such an understanding of the world generate? How does perceiving borders to be under God's hands bring new and critical perspectives to modern borders? If all such experiences constitute divine migration journeys (hicret), what are some alternate meanings that displacement may take?

## **Desert Political Ecologies, Conservation, and Contested Sites of Memory in the Mojave Desert: A Contrapuntal Analysis**

**Author:** Carrie Lynn Zaremba, *Pomona College*

**Keywords:** Conservation, deserts, cultural heritage, political ecology, memory

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 12, Sheraton, Concourse Level

The past decade has witnessed the loss of a number of historic and sacred sites in the Mojave Desert, a rising threat that demands the scrutiny of settler colonial ecological and cultural conservation practices that shape the landscape. This paper examines the political ecology of sites of memory in relation to Indigenous sovereignty, vernacular knowledges, and settler colonialism in the Mojave. Given the often-competing perspectives on conservation propagated by the various settler entities that (mis)manage the landscape—the National Park System, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Department of Defense, and private landowners—how do these stakeholders engage with Indigenous and settler sites of memory to project attitudes towards desert conservation? Where do these settler conservation models converge and diverge, and what might these attitudes suggest, more broadly, about the role of memory work in political ecology? I draw from Saidian contrapuntal geographies to interrogate how this memory work produces overlapping and contested eco-imaginaries of the Mojave's past, present, and future. Weaving ethnographic fieldwork, participatory mapping, and critical fabulation, I evaluate the Mojave Memorial Cross, Amboy Crater, and the Oasis of Mara as sites of memory that underscore the settler colonial (mis)management of the Mojave while simultaneously enabling the development of subaltern counterpublics of conservation. Ultimately, this paper seeks to situate sites of memory in Mojave conservation discourses as a departure point for a theory of contrapuntal desert political ecologies.

## **Peripheral Territories: Informal Settlement Network of Places of Worship in Scarborough, Toronto**

**Author:** Esmond Lee, *York University*

**Keywords:** Periphery, Suburbs, Places of Worship, Informal Spaces, Migration, Settlement, Scarborough, Toronto

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Centennial Ballroom F, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Places of worship have historically been important cultural institutions and one of the first European settler buildings in Toronto. I argue that the approximately 300 places of worship in Toronto's urban periphery have established a territory of resistance. Scarborough, the eastern suburb of Toronto, is home to a significant portion of the city's lower-income, racialized newcomer communities. With a strong manufacturing history that remains today, the informal occupation of "undesirable" industrial and commercial spaces as places of worship reveal an ongoing resilience against social and economic marginalization. These informal community spaces reveal everyday placemaking and expression hidden from urban-centric readings of form and space. Places of worship in Scarborough were identified and documented through extensive fieldwork, online presence, and municipal data. These findings contextualized within census data (individual and household income, visible minority, and source country of foreign postsecondary education) and interviews from papers examining urban churches. Although lacking the grand architectural presence of churches from early European settlers, today's unassuming places of worship have established an informal social-spatial network of settlement services woven into Toronto's suburban landscape, offering vital social, spiritual, and material support for marginalized communities relegated into the spatial and cultural margins. The seemingly innocuous, subtle manipulations of industrial and commercial building typologies have quietly formed unique spatial vocabularies that operate outside formal program, planning, and spectacle—establishing a territoriality of continuous resistance against nation-state and capitalism.

## Eco-memory and the Retelling of the Jordan River

**Author:** Megan Rose Awwad, University of Southern California

**Keywords:** Settler colonialism, indigenous studies, environmental justice, decolonization

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 12, Sheraton, Concourse Level

Weaving together archival documents and oral history to retrace the landscape of the Jordan River from 1848 to current day. The Jordan River was a flourishing river, providing life and sustenance to Indigenous Palestinians. A sacred site and a life source the river was a part of Palestinian traditional ecological knowledge and spiritual practices. By retelling and reclaiming the stories that have been passed down in my family history, I argue that the construction the dam in the 1960s and the national water carrier project lead to a destruction of the river by the settler state. The fight over water, the control and expansion of and by the zionist state slowly constructs a river that becomes embedded within the carceral landscape. The Jordan River goes from sacred site, a natural border between Jordan and Palestine, to a militarized border. As the colonization of the River takes place, the stories, and memories shift the river becomes an important examination of settler colonialism and the expansion of the zionist state. The river becomes central in controlling the landscape and erasing the memory of both migration, the river itself, and the history of Palestinians around the river. As a result, the Jordan River is now at some of the lowest water levels, leading to further ecological disaster to the region. Thus, as a displaced Palestinian, the refusal to let go of the memory of river and the liberation of our homeland becomes central to the question of Palestine and return.

## Adapting Corn to Place: Indigenous Rerooting and Settler-Indigenous Collaboration

**Author:** Andrew Frederick, *University of Kansas*

**Keywords:** Indigenous science, corn, place, Indigenous knowledge, knowledge systems, maize, coexistence

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row I, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

Non-Native farmers and gardeners in the US who are involved in adapting culinary corn to particular places through selecting and saving seeds, alongside Tribal Nations are participating in an ongoing Indigenous agricultural practice with a millennia long history and deep ancestral and spiritual roots. Adapting corn to particular places, and developing shared relationships and responsibilities to place through seeds, holds the potential to decolonize environmental and agricultural knowledge systems in Indigenous-settler collaborations. Indigenous relationships with place through corn continue to the present despite centuries of colonial displacement, land theft, and allotment and assimilation policies which have brought about loss of ancestral homelands, seeds, and agricultural knowledge. Indigenous food sovereignty movements in the US aspire to revitalize corn agriculture as a strategy of cultural survivance as peoples, despite, in some cases, having to reroot their corn far from their ancestral homelands. This paper will explore several individual Tribal Nations' relationships to corn and place through their migratory movements in North America, both colonially forced and via treaties, to show how the Indigenous science of corn agriculture has allowed for adaptation, resilience, and cultural survivance. It will then turn toward recent and nascent collaborations between Native and non-Native farmers around place-based seed rematriation and place-adapted corn. Though potential areas of commonality in philosophy and place-based techniques and knowledges are present, protocols must be in place to address the settler-colonial history of the land and differing ontologies of place and seeds with the goal of fruitful collaboration and coexistence.

## Citizens of the Nation-State and the Kingdom: US Evangelical Conceptions of Political Membership and Agency

**Author:** Caroline Nagel, *University of South Carolina*

**Keywords:** Evangelical Christians, citizenship, Christian nationalism, multiculturalism

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall F, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Geographers have worked to complicate territorially bounded conceptions of citizenship, calling attention to the complex spatialities of rights, participation, and community. A key insight of this scholarship has been the overlapping nature of citizenships, whereby individuals may claim membership in multiple territories, while single territories may encompass multiple systems of membership and rights. The social-spatial complexity of citizenship is exemplified by the mobilization of US evangelical Christians around two distinct political projects: The first rejects American ethnocentrism and the trappings of American nationalism with the aim of creating a universal community of believers that reflects the diversity of God's kingdom. The second has fused evangelicalism to American nationalism and has sought to inject 'Christian values' in political life. These contradictory projects of Christian multiculturalism-universalism, on the one hand, and America First Christian nationalism, on the other hand coexist, however uneasily, in Christian communities. This paper will explore the complicated historical relationship between American evangelical Christianity, nationalism, and citizenship and will examine the tensions in contemporary evangelical mobilizations around ideas of political membership and rights. A broader aim of this paper is to shed critical light on the idea of secularism by showing the constant contestation and configuration of the boundaries between faith, politics, and the political community.

