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

Vincent M. Artman,  
GORABS Chair

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or

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GORABS Secretary &  
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Dear GORABS Members,

On behalf of the GORABS Board, we hope that you will enjoy this Spring 2021 edition of the GORABS Newsletter. Once again, this year's AAG Annual Meeting, which was scheduled to be in Seattle, is instead being held online. While we would love to have the opportunity to see you all in person, the realities of the pandemic make that impossible. Hopefully we'll be able to meet one another at the 2022 meeting, which is scheduled for New York City.

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

Best,

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

### GORABS News

Please note the following GORABS-related information:

1. **GORABS Statement of Solidarity against Racism and Police Brutality** (p. 4)
2. **GORABS is recruiting members to serve on the board** (p. 5)
3. **Participate in our "Virtual Brownbag" series** (p. 5)
4. **New book includes contributions from several GORABS members:**  
*Religion, Sustainability and Place: Moral Geographies of the Anthropocene*, Edited by Steven E. Silvern and Edward H. Davis (p. 6)
5. **Upcoming AAG Sessions & Paper presentations** (pp. 7-29)

### 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,

This has been a difficult year for GORABS and for all of us personally. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll. GORABS has been more silent than usual as our members and our Board have been busy taking care of themselves, their families, their students, and their communities.

The cancelation of the 2020 Denver Annual Meeting was unfortunate, but I am very happy to announce that Dr. Ken Foote, who had agreed to give the 2020 GORABS Annual Lecture will instead deliver his talk, entitled: "Shadowed Ground, Sacred Place: Reflections on Memory, Memorials and the Spatiality of Public Commemorative Rituals," at this year's meeting instead. In addition, we have organized a very exciting paper session around the major new volume, *Religion, Sustainability, and Place: Moral Geographies of the Anthropocene*, edited by GORABS board members Edward Davis and Steven Silvern.

One item of note is that this year's virtual AAG will be recorded by default. There has been some controversy around this decision, since some presenters may wish to opt out of having their sessions or papers recorded and archived. The AAG recommends that any presenters who do not wish to be recorded **pause the recording in Zoom** while they are presenting. Further information on the recording policy and a "Toolkit for Virtual Sessions and Presentations" can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bQARjAijnjMbToTjsAgnKyo3CEcA2cEtqcszD4I1ofY/edit>

To access the sessions, you will need to login at the Final Program Platform here: <https://aag-annualmeeting.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/main/home>. You can use the menus to search and navigate to the sessions that you're interested in (many of which are listed below).

Unfortunately, as was the case last year, we did not receive any submissions for the David Sopher New Scholar or Wilbur Zelinsky Awards in 2021. Given the circumstances, this is understandable, but the GORABS Board is very keen to make sure that we have submissions for 2022. So, if you or one of your students is interested in applying for either one of those awards for the coming year, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or other members of the Board.

It is worth noting here that the previously announced schedule of AAG meetings has been revised significantly – Honolulu, Detroit, etc. have been shuffled off the list and the 2022 meeting will (as of this writing) be held in New York City from Thursday February 25 to Monday March 1, which is substantially earlier than usual. So plan accordingly! We hope to see you there.

GORABS also continues to maintain a robust online presence. Our social media accounts (on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/GeographyOfReligionAndBeliefSystemsGorabsAag/> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/gorabsAAG>) continue to be active, and our official web page has transitioned from the old WordPress site to <https://www.gorabsaag.org/>. We hope this will better promote the activities of GORABS members, serve as a clearinghouse for calls for papers, and function as an archive of previous newsletters and other items of interest. If you have any calls for papers or abstracts, conference announcements, or any other news that you think would be of interest to the GORABS membership, please contact me or another GORABS Board member and we'll make sure that it gets advertised online.

Last summer, in the wake of months of protests against racialized police brutality, GORABS published a statement of solidarity against anti-Black racism, militarized policing, and all other forms of oppression. As I wrote in the August newsletter, "these events...forced us as scholars, as geographers of religion, and as members

of the AAG to recognize and reckon with the struggles faced every day by Black geographers and other geographers from marginalized communities. Discussion of the violence and oppression suffered by our friends, our colleagues, our students, our communities, and our families can no longer be ignored, downplayed, or put off for another time.”