## The Construction of Pathologized Muslim: Biosecurity and Anti-Muslim racism in India

**Author:** Wajiha Mehdi, *University of British Columbia*

**Keywords:** Islamophobia, Muslim, coronajihad, fascism, Muslim women, disease

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 9

In 2020, leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) in India accused Muslims of spreading COVID-19 to the Hindu majority through undertaking a holy war - 'coronajihad' and 'corona terrorism.' The discourse dominated the news channels, print and social media as Tablighi Jamaat, an Islamic organization, was blamed for systematically spreading coronavirus. According to Hindu nationalist discourse, Muslim body as the site of disease entwines with physical spaces it inhabits, thereby contaminating the nation. This paper is interested in how the Muslim body emerges as a site of disease and terror, how it is rendered as non-human and thereby placed outside the Indian nation as non-citizen (Said 1978, Shah 2001, Kolb 2021, Wald 2008). Beginning with the 1865 cholera epidemic, this paper traces how the colonial and Hindu nationalist discourses present the gendered Muslim body as 'diseased' across history and present (Kolb 2021). Through analysing the Hindutva discourse around coronajihad, I look at how colonial geographies have set out linkages for present geographies of Islamophobic violence, incarceration, and displacement of Muslims in India. In this context, this paper asks the questions 1) How does discourse of a terrorism contagion linked to Muslims circulate through colonial discourse to the postcolonial Indian nation? 2) What is the geopolitical context and, geographies of disease and blame in which these narratives emerge? 3) How is the Hindutva discourse around, 'Islamic terrorism' and 'COVID-19 pandemic' redefining ideas of citizenship and nation in India.

**The Law encounters the Grizzly Bear: Constructing a Sacred Space in Ktunaxa**

**Author:** Bailey Fox, *University of Toronto*

**Keywords:** Legal geography, Indigenous law, legal pluralism, religion and geography, sacred sites

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/23/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 12

In this paper, I explore the relationship between law's conception of place and freedom of religion in the Canadian Supreme Court's decision in *Ktunaxa Nation v British Columbia*. In Ktunaxa, the Court held that freedom of religion does not protect objects of belief and therefore the development on a ski resort on a sacred site does not violate the First Nation's freedom of religion. I draw on insights from the field of legal geography to examine how legal discourse, performance, and materiality generate a sense of place – a sacred site – and a set of legal possibilities. I argue that the concept *terra nullius* (that North American territory was empty when 'discovered') and the landscape of religious freedom constructed through previous religious freedom jurisprudence shaped and produced the Court's conception of the Qat'muk/Jumbo Valley such that it could not be recognized as a holy site. Finally, I look at events since the decision, including the eventual designation of the area where the ski resort was to be as an Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area as an episode of reimagining - and reconstructing - space through law.

**Making good deeds, making a good life: Tackling Islamophobia, racism and sexism through Muslim creative activism**

**Author:** Saskia Warren, *University of Manchester*

**Keywords:** Gender, Feminist Geographies, Religion, Islam, Muslim Geographies, Activism, Equity, Justice, Creativity, Art, Culture, Labour

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 9

There is a significant gendered dimension to how people contribute to discussion of religious faith and everyday 'good' life in the public sphere (Warren 2022). The broadening of ways to reach and build a listening public has been especially popular with young Muslim women (e.g the Egyptian mosque movement, Mahmood 2001, 2006, or Pakistani women's religious militarisation, Zeb Babar 2017). In a different direction the imbrications of digital, religious faith and creativity are written about in the rise of so-called Mipsters, the M-generation and New Muslim Cool (Lewis and Hamid 2018; Warren 2018; 2019).

Direction in how to live well can be provided by religious faith. Amongst a social, political and economic landscape of risk and uncertainty, 'Islam can provide a welcome foundation for guidance' (Vinken 2005: 150). Self-fashioned renewal and revivalism in personal piety is increasing especially among young Muslims (Vinken 2005: 807) where pietisation interlinks with the emergence of post-traditional lifestyles (Turner 2008: 20). There are clear intersections between civic and creative spheres, where Muslim women creatives in many cases are active charity and development campaigners. As Malik at al. (2020) observe, arts and culture can offer a vehicle for social change and space for hope.

Informed by a major three-year research project, I consider how Islamic-informed ideals of *da'wa* (education) and *sadaqah* (charity) are manifest in form bringing meaning to labour and everyday life (Warren 2022). Quieter and more spectacular kinds of Muslim creative activism can offer opportunities for building alliances, solidarity and living a 'good' life.



## Health Literacy Priorities and Activities of Migrant Faith-Based Organizations: Opportunities and Limitations

**Authors:** Raymond Tutu, *Delaware State University*; Anwar Ouassini, *Delaware State University*; Doris Ottie-Boakye, *CITADEL Research Network for Development*

**Keywords:** Health literacy, community health, faith-based, population health, Ghana

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall A, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

This study explored health literacy priorities and activities of migrant faith-based organization in Accra, Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to understand (1) the health issues that the organizations consider to be priority, and (2) the programs and interventions being implemented to address health literacy. This study is situated in the broader conceptual context of Organizational Health literacy – efforts by organizations to ensure easy comprehension, navigation, and use of health information and services to support their health. Although health literacy is an established social determinant of health, little is known in the population health literature about faith-based organizations' efforts in ensuring a health literate membership. Drawing on the Community Health Literacy Assessment Framework, this study used a qualitative design to investigate health literacy priorities and activities of 48 faith-based organizations. A semi-structured interview was administered to the leaders or designees with in-depth knowledge of health activities in the organizations. Summative content analysis technique was employed to analyze, quantify, and interpret the interview text. The results show that the most cited priority was lifestyle-related diseases although several of the organizations did not indicate specific health priorities and others mentioned all aspects of health. Preventive health and malaria were also mentioned as priorities. The study found that the most cited activity being implemented to address health literacy was hosting health education programs and that was followed by health screening exercises. Finally, while admirable efforts are being made by several faith-based organizations to improve health literacy of congregants, there exist substantial activity deficits.

## Í'zhúje'waxóbe: An Agent of Place

**Authors:** Soren Larsen, *University of Missouri*; Jay T. Johnson, *University of Kansas*

**Keywords:** place, Indigenous, agency, Kaw Nation, Kansas

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 14, Sheraton, Concourse Level

This presentation introduces the term “agent of place” to describe entities such as Í'zhúje'waxóbe (Sacred Red Rock) who intervene on behalf of place through the journeys they take. According to Kaw Elder Curtis Kehkahbah, the 28-ton red Siouxan quartzite boulder traveled from the heavens to Earth, moving with the glaciers and arriving at Shunganunga Creek, where generations of Kaw Nation people recognized its power. Then, in 1929, settlers forcibly moved the rock to Robison Park in Lawrence, Kansas. In the twenty-first century, Í'zhúje'waxóbe is on the move once again after catalyzing a restorative justice project to return the rock to Kaw Nation land. We make a case that the sacred red rock is an “agent of place” who intervenes on behalf of the relationship of things to each other as part of a sacred journey. Agents of place can be material or immaterial (stories and dreams, for example), but all are characterized by the great strength and endurance required for the generations-long journey on behalf of place. By contrasting this definition against the academic concept of “boundary objects,” we show how agents of place like Í'zhúje'waxóbe help decolonize, Indigenize, and “place” geographical research on Indigenous land.

### Cultural Geography Specialty Group Keynote Speaker – Erin Templeton: “Infrasecularity in Stardew Valley”

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Capitol Ballroom 4, Hyatt Regency, Fourth Floor

**Organizer and chair:** Joshua Merced, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Stardew Valley is a role-playing and farm simulator video game released by sole creator Eric Barone (online alias ConcernedApe) in 2016. This paper aims to apply an infrasecular (della Dora 2018) lens to the analysis of sacred spaces in Stardew Valley. Della Dora’s (2018) work on infrasecularity stresses the layered nature of sacred spaces. Different belief systems may be present in a single sacred space that interact with each other over time. This paper analyzes the game’s magical ritual spaces, as well as spaces dedicated to reverence of in-game deity “Yoba.” Methods include auto-ethnography, narrative analysis, and content analysis.

### “Un-American, Un-Christian, and In-Defensible”: The Birth of a Nation and Nebraska

**Author:** William Helmer, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

**Keywords:**

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall E, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

This paper examines the multitude of effects that the 1915 film “The Birth of a Nation” had on the cultural landscape of Nebraska. Directed by D.W. Griffith, “The Birth of a Nation” premiered in early 1915 to widespread popularity and controversy. The film promotes the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, and portrays the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic and noble organization. The film brought these Southern concepts to Nebraska, where it played starting in late 1915. By analyzing advertisements, newspaper accounts, and documents, I was able to chronicle the locations where the film was shown and the impacts that it had. The film was first screened in Omaha, then spread through Southeastern Nebraska in early 1916, before traveling to small towns in the rest of the state from 1916 through 1918. I map the locations the film played in my paper. I also uncover the social effects the film had on Nebraska. The state’s black community mounted a massive resistance campaign against the film. I explore the ways the legal and social battles over the film unfolded throughout the years after its release. The NAACP became active in the state as a result of this campaign. The film increased racial prejudice among white Nebraskans, and inspired a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. By studying the influence of a single film on a state, I demonstrate that media can have profound impacts on a cultural landscape.

### Life Support: Youth, Life and Viability in the Indian Himalayas

**Author:** Jane Dyson, *University of Melbourne*; Craig Jeffrey, *University of Melbourne*

**Keywords:** Life Youth Viability India

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 10

This paper examines young men’s everyday social action in a village in the High Himalayas of Uttarakhand, north India to provide a new framework for reflecting on social action and geographies of ‘life’. Building on 20 years of fieldwork, we argue that young men are engaged in multiple forms of progressive action which they understand as supporting jeevan - a Hindi word for life. Jeevan is akin to the Greek idea of life as ‘bios’, referring to everyday human living, for example in relation to obtaining food, water, housing, education, and healthcare. At the same time, however, young men also channel energy into linking this everyday action to what they term ‘puri life’ (whole life), understood as ethically-meaningful human

and non-human life within their wider geographical milieu. Puri life resonates with the Greek idea of life as 'zoe'. We use this account of young men's action to argue for a conceptual framework that takes account of how social action is directed towards key life domains (jeevan/bios) and an ethically-valued wider social, environmental, and spiritual milieu (puri life/zoe).

### **Knowing the subsurface: a critical look at experiencing the lower worlds via shamanic trance travel**

**Author:** Eva Barbarossa, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

**Keywords:** Subsurface, shaman, lower world, seeing below

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Centennial Ballroom F, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

There are many ways of 'seeing' the subsurface that use a variety of senses, not just our eyes. From a physical descent to caves to the older mode of shamanic trance travel to the lower world, our bodies can travel and experience the subsurface. And from the surface, we can see below, with technological tools such as radar or lidar to the more folk-classified dowser's rod. What is it to see through technology? How do we classify these tools and modes as reliable or true, or dismiss them as impossible? What do we consider reasonable proof, from physical experience to outcomes to that which may be refused? This paper explores a model of how we think about how we know the subsurface, and suggests a critical dialogue about what we believe.

### **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), Social Relations, and Access: De-centering Property in Environmental Governance for Non-federally Recognized Tribes**

**Authors:** Alexii Sigona, *University of California-Berkeley, Department of Environment Science, Policy, and Management & Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of California*; Adrienne Johnson, *University of San Francisco, Environmental Studies Program*

**Keywords:** MOUs; conservation; Indigenous political ecology; theory of access

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Agate A, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Indigenous peoples in the US have long struggled to maintain their unique connections to, and reliance on, land-based resources for cultural, spiritual, and subsistence purposes due to colonial encroachment and violence. For non-federally recognized Tribes – Indigenous communities not recognized as formal social and political entities by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs – the struggle is particularly challenging as they do not qualify for governmental social services, legal protections, and land base programs. Increasingly, Tribes without formal recognition are turning to Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with land-holding actors as a way to (re)center social relations and access land. MOUs are legally non-binding formal agreements between two or more parties that establish co-management structures and power-sharing arrangements in environmental governance and conservation. We ask, (1) What motivations drive the establishment of MOUs between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors in environmental governance contexts? (2) What are the benefits and limitations of MOUs for non-federally recognized Tribes? (3) What implications do MOUs have for building anti-colonial theories of access for Tribes without recognition? Drawing on Indigenous-led research with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of California and gleaned insights from Indigenous political ecology, politics of recognition, and theories of access, we argue that MOUs are fraught settler tools that provide space for Tribes to negotiate access to culturally-important resources due to their relational, flexible, and trust-centering nature. At the same time, while they extend alternate forms of Tribal sovereignty and environmental authority recognition, MOUs may reinscribe hierarchical decision-making and colonial notions of property ownership.

**“Tradition is Work”: Wandering Ghosts, Women’s Work, and Geographies of Forest Loss in Rural Tanzania**

**Author:** Jessie Fredlund, *University of Connecticut*

**Keywords:** Gender, labor, forests, agriculture, water

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Tower Court D, Sheraton, I.M. Pei Tower, Second Level

In the Uluguru Mountains of Tanzania, forest loss is an issue of local and national concern. Loss of forests has led to changing precipitation patterns and increased erosion, threatening both the crops of local smallholders and the flow of the Ruvu River, which originates in Uluguru and serves as the primary source of fresh water for Tanzania’s largest city, Dar es Salaam. While official narratives of forest loss are typically framed in terms of degradation, local farmers instead discuss deforestation as the result of shifting configurations of labor. Economic changes in recent decades have increased demands for mobility, especially for men, who are often expected to seek cash-earning opportunities elsewhere. Men and women alike describe this as limiting men’s ability to carry out farming and household labor and to participate in rituals involving tending sacred forests and healing the land. An analysis of the geography of deforestation lends support to these narratives, showing that the loss of men’s labor in social reproduction and the increasing bifurcation of (unpaid) reproductive and waged forms of work has been a major driver in environmental change in Uluguru. This analysis inverts narratives of degradation and opens new possibilities for imagining environmental futures.

**Mapping Hercules - A geographic teaching tool**

**Author:** Bernie Taylor, *Community Member*

**Keywords:** Cultural Geography, Mountain Geography, Indigenous Peoples

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall B, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Hunter-gatherer and ancient peoples are globally recorded as teaching their cultural history through a structurally common narrative. American mythologist Joseph Campbell provides global examples of such a central character, or hero, on a journey or adventure. The central character in this narrative encounters other beings, both real and supernatural, that either support or challenge the individual. Each culture carries with them their own regionally unique characters and geographical sites that reinforce the narrative. The supernatural characters are either a mix of a human and another animal or an animal that has the means to communicate with the central character. Both give the central character special non-human abilities to complete the journey.