In light of escalating violence in this country against Asians and Asian-Americans, as well as the introduction of various pieces of legislation in many states that seek to restrict voting rights and/or limit access to health care to trans people, among other things, I want to reaffirm in no uncertain terms this specialty group’s commitment to addressing systemic inequity. Our statement of solidarity is reproduced in full below.

Particularly in light of the challenges posed by the pandemic, however, it seems to me that GORABS has a long way to go in terms of increasing our membership -- and doing so in a way that represents the diversity of the discipline. I would once again like to encourage everyone, particularly scholars from historically marginalized communities, to consider not only becoming GORABS members, but also serving on the Board and assuming a leadership position in our specialty group.

I concluded my “Message from the Chair” in the August 2020 newsletter by writing that it was my hope that the study of religion could assume its central place in the discipline of geography. Despite the hardships of the last year, that remains my goal, and so we must work together to strengthen GORABS as an organization and demonstrate its importance vis-à-vis both the issues of the day and to the discipline of geography as whole.

It has been my pleasure to be involved with GORABS over the past several years. I hope my stewardship of this group has been worthy of the times we find ourselves in, even if circumstances have forestalled upon some of my aspirations as I began my term as Chair. Whatever the future brings, I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to the GORABS Board and membership at large. As always, if you have any comments, suggestions, or proposals regarding these or any other matters, I urge you to reach out to me.

Take care.

*Vincent M. Artman*

## **Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Statement of Solidarity**

The Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group (GORABS) expresses its unconditional condemnation of anti-Black racism, militarized policing, and all other forms of oppression. We affirm our support for the struggle of Black geographers and all activists and protesters in the community who fight against this oppression every day. Following the lead of the Black Geographies Specialty Group, the Queer and Trans Geographies Specialty Group, the Indigenous Peoples' Specialty Group, and the Latinx Geographies Specialty Group, among others, we express solidarity with all marginalized peoples and call on the AAG and all geographers to resist by any means necessary structural racism and violence, police brutality, and white supremacy.

Recent events in the United States have once again brought into stark relief the profound, racialized inequities that pervade American society, which are too often overlooked, downplayed as someone else's problem, or simply ignored. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, David McAtee, and Ahmaud Aubrey are only the latest in a long history of violence perpetrated against people of color. It is not enough to say that responsibility for this brutality can be attributed to racist structures of state, to the dehumanizing economic system that has left millions in grinding poverty, or to the white supremacy that has characterized much of American history. All of these things are to blame. But responsibility, ultimately, is woven into the very fabric of our society and of our lives.

As fundamental parts of our lives and of our society, religion and other belief systems are thus inexorably tied to issues of racial injustice. While religion is frequently a potent symbol of hope and a unifier of people, it is just as often been employed as means to divide, to downgrade, and to 'other.' Whether in justifications for the violence of colonialism, the destruction of places of prayer for marginalized people, or discriminatory immigration policies, religions and belief systems are intimately bound up with systems of oppression. Only recently have we witnessed the appalling spectacle of chemical weapons being employed against peaceful protesters to allow the President to pose with a Bible in front of a hijacked church, putting into stark relief how geographies of religion are interlaced with geographies of violence. It is the task of geographers of religions and belief systems to confront this violence, both in our scholarship and our lives, and to commit ourselves to supporting our colleagues and those in our community who are most affected by it.

This begins with amplifying the voices of marginalized peoples in our scholarship, centering their histories in the classroom, promoting them in our departments and institutions, and decolonizing our course curricula. But our efforts cannot end there. These can only be first, partial, steps towards a fuller reckoning with the legacies of racism and oppression in the academy, in our communities, and in society at large. GORABS stands with all those seeking to achieve those ends.

Black lives matter.

Signed:

*The Board of the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Specialty Group*

## **THE DAVID E. SOPHER NEW SCHOLAR AWARD 2022**

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

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

**Award:** The amount for the 2022 award is a travel grant of \$250. The recipient will also be given an official certificate at the AAG Awards Luncheon.

**Disbursement:** A check will be disbursed to the winner at the 2022 Geography of Religions and Belief Systems Annual Business Meeting at the AAG event.

**Requirements:** The paper and application form must be submitted in rich text or Microsoft Word format by March 21, 2022. The paper must subsequently be presented at the national AAG meeting, though it does not have to be in a GORABS-sponsored session. A panel drawn from the GORABS Board will judge the papers and determine a recipient. The winner will be announced in time to attend the Awards Luncheon with a GORABS representative. GORABS reserves the right to not make an award in a given year.