The archeological evidence and mythological literature consistently report that hunter-gatherer and ancient peoples had traditions of projecting these supernatural characters from regionally unique animals, their landscapes and the night sky to designate time and space. The projection of characters from known geological formations and the night sky gave the impression of gigantic beings and reinforces a recognizable reality in the narrative. The global observance of such animistic characters in the landscapes and night sky indicates prehistoric roots.

This paper takes the student on a journey deep in Upper Paleolithic Europe that surfaces real and supernatural characters, geographical features and motifs, some that may be recognized from literature classes and movies. The structural characteristics of the journey can be reapplied to regional indigenous sacred narratives and ancient myths to teach geographical uniqueness and the cosmic view of the original educator.

### **Ghosts: An engaging entry point for lecture and discussion**

**Author:** Sarah Schwartz, *Texas Christian University*

**Keywords:** Ghosts, pedagogy

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall B, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Using the topic of ghosts in lectures or discussions has the potential to bring a welcome lightheartedness and sense of (scary) fun to class. This paper outlines two situations in which ghosts may provide a captivating entry point or discussion point in a geography class. First, ghosts (real or not) pop up in a range of geographies - landscape, historical, religious, tourism, cultural - and may therefore be used as a common thread in a lecture designed to introduce students to the discipline. Second, in a lecture on dark tourism, ghost tours and haunted houses provide a clear example of the lighter side of dark tourism and a break from the seriousness darker examples of dark tourism. Ghost tours also serve as a useful end point for an activity that asks students to organize a range of dark tourism activities from lightest to darkest.

### **“Because the Lord has given me this”: The sacred reckoning of Black museum geographies**

**Authors:** LaToya Eaves, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*; Amy Potter, *George Southern University*

**Keywords:** Black Geographies, Museum Geographies, Memory, Tourism

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row I, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

From the National Civil Rights Museum to cramped one-room museums that emerged as havens in historically Black neighborhoods, there are nearly 200 African American History and Culture Museums dedicated to affirming that African American people have not only a history in America, but a history at the center of America. While scholars have studied a wide array of sites of memory, heritage, and tourism, Black museums remain understudied and under-theorized despite engaging in valuable, local knowledge production and, often, scaffolding a deeper understanding of national- and global-scale historical and geographic narratives. This paper seeks to understand the intersection of Black places and memory through research with Black museums. Building on site visits and semi-structured interviews with museum management, this paper will focus on two neighborhoods, Germantown and West Philadelphia in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the location of several Black history museums including the Paul Robeson House, ACES, Black Writers Museum, Lest We Forget Black Holocaust Museum, and the Colored Girls Museum. This paper will highlight the range of place-making work, community engagement, and current challenges facing these museums and their neighborhoods.

### **Who speaks for Newe Sogobia?**

**Authors:** Marissa Weaselboy, *Yomba Shoshone Tribe, University of Victoria*

**Keywords:** Western Shoshone, Indigenous dispossession, resource extraction, settler-colonialism

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Capitol Ballroom 1, Hyatt Regency, Fourth Floor

Approximately two-thirds of Nevada is Western Shoshone homelands called Newe Sogobia. In contrast, around 85% of Nevada has been designated as federal lands managed by United States federal agencies like the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy. Consequently, access to our homelands and our traditional foods has been intentionally commodified for settler consumption. Not only has this

contributed to Shoshone health disparities but it has also severed spiritual connections to the land where ceremonies are disrupted by competing economy-based activities. Shoshone people are forced to compete as if we are part of the general public rather than part of the land itself.

Furthermore, Shoshone people have been erased and rendered invisible in conversations around health impacts resulting from the Nevada Test Site where nuclear devices were tested beginning in the 1950s. Central Nevada has been termed a wasteland in public discourse as a way to justify the storage of nuclear waste, resource extraction, and public recreation as my homelands are termed “public lands”. Cultural heritage authority has been given to the State Historic Preservation Office allowing settlers to circumvent speaking to living communities; instead, power of authority is granted to settler [academics] to speak over and for Great Basin peoples. In this paper, I will document the impacts of how government policies and settler politics have exacerbated dispossession from the land for Shoshone people, as well as strategies for renewal and reconnection that are grounded in Shoshone ontologies.

### **Nationalism, Place, and Planning in Postcolonial Sri Lanka**

**Authors:** Pradeep Sangapala, *University of Alberta*; Rob Shields, *University of Alberta*

**Keywords:** Anuradhapura, Buddhism, Nationalism, Planning, Postcolonial, Sri Lanka

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 12

Our study examines the impact of nationalism, ethnic identities, and religious expressions of space on planning and place-making in postcolonial Ceylon (Sri Lanka since 1972). We investigate the first planned community in independent Sri Lanka, the New Town Plan of Anuradhapura, in 1949, in the context of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists’ conceptualization of their spatial identity. Anuradhapura is the most ancient capital city known on the Lankan territory, established circa 250 BCE. The Anuradhapura new town planning project marks the location where the colonial planning discourse met the national consciousness. The study of Anuradhapura’s new plan and the planning process enable us to understand the influencing ideologies, such as Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, how they were negotiated, and the potential impact of the planning process. Accordingly, we examine the development of this project in the context of Buddhist nationalists’ conceptualization of their sacred city. First, we delve into why Anuradhapura became crucial for the Ceylonese Government at the dawn of independence -why Anuradhapura was significant. Then, along with the actors who put up with the new planning scheme, we explore the perspectives that contested the new town’s formation in Anuradhapura. Finally, the study demonstrates that Anuradhapura’s planning provided a rationale for the nationalists’ political claim for space, laying the basis of postcolonial spatial thinking in Ceylon. Thus, we approach the new Anuradhapura planning project as a ground-up knowledge-building project, demonstrating that planning is a critical instrument that can provide a spatial form to the ideological stances of nationalism.

### **Nationalism, Gender, and Higher Education in Post-Revolutionary Iran**

**Author:** Somayeh Nikoonazari, *CU Boulder*

**Keywords:** Nationalism, gender, education policy, post-revolution Iran

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/24/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 17, Sheraton, Concourse Level

Following the 1979 Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran framed girls’ and women’s education as the key to promoting equality and equity. However, access to state-funded education has largely favored men and women who are admitted to state universities and face significant barriers to employment and equitable wages. Ethnic minority women in Iran navigate additional obstacles in accessing education and employment. My thesis analyzes the gap between higher education policies

that are predicated on a nationalist discourse of gender equity and how these policies affect Iranian Kurdish women. Drawing on literature in feminist geography, geographies of higher education, and postcolonial feminism, I analyze how nationalism as a gendered social process is linked to place, gender, ethnicity, language, and higher education. I pose three main questions. First, what barriers do Kurdish women experience in higher education? Second, what do these obstacles tell us about education, nationalism, and gender equity? Third, how do educational policies affect Kurdish women's ability to secure permanent employment? My research methods include content analysis of Iranian education policy documents and in-depth interviews with university-educated Kurdish women in Iran to understand the intersection of ethnicity, religion, gender, and language in relation to educational equity.

**Rituals of Subordination. A study on the performativity of rites of passage and purification in migration: Disinfection Centres of Thessaloniki 1922, Refugee Camps 2022**

**Author:** Loukia Limperi Oraiopoulou, *Complutense University of Madrid*

**Keywords:** Rituals, Migration, Subaltern, Greece, Refugee Camps

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 10

The present research consists of two case studies, both located in the borders of Greece: the decontamination structures built for the refugees that arrived in the port of Thessaloniki in 1922 and the modern, closed controlled access centre for refugees and migrants on the island of Samos.

Through these cases, the study attempts to investigate how the institutional context shapes the spaces where power is exercised over the bodies of refugees and migrants (disinfection centres, closed structures) through a series of performative practices (rituals of purification).

Moreover, the set of these institutional practices, that determine the arrival and settlement of refugees/migrants in the country, also determines how they are "distributed" in the system of production, constructing the kind of social and economic participation they will be able to exercise. Consequently, it is through these purifying rituals of entry that the social classification of subjects and the construction of a system that produces subordination to labour and power structures is ensured.

Finally, by analysing the entry and residence patterns of refugees and migrants, it is possible to observe the creation of a register for the lower type of work. In the case of 1922, the refugees constituted the critical mass for the formation of the working class in Greece. Similarly, the policies and practices applied in modern Greece (2022) lead to the creation of a new lower social class of subalterns in order to occupy the spaces of the host society.

**“Making the Desert Bloom” – colonialism and environmentalism in Israel/Palestine**

**Author:** Sarai Kirshner, *KCL, UCL*

**Keywords:** Desert, Israel/Palestine

**Session Type:** Paper, hybrid

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Centennial Ballroom F, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

As the disaster of climate change unfolds, more knowledge about desert environments is needed. Though much attention has been given to examining the relations between nature and power paying attention to tropical or wilderness, desert environments are still under-researched. Taking seriously the foundational myth of the Zionist nation-state “making the desert bloom”, this paper will focus on desert environments in Israel/Palestine as both imagined spaces and real places to

examine how through the arid landscape colonial imaginations produced new subjectivities and how these were translated to support colonialist forms of social reproduction.

Contributing to an increasing body of work conceptualising environmentalism and more specifically aridity both a climate and a form of governability (Davis, 2016; Povinelli, 2016; Weizman, 2015 et al), I will focus on two different sites built in the desert in the early 1960's – a nature reserve and a military base, to trace connections between conservation, militarism, religion, and nationalism, and to examine how these shaped nature in the desert, which then shaped human.

### **This is Sacred Ground**

**Author:** Catherine Carter, *Senior/Stand-alone Geographer*

**Keywords:** Religion, Spirituality, Landscape, New Mexico, Visual Geography

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Capitol Ballroom 1, Hyatt Regency, Fourth Floor

In the U.S. there is evidence that people are actively investigating spiritual practices. They are not, however, gravitating to traditional expressions of religion; rather, they are seeking places where they sense spirituality emanating from the landscape. Many of these people find New Mexico and its plethora of sacred places to fit with that which they seek. Sacred sites pervade the state, attracting people looking for God or hoping to recover a spirituality they may have lost in the modern world. This project reflects upon the many sacred places in New Mexico that have cultural history and sacredness embedded in them. The project uses photography as a creative methodology to build a world composed of sacred landscapes. The landscapes may be physical, enabling seekers to walk among them. They may be ethereal, arising from the faith of the seeker. They may exist only as layers of history in the ancient places of the state. Or they may only be fully understood through the telling of centuries-old stories. The ancient places, worship places and natural places of New Mexico reflect the spirituality that is inherent in sites where worship has been offered.

### **Home Making Process of Nepali Diaspora**

**Author:** Sudikshya Bhandari, *University of California Davis*

**Keywords:** Home, culture, Nepali, adjustment, identity, practices

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Capitol Ballroom 1, Hyatt Regency, Fourth Floor

This research looks at how members of the Nepali diaspora have created their home environments using their transnational religious and socio-cultural practices in the US to ensure their sense of identity and well-being in this new context. Home is an essential site of cultural and religious expression for different ethnic groups in Nepal and a basis for maintaining their generational and family values and socio-cultural norms. The design of the mass-produced houses in the US poses a challenge for Nepali immigrants to maintain their ethnic-based practices. The study will examine tangible cultural markers such as food, artifacts, language, and festivals and the intangible values and meanings that constitute the lived experiences of diaspora members in the homemaking process. I will present my findings from the depth interviews and participant observation with sixteen households from the Sacramento region. The presentation will focus on identity, belonging, transnationality, gender, and intergenerational themes within the adjustment of Nepalis in the US.



**(Re)purposing cadasters: When mapping ecclesiastical archives advocates for Indigenous land rights**

**Author:** Lea Denieul Pinsky, *Concordia University*

**Keywords:** Cadasters, archives, land, indigenous

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** AAG Node - Montreal - 1

In Canada, the dispossession of Indigenous lands has greatly benefitted the catholic church. It remains one of the biggest landowners today, with an estimated \$3.3 billion in assets from property in 2019 (Grant & Cardoso, 2021). Not all congregations chose to hold on to the land however, some sold it to settlers to fill their coffers. This is the case of the Seminary of St Sulpice, a society of diocesan priests whom the king of France gave 539.9 km<sup>2</sup> of land by 1735, forming the Seigneurie du Lac des Deux Montagnes. In their land registries, the Sulpicians painstakingly recorded every property transaction they made with settlers for more than 300 years. These records served as powerful inventories of data used by the Sulpicians to claim Indigenous territories, to erase Indigenous presence, to attract settlers. I propose repurposing these data to give them new life and new meanings in the present. This proposal aligns with post-representational cartography theorists (Del Casino & Hanna, 2006; Kitchin & Dodge, 2007; Caquard, 2015; Rossetto, 2015), who rethink cartography through mapping processes and practices. They propose that a map is a mutable object that can be made and remade continuously. This is an exciting prospect; by returning these ecclesiastical archives to the Kanehsatakeró:non, the mapping process creates new circumstances in which to render their own territorial perspectives.

**False stewardship for compassionate conservation in practices of animal mercy release in Vietnam**

**Author:** Hoang Mai Thach, *Rutgers University*

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Environmental Ethics, Relational values, Nature Conservation, Species Conservation, Asia

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 3

Cultivating stewardship for nature is an eminent globalized approach to engage the public into practices of environmental protection. This anthropocentric methodology originates from a dominion thesis in Christian environmental ethics, which states that humans play a dominant role to steward other non-humans on earth. At first glance, Buddhist animal mercy release practice in Vietnam and other Asian countries seem to coincide with this stewardship thesis, with humans playing a dominant role to save the lives of individual animals. Theoretically, the practice pairs with the compassionate conservation movement, which advocates for animal welfare and rights through spiritual compassion, care, and relational values between humans and animals. Yet, my research results reveal the opposite outcome; namely, that on-the-ground practice of animal mercy release shows only false stewardship for compassionate conservation implementations. I explore false stewardship for nature conservation in practices of animal mercy release in Vietnam by applying Klain's (2017) and West's (2018) analytical frameworks of stewardship, care, and relational values to illuminate specific disconnections with nature conservation on observations of practices in Hanoi and HoChiMinh City and to explore alternative approaches or potential for compassionate conservation within practices of animal mercy release. I describe how my results relate to moral (dis)connections, such as the lack of connection between the environmental ethics and goals of animal mercy release and those of wildlife conservation or environment protection. I also highlight how animal mercy release practices exhibit a lack of relational values, which requires a longer human-animal interface than is possible through current practice.