## **THE WILBUR ZELINSKY AWARD 2022**

GORABS has recently inaugurated The Wilbur Zelinsky Award, which students can apply to upon submitting a session of papers to the AAG, having first taken out student membership in GORABS and received GORABS group sponsorship. This award was first presented in 2018. Applications are now open for The Wilbur Zelinsky Award 2022, whereby a certificate and \$100 will be given to the best session of papers that qualifies in the above categories.

## **GORABS IS RECRUITING**

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

## **VIRTUAL BROWN BAG SERIES**

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

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

Chair: Dr. Vincent Artman, Wayne State University, [vincent.artman@wayne.edu](mailto:vincent.artman@wayne.edu)  
Secretary & Vice-Chair: Dr. Maxim Samson, DePaul University, [msamson6@depaul.edu](mailto:msamson6@depaul.edu)  
Assistant Secretary: Dr. Nathan Burtch, George Mason University, [nburtsch@gmu.edu](mailto:nburtsch@gmu.edu)

## New Book Includes Contributions from Several GORABS Members

### *Religion, Sustainability and Place: Moral Geographies of the Anthropocene*

Edited by Steven E. Silvern and Edward H. Davis

Palgrave Press (London) forthcoming in early 2021

This book explores how religious groups work to create sustainable relationships between people, places and environments. This interdisciplinary volume deepens our understanding of this relationship, revealing that the geographical imagination—our sense of place—is a key aspect of the sustainability ideas and practices of religious groups. The book begins with a broad examination of how place shapes faith-based ideas about sustainability with examples drawn from indigenous Hawaiians and the sacred texts of Judaism and Islam. Empirical case studies from North America, Europe, Central Asia and Africa follow, illustrating how a local, bounded, and sacred sense of place informs religious-based efforts to protect people and natural resources from threatening economic and political forces. Other contributors demonstrate that a cosmopolitan geographical imagination, viewing place as extending from the local to the global, shapes Christian, Jewish and interfaith groups' struggles to promote just and sustainable food systems and battle the climate crisis.

#### List of Contributors

##### **Vincent M. Artman**

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##### **R.D.K. Herman**

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Hawaii, USA

##### **Madden Bremer**

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Department of Geography  
Colgate University, USA

##### **Kendyl Crawley Crawford**

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##### **Nora McNamara**

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##### **Briana Meier**

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##### **Madeline Duntley**

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##### **Faith Harris**

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Virginia Union University, USA

##### **James L. Wescoat Jr.**

Department of Architecture  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

##### **Stephen Young**

Geography and Sustainability Department  
Salem State University, USA

## **List of GORABS-sponsored papers and sessions:**

**The 2021 AAG Annual Meeting will be utilizing ZOOM meeting rooms that will be accessible through the AAG's Final Program Platform (<https://aag-annualmeeting.secure-platform.com/a/organizations/main/home>)**

**Please note that all times are in PACIFIC DAYLIGHT TIME (PDT).**

### **GORABS Annual Lecture: Ken Foote**

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 4:40 PM / 5:55 PM (PDT)

Room: Virtual 48

Organizers: Vincent Artman

Chairs: Vincent Artman

#### Description

Please join us for the 2021 GORABS Annual Lecture. This talk, by Dr. Ken Foote, focuses on public memory and commemoration and how these crosscut traditional concepts of ritual and sacred place, in three ways. First, it considers recent traumas and their consequences for changing patterns and processes of memorialization in the American and European landscapes. Second, it considers how the creation of these memorials is expanding the repertoire of ritual spaces in contemporary society, as well as providing settings for debate over religious expression, public versus private expressions of grief and bereavement, and individual versus collective control of the sacred. The presentation closes by reflecting on the theoretical significance of these developments and offering a spatial perspective on ritual practice in contemporary society.