## **Cemetery Abuse and Neglect: The Restoration and Revival of Jewish Graceland Cemetery using Geographic Information Systems to Preserve the Dignity of the Deceased**

**Author:** Alfred W. Weiss, *Waubensee Community College / Jewish Graceland Cemetery*

**Keywords:** Cemetery, Restoration, Geographic Information, Deceased, Tombstones

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall D, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Cemeteries were created and designed as resting places for the deceased and as memorials while preserving cultural and spiritual traditions. Having endured decades of physical neglect, the use of geographic information systems has greatly assisted in the restoration of Jewish Graceland Cemetery located in Chicago IL. Immensely overgrown brush, fallen trees, tombstone vandalism, monument wear, inefficient records management, and tree hazard impacts were some of the problems that impacted the cemetery. The use of geospatial technology has provided a visual advantage to understanding and planning landscape cleanup as well as identifying and restoring tombstone monument conditions and inventory control throughout the cemetery. Various tools such as density, distance, and geoprocessing were used for geospatial analysis and problem solving. After addressing general cleanup and vandalism impacts, the findings concluded that numerous tombstones were at risk of being damaged by aging trees while other tombstones have degraded due other natural factors. Additionally, burial plots and landscape management were also enhanced using geographic information systems. In short, this geographic analysis can be used in numerous sustainable situations beneficial to a variety of audiences.

## **The Ritual and the Biopolitical: Planning for Anti-Caste Outcomes in Urbanizing India**

**Author:** Pranav Kuttaiah, *UC Berkeley*

**Keywords:** Caste, India, Planning, Urban, Identity

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/25/2023

**Start / End Time:** 12:50 / 2:10 PM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 4

How should modern planning approach a caste society? The promise of modernity for anti-caste ideologues in the twentieth century was one that privileged the role of centralized intervention. A “scientific” planning practice was seen as the way to undo any non-economic, identitarian forms of subjectivity. Within this discourse, cities were envisioned as engines of producing a new secular citizenship and subverting traditional caste antagonisms; to overcome the village's effect as a "sink of localism".

India’s pathways of urbanization have proved caste to be a far more dynamic axis of stratification than one simply tied to rural spatialities. Nonetheless, much anti-caste scholarship continues to reify the exalted position of the ‘urban’ itself, presuming the resilience of caste as a failure of urban possibility rather than an outcome of planning interventions designed to consolidate caste power. This approach has led anti-caste parties to focus their energies solely on electoral victory rather than asking the more profound question: what is an anti-caste technology of government? Is centralized state intervention still the panacea? Or a more diffused decentralization, incorporating new activism around commons with the broader ideals of universal citizenship? At what scale must intervention be (re)conceived to produce “anti-caste” outcomes, and what might be an anti-caste epistemology of built and natural environments? By reviewing newer interventions that complicate the urban-rural binary and by delineating two different types of caste logics – the ritual and the biopolitical – this paper seeks to nuance the role planning and welfarism might play vis-a-vis anti-caste politics.

**A national project? Creative destruction, Pentecostalism, and the spectacle of Ghana's national cathedral**

**Author:** Kwame Adovor Tsikudo, *Thomas Jefferson University*

**Keywords:** Ghana, political party ideology, national cathedral, creative destruction, spectacle, religion

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 8:30 / 9:50 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 11

The Ghanaian government announced in 2017 to build a national cathedral to promote national unity and identity. The declaration caught most people by surprise, sparking national discourse on the relevance and the state's involvement in religious activity. Yet, despite all odds and criticisms, the government is proceeding with the project. Drawing on the notions of creative destruction and the spectacle, this talk will explore the connections between religion and politics in Ghana. It will also analyze the link between political party ideologies and national development aspirations to understand what becomes the national project.

**Interspecies Entwinements: Plant-human relations toward spaces of life**

**Author:** Laura Dev, *University of Wisconsin-Platteville*

**Keywords:** Interspecies, multispecies, plants, worlds, Indigenous peoples, political ecology, Amazon

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall F, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

In this talk, I develop the concept of "interspecies entwinements" to describe the influence of powerful Amazonian plants through the bodies and lives of the humans with which they become involved. Amazonian spiritual practices of relating with specific master plants and enrolling them as healers and teachers create interspecies entwinements that animate and lend vitality to extractive economies, Indigenous-outsider relations, conservation efforts, and healing practices, processes which have defined power inequalities in the Amazon for centuries. Interspecies entwinements as an analytic framework attends to how more-than-human actors mediate these (cosmo)political processes while revealing the power relations therein. This talk follows the case of the commodification of ayahuasca, a psychedelic Amazonian plant mixture that has sparked a growing international tourism industry throughout South America. As ayahuasca has expanded from Indigenous communities in the Amazon to urban centers in the Global North, both plant-human relations and Indigenous-outsider relations have shifted. I argue that ayahuasca is not just a drug, plant mixture, or commodity, but an entwinement between plants and humans that is imbricated with colonialism, power, and the potential to heal. Drawing on intensive ethnographic fieldwork in Shipibo communities in the Amazon of Peru, this talk specifically focuses on how interspecies entwinements are applied to issues of Indigenous territorial sovereignty, land relations, and conservation efforts, and how these entwinements can work toward spaces of life.

## Why Have We Lacked Geographies of Religion and Nature?

**Author:** Dominic R. Wilkins, *Syracuse University*

**Keywords:** religion, nature-society, cultural geography, environmental humanities

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall B, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

Over the past two decades, geographers have begun redressing their longstanding omission of religions, spiritualities, sacralities, and beliefs. Scholarly literatures have flourished in recent years, particularly when it comes to religion and secularity, gender, embodiment, or emotion. Even so, substantial gaps continue to exist. These include limited attention to nature-society relationships, as these still remain marginal to much of contemporary geography--a particularly odd omission given our discipline's history.

This paper aims to provoke a discussion as to why geographers and religion and nature-society relations have each tended to place religio-nature relations as external to their research programs. Certainly and quite fortuitously, geographers are beginning to fill this gap (ex. Silvern and Davis, 2021; Gao et al., 2021), but it still holds for much of our discipline. It thus remains crucial to understand how and why limited attention to religio-nature geographies cuts across disciplinary literatures.

I suspect this oversight stems from several mutually-reinforcing reasons, including (through not limited to) critical theoretical antipathy toward religion, the geography of religion's emergence from new cultural geography, and long-standing efforts to stress religion as socially-produced. Assessing this, of course, requires embracing uncertainty. We tend not to write (or publish) about why certain questions lie unasked or topics unaddressed. Such hypothetical work is nevertheless crucial when it comes to understanding--and undoing--the persistent existence of under-researched scholarly fields. Through this paper I therefore hope to help understand why geographic research concerning religion arrived in its present place and where it might go next.

## Understanding the need for Gender Inclusiveness: A Case Study in Kolkata, India

**Authors:** Nilasree Dutta; Stephen Aldrich

**Keywords:** Kolkata, gender, female, slums

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Agate A, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

In India, the low status ascribed to females is evident today in the persistence of cultural practices such as the rituals of dowry, burning of brides, and female infanticide. In some communities, bringing a female child into the world is considered to be unfortunate. Poverty can magnify gender discrimination. Everyday women's lives and opportunities are shaped by societal norms or attitudes towards women. For example, because people believe that females are only meant for domestic chores, they are often not encouraged to continue their education beyond the primary level. Sometimes, because of differential access to household requirements, such as water, women spend a lot of time during their day procuring these items for their household, limiting the amount of time they can dedicate to other facets of life such as going to school. The slums of Kolkata, which include both authorized and unauthorized slums, are an ideal location to study the condition of women and how they are affected in the domains of education, diet, and religion. With the amalgamation of both qualitative and quantitative methods, this research will focus on the impediments that the women are facing in their day-to-day lives.

### **(Re)Fashioning Selves, Subjects, and Struggles for Social Change in western India**

**Authors:** Kiran Asher, *UMass, Amherst*; Dolly Daftary, *UMass, Boston*

**Keywords:** Subjectivity, state, artisans, pastoralists, political ecology, India

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Mineral Hall C, Hyatt Regency, Third Floor

This paper explores how rural weavers and pastoralists in Kachchh at India's western borderland fashion themselves in the era of intensifying capitalism/and religious chauvinism. Far from being an individuated practice, self-making always transpires in relation to the state and capital. Nor is self-making uniform, it is variegated and mirrors the variegated nature of capitalism and state-society relations. We use the analytic of relationality and value- which is a relation between objects-subjects and production and reproduction to think about subject-formation and struggles for social change. Subject-formation and self-making transpire in relation to geographies of Hindu chauvinism, changing political economies and political ecologies, which are of course tightly (though often invisibly) intertwined with gender and caste. Drawing on or ethnographic work with subordinated-caste Vankars (weavers) and Maldharis (Muslim pastoralists), we explore the complex and contradictory dynamics of social struggles and the refashioning of artisan and pastoralist subjectivities.

### **Effects of Anthropogenic Activities on Mt Elgons' Floral Diversity**

**Authors:** Nelly Nambande Masayi, *Kibabii University*; Linet Nabutola, *Kibabii University*; Margaret Nanjala Matisi, *Kibabii University*

**Keywords:** Diversity Index, Anthropogenic activities, Floral diversity; Species abundance

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/26/2023

**Start / End Time:** 4:30 / 5:50 PM (MT)

**Room:** Governors Square 9, Sheraton, Concourse Level

Mt. Elgon Forest is termed a biodiversity hotspot and a home to globally threatened species making it a priority for species conservation. The forest encompasses human communities who engage in anthropogenic activities that have diverse effects on the forest's floral diversity. The study investigated the effects of anthropogenic activities on floral diversity in Mt. Elgon Forest. Effects of anthropogenic activities on floral diversity were evaluated using 50 x 50m duplicate quadrants that were placed in areas influenced by different anthropogenic activities. The Shannon Weiner diversity index was used to determine changes in floral diversity while Kruskal Wallis test and chi square test was used to assess the differences in species abundance. The Shannon-Weiner diversity index revealed that modern religious activities had the highest diversity index ( $H=2.4182$ ;  $E=0.8074$ ), followed by the control site (natural forest) ( $H=2.07331$ , evenness=0.884), indigenous plantations ( $H=1.93962$ ; evenness 0.69957), urban settlements ( $H=1.85081$ ; evenness=0.66754), traditional religious activities ( $H=1.6111$ ,  $E=0.7651$ ), tea farming ( $H=1.5324$ , evenness=0.56), mixed farming ( $H=1.43694$ , evenness=0.43694) and exotic plantation ( $H=1.28231$ , evenness=0.61612). The results revealed a significant difference between specific plant communities (trees, shrubs, herbs, ferns, and climbers) in the study area ( $H=38.116$ ;  $P=0.000$ ). Chi square test revealed a strong relationship between the type of anthropogenic activity and floral diversity ( $P=0.000$ ,  $X^2=23.652$ ). Species diversity in areas under modern religious activities exceed those of the control side while indigenous planted forests closely approach that of the natural forests. Modern religious activities and Indigenous planted forests could be used to restore floral diversity in Mt Elgon Forest Ecosystem.

## **Kuwohi and the Repatriation of Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park**

**Author:** Seth T. Kannarr, *University of Tennessee*

**Keywords:** place naming, renaming, repatriation, national park, mountain

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/27/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row E, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

Within the context of the greater place naming turn over the last decade, recent attention has been brought to the proposed renaming of Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) by the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Originally called Kuwohi by natives for hundreds of years, this indigenous history was erased in 1859 when the mountain was renamed after Confederate general Thomas L. Clingman. In this project, I seek to interview key stakeholders to better understand human perceptions and grounded experiences with the potential renaming of this popular mountain, as well as to gauge how the renaming of Clingmans Dome would intersect with people's competing senses of place. To add requisite historical context, I plan to investigate and visit the archives to unpack the full naming history of Clingmans Dome. It is our intent to help demystify the process of place naming, and help place renaming be more participatory across all perspectives, from members of the Cherokee nation, to National Park Service personnel, to everyday visitors of the GSMNP. Additionally, I will use the interview data to create an interpretative display sign on the mountain to educate visitors on the natural heritage of the land and the indigenous and post-colonial history of the mountain currently named Clingmans Dome. Intentional emphasis will be placed upon Cherokee voices and perspectives on the past, present, and future of this sacred place for all visitors to learn about the power and influence of place naming into perpetuity.

## **Refugee resettlement in a mid-size Canadian city and the role of religious institutions**

**Authors:** Murray Derksen, *University of British Columbia*; Carlos Teixeira, *University of British Columbia*

**Keywords:** Canada, Refugee, Private Sponsorship, Religious Institutions, Integration

**Session Type:** Virtual paper

**Date:** 3/27/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Virtual 5

Canada, a leading refugee-resettlement nation state in the United Nations, has a highly developed private refugee sponsorship program. Seventy percent of private sponsors are registered with religious institutions. Private sponsorship is pushing Canada's refugee response to record levels, yet there is insufficient literature to support the scholarship behind the trend. The main purpose of this exploratory case study was to discover the role and impact of religious institutions in refugee settlement in Kelowna, BC, the fastest growing Census Metropolitan Area in Canada. Kelowna has seen a significant increase in refugee sponsorship since 2015. The churches and the mosque have worked in collaboration with settlement services and community partners to see hundreds of refugees resettled recently. Data was collected through a questionnaire survey among former refugees (n=26) and semi-structured interviews with key informants (n=26). The questions guiding the case study included: What barriers and challenges do refugees face in Kelowna? What coping strategies do refugees use? What is the role and impact of religious institutions in refugee settlement? What policy and best-practice recommendations can be made? The results of this study show that religious institutions play a significant role in helping refugees cope with their barriers and challenges by bridging the language barrier between newcomers and the community, assisting refugees in integration, and helping to ensure they move towards prosperity rather than precarity. This study expands the existing body of literature around privately sponsored refugee settlement in Canada.

## Street Names and Dreamscapes in Yael Bartana's Berlin

**Author:** Adam Lundberg, *Uppsala University*

**Keywords:** place naming, street names, yael bartana, public sphere, contemporary art

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/27/2023

**Start / End Time:** 10:20 / 11:40 AM (MT)

**Room:** Directors Row E, Sheraton, Plaza Building, Lobby Level

In her monumental three-channel video installation *Malka Germania* (2021), the Berlin-based Israeli artist Yael Bartana reimagines the memory landscape of Berlin, as part of her exploration of possible redemption between people, place and time. By fusing actual and alternative fictional realities of the German-Jewish experience, as a way to offer “critical scrutiny of collective expectations of political or religious salvation”, she recreates Jewish Europe as something like a dream-scape (or nightmare). In one scene, street signs in German are exchanged for Hebrew ones, reminding of the power of street names as a decolonial and reparative practice. The new names are chosen carefully: Street of Revenge, Way of Redemption, and so on. Continuing on theoretical developments in the wake of the humanistic turn in geography and the spatial turn in the humanities, this paper investigates contemporary art which critically re-enact and anchor the past in place, by using authentic or historically symbolical materiality and by employing mnemonic and geographical aesthetics.