### **GORABS Session: Religion, Place, and Sustainability**

#### **Emerging Places of Repair: A Sustainable Urbanism Approach to Living in and with Cities—Inspired by Vine Deloria, Jr.'s Agent Ontology of Place**

Authors: Briana Meier\*, *University of Oregon*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems , Urban and Regional Planning, Urban Geography

Keywords: Native American religion, Sustainable urbanism, Places of repair

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 48

This presentation proposes the concept of places of repair as a contribution to contemporary, sustainable urbanism in North America, starting with the everyday urban environment around us. The project is inspired by and builds on the work of Native American scholar and activist, Vine Deloria, Jr. by suggesting that Deloria's work can inform how the everyday built environment is created, experienced, and cared for. I draw from Deloria's explanation of sacred places by proposing that the agential capacity of places allows for the emergence of new sorts of sacred places, places of repair. This concept is presented through analysis of Deloria's texts and discussion of two contemporary projects in the built environment of the North American Pacific Northwest.

**Saving Mount Shasta's Sacred Water: The Spiritual Campaign against Crystal Geyser**

Authors: Madeline Duntley\*, *Bowling Green State University*

Topics: Anthropocene, Cultural Ecology, Religion and Belief Systems

Keywords: water activism, spiritual tourism, sacred geography, extractive capitalism,

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 48

For twenty years Mt. Shasta, California (pop. 3287) has resisted the commercial bottling of water sourced from its namesake volcano, a 14,179 foot Cascade peak that is a cosmic, sacred mountain to many metaphysical groups. Mountain-centered, esoteric spirituality shapes the town's water activism and inspires an activist alliance with the Winnemem Wintu tribe. Origin myths recount the tribe's emergence from a sacred spring on this mountain. This town-tribe alliance delayed the 2015 planned opening of a Crystal Geyser plant, successfully petitioned for an Environmental Impact Report, lost two lawsuits, and awaits a pending state court appeal. Under pressure from economic stakeholders, activists support a business model of spiritual tourism to protect its sacred water from the extractive capitalism of Crystal Geyser.

**Resource Nationalism and Spiritual Pathways to Sustainability in Kyrgyzstan**

Authors: Vincent Artman\*, *WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems , Cultural and Political Ecology, Eurasia

Keywords: resource nationalism, eurasia, religion, political ecology

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 48

The Earth's natural environment figures heavily in many nationalist ideologies. During the period of Romantic nationalism, for example, the environment was conceived of as consecrated soil out of which primordial nations emerged, and to which their mythical and historical dramas were indelibly connected. Modern nationalist ideologies, meanwhile, frequently link the natural environment and resources contained therein to discrete political-territorial units, as well as to questions of identity and belonging. At the same time, the nationalist imaginary is also frequently connected with specific religious traditions, which may themselves embrace particular ecological perspectives. This paper explores the nexus of religion-ecology-nationalism, with the aim of demonstrating how the intersection of religion and nationalism might work to constitute a form of normative praxis vis-à-vis issues related to the preservation of the natural environment. In particular, the paper focuses on the issues surrounding Lake Issyk Kul and the Kumtor gold mine in the Kyrgyz Republic, where protest against environmental degradation frequently assumes a form that is at once nationalist and religious or spiritual. Finally, the paper examines how spatial practices, such as designating particular areas as sacred space, are consciously constructed as means of effecting the preservation of ecologies of significance in the national imagination. The paper highlights the imbrications of religious and nationalist discourses vis-à-vis political ecology and suggests that further research is needed on this subject.

**U.S. Food Movements and the Influence of Christian Ideas**

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

Topics: Food Systems, Religion and Belief Systems , United States

Keywords: Food, Movements, Christianity

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 48

The United States food system is not environmentally, socially or economically sustainable. And yet improvements have occurred, thanks to 19th- and 20th-century reformers, many of whom based their campaigns on Christian ideas. Their ideas continue to support the drive to make the U.S. food system sustainable. This chapter is about the ideas of food movement leaders who linked Christianity to sustainability since the late 1700s. I consider leaders in five movements: food safety, vegetarianism, organic farming, food justice, and the local food movement. The locally-focused agrarianism of the late twentieth century, led by Wendell Berry, builds on these ideas and on the four older movements. In this synthesis we can see how both place and Christian ideas become critical to sustainability discourses.

### **Religion, Sustainability and Place: A Conceptual Framework**

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

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems , Cultural Geography, Sustainability Science

Keywords: religion, sustainability, place

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 48

This paper introduces a session devoted to exploring how religious and faith groups promote sustainable relationships between people, place and environments. In this presentation, I provided the academic context and a conceptual frame for the presentations to follow. I begin with a review of the academic literature , noting that there are few studies linking the study of religion with sustainability and place. Religious and faith groups conceive of and advocate for understanding the sacredness of creation and the natural world; concerns that motivate an activist engagement with sustainability in practice. Place is ontologically central to this religiously informed conception of sustainability; conceptions of place influence sustainability concerns and activism of religious and faith groups. There is a tension in how these place conceptions are expressed and how they inform action. Building upon and utilizing the work of Doreen Massey and other geographers, I note that this is a tension between an inward-looking geography of concern --a more narrow and bounded sense of place-- and a geography of care and concern that extends beyond the local to the global. Thus, place can become part of a defensive posture, an exclusive place-based definition of sustainability that can be nationalistic or even xenophobic. Or the efforts of religious groups to promote sustainability may be informed by a more open and global sense of place, a cosmopolitan sustainability discourse that seeks to engage and cooperative with others in interfaith movements for environmental and social justice.

### **GORABS Business Meeting**

**Day:** 4/9/2021

**Start / End Time:** 4/9/2021 06:15-7:30 PM (PDT)

**Room:** Virtual 48

## **Other Papers at the Seattle AAG of interest to GORABS (April 2021)**

### **Tree-ring analysis of James Strang's Kingdom, Beaver Island, Michigan**

Authors: Matthew Bekker\*, *Brigham Young University*, James Speer, *Indiana State University*

Topics: Biogeography, Religion and Belief Systems , Paleoenvironmental Change

Keywords: tree rings, dendrochronology, biogeography, religion

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 6:15 PM / 7:30 PM

Room: Virtual 30

Beaver Island, Michigan was occupied by a religious sect led by James Strang from 1848-1856. Strang was crowned king of the group, but assassinated by disgruntled followers in 1856, whereupon local fishermen drove the “Strangites” off the island and reportedly took over or destroyed their buildings. Some of the structures from the Strangite period have known construction dates, while details for others are unknown. We provide tree-ring dates for the Mormon Print shop (MPS), Protar House (PH), and Neils-Schneider Home (NSH). MPS was built during the Strangite period and has a known construction date of 1850. PH is believed to have been built in 1858 and NSH in the 1890s, both after expulsion of the Strangites, but they may have used repurposed logs from Strangite structures. We extracted cores from all accessible timbers to evaluate the construction dates suggested by historical records and determine whether PH and NSH included repurposed timbers. MPS was primarily red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), PH white pine (*P. strobus*), and NSH balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*). We compared floating chronologies for each species with established regional chronologies to determine cutting dates. Cutting dates for MPS ranged from 1848–1850, consistent with historical records indicating construction in 1850. PH showed a strong cluster in 1861, three years later than assumed, but it also included a few dates that were contemporaneous with the Strangite period. NSH showed a cluster of dates in the early 1880s, earlier than the assumed 1890 construction date, but with no Strangite timbers.

### **White Noise and Unnecessary Evil: Balancing Security and Community in Synagogues**

Authors: Maxim Samson\*, *DePaul University*

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems , Ethnicity and Race

Keywords: Security, synagogues, places of worship, hate crimes, terrorism

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 48

Violent hate crimes at synagogues in recent years have engendered a distinctive dilemma for such institutions: How can one ensure people’s safety and security without compromising the warm and welcoming environment that these communities seek to create? Drawing upon interviews with Jewish leaders, this paper explores how this dilemma is being negotiated by synagogues in Chicago. After presenting several key predicaments faced by synagogues as regards security, the paper will argue that securitization should be understood as a form of “white noise,” necessary to their functioning and yet necessarily invisible. Indeed, although security is now an essential feature of many synagogues, it is also at constant risk of undermining their cordial ambience through providing a reminder of one’s mortality, requiring that it be present,

but in the background. Consequently, synagogues today are compelled to find a careful balance between hospitality and openness, with diverse and often paradoxical implications.

### **Black Lives Matter, the Beta Israel, and Netanyahu**

Authors: Holly Jordan\*, *Virginia Tech*

Topics: Middle East, Human Rights, Religion and Belief Systems

Keywords: Israel, Black Lives Matter, BLM, Beta Israel, Ethiopian Jews, racism, marginalization, minority religious populations

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 48

Nearly two months after the tragic murder of George Floyd