## Progress Towards UNAIDS 90-90-90 Target in Zimbabwe: Sociodemographic Constraints and Spatial Heterogeneity

**Authors:** Md. Tuhin Chowdhury, *University of Cincinnati*; Anna Bershteyn, *NYU Grossman School of Medicine*; Diego F. Cuadros, *University of Cincinnati*

**Keywords:** HIV, Zimbabwe, 90-90-90, Public Health, Epidemiology

**Session Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/27/2023

**Start / End Time:** 2:40 / 4:00 PM (MT)

**Room:** Colorado, Sheraton, I.M. Pei Tower, Mezzanine Level

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) established the 90-90-90 targets to end the HIV epidemics by 2030: 90% of all people living with HIV should be aware of their HIV status; 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV must receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART); and 90% of those receiving ART should achieve viral suppression. This study assessed the progress of 90-90-90 targets in Zimbabwe, estimating spatial and demographic metrics of the HIV care continuum using the Zimbabwe Population based HIV Impact Assessment (ZIMPHIA) survey data of 2015-16. We conducted a survey weighted multivariate logistic regression for the three targets to assess sociodemographic and behavioral risk factors, we also performed kernel density interpolation methods and hotspot analyses to identify spatial heterogeneity of the HIV care continuum over Zimbabwe. The estimated targets were 78-89-85, suggesting a lack of progress in the first target. Results indicated that the likelihood of unawareness of being HIV positive was higher for males, young people, and population with non-christian and no religious beliefs. The young population also had a lower likelihood of being on ART and achieving viral suppression. Areas with low HIV prevalence had lower percentages of HIV awareness, ART, and viral suppression when compared to high HIV prevalence areas, suggesting populations in need for public intervention in Zimbabwe to achieve the 90-90-90 targets.

## Minutes from GORABS Annual Business Meeting, 2022

*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 Saturday February 26, 2022, 7:00–8:00 PM (ET)*

*Present: Vincent Artman (VA); Max Samson (MS); Ed Davis (ED); David Rutherford (DR); Nathan Burtch (NB); Briana Meier (BM); Mike Ferber (MF); Juan Sebastian Durango Cordero (JSDC); Talya Tenbrink (TT)*

*Minutes recorded by MS and NB*

### I. Introductions

- Those present introduce themselves.

### II. Formal introduction by VA

- Thank you to everyone on the board for all your work over the past, challenging year.
- We have had a good amount of discussion among board members about our activities this year, and we enjoyed Kristin Kobes Du Mez's annual lecture. The lecture possibly increased our profile a little bit within geography, and her work on ethnonationalism and exclusion is certainly relevant to the AAG theme this year. Her lecture also linked well to our growing focus on the "belief systems" part of our name, although we would have liked to have had more than 18 people in attendance, 30 being our target. This is something we may need to think about, going forward. Admittedly we did not need to pay out of our budget, thanks to receiving generous funds from an anonymous donor as well as some AAG funding. However, it may not be worth repeating such a gambit next year, considering we had the same attendance last year without going through the stress of securing funding and bringing in a renowned speaker external to geography.

### III. Future speakers

- ED agrees with VA's point above that it would be advisable to avoid the nightmare VA faced this year of trying to obtain money from the AAG.
- VA describes the issue: despite being in touch with Du Mez's management company since around September, the AAG forced him to wait far too long regarding the matter of funding, to the point that the lecture was only confirmed about a month ago. VA was compelled to act as a go-between between Du Mez's management company and the AAG, which was incredibly tedious. In future it may be worth seeking someone who can also provide a great lecture but whom we can pay out of our budget. Priscilla McCutcheon has been floated as a possibility in the past and would seem to be a good starting place. Other names we have suggested in the past are Tristan Sturm, Katrina Lantos Swett, Betsy Olson, Patricia Ehrkamp, and Christopher Peet.
- ED favors the idea of asking Priscilla McCutcheon and thinks that Sandy Marshall knows her already. It is agreed by the board that Priscilla McCutcheon will be our first point of call as our speaker for 2023, which all going well will be in Denver.



#### IV. VA's feedback from the Chairs Meeting

- Mainly lots of decisions about supporting specialty groups in different ways. Also lots of information about the website being updated, which in my opinion, compared to the previous website, has been improved in some ways and worsened in others. Crucially, though, it seems faster and is more unified.
- A New Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee with the abbreviation "JEDI" has been established.
- There is also the possibility of regional meetings become quarterly.
- There will be new monitoring or auditing of specialty and affinity groups, but we should not be worried because we are active and have a growing, if modest, membership base, so we should not set off any red flags.

#### V. Sopher and Zelinsky awards

- VA: Again we were unsuccessful in finding applicants for our awards. Regarding Sopher, about five people reached out requesting details, but despite following up, all but one disappeared, and that one ultimately decided they would consider submitting next year instead. This was frustrating, because we did a better job this year of advertising the award on Knowledge Communities and social media, and it did seem to generate more interest than in the past, yet still we received no papers.
- Zelinsky is tough when we do not have many people proposing sessions, because the whole point is to organize a session. This year we had to scrape things together quite late on just to have any sessions. We advertised Zelinsky alongside Sopher, but this did not generate any applications. Perhaps with COVID, people are doing other things, but it certainly does seem like we are struggling more for applications than in the past.
- ED: seven or eight years ago, we sponsored several sessions, but I do not recall us doing anything different at that time. It simply seemed like we had more interest in general.
- NB: COVID has had an impact and we probably do need to give a lot of grace for that reason; we should not read too much into the fact we have struggled for applications in recent years. That some people considered applying is a positive sign. We should try the same process for at least another year, i.e., distributing adverts early: maybe if we have a normal year in Denver, we will get some more interest.

#### VI. Increasing membership

- VA: I feel like this year we did a good job of getting our name out there. It does not seem to have been translated into a significant increase in membership, although it has increased since 2019, even if modestly. However, it is disappointing that despite being a huge name and meshing with the AAG's themes, Du Mez's lecture was not better attended. It seems that we do still have a way to go.
- VA will be handing Twitter and Facebook keys over to MS. The Facebook page does not tend to get too many hits, but the Twitter account has picked up followers, and a lot of the other specialty groups follow it and notify us of events of interest. It could be more active, but it is bubbling along and VA makes sure to tweet from time to time. VA claims to be relatively happy with how it has progressed over the past couple of years. Our official website (<https://www.gorabsaag.org/>) gets updated for big news, but there is scope to expand it as well: it is very helpful as an archive.
- ED points out that we also have our old WordPress account (<https://aaggorabs.wordpress.com/>), but it has not been used since 2019. We need to close it down. VA then manages to log in, and makes the WordPress site private. The next step will be to set up a redirect to the new website.
- ED demonstrates that our newsletters have been uploaded to the newer website, but calls on others to provide details of publications. MS reiterates this message.

- MF notes that he has all the old newsletters, too, if needed.
- ED asks MF to keep us informed as to the progress of the laments project, as we should provide updates on the website.

## **VII. Elections**

- As this has been VA's last year as Chair, it is time to elect new positions.
- Following some discussion as to what some of the roles have previously involved, NB formally proposes MS to Chair and BM to Assistant Secretary, while NB is proposed to Vice-Chair and Secretary. All three are seconded and voted into these new roles.
- MS will reach out to the board to clarify each role, particularly with respect to social media, which VA kindly offers to phase to MS.

## **VIII. DR's treasurer's report**

- As of January 31, 2022, our balance was \$3,176.71.
- VA will get in touch with the AAG to pay out the remaining agreed \$300 to Du Mez's management company.
- The anonymous benefactor's contribution to the lecture has not shown up in the budget so far, so VA will also get in touch about that.
- Nothing else to report.

## **IX. AOB?**

- ED suggests that we agree to pull a meeting together over summer. MS says that he will reach out to the board to organize and clarify everyone's roles.
- ED also reiterates that we should plan our speaker well ahead of time.
- NB suggests that we organize quarterly meetings. ED and MS are in agreement.

Meeting adjourned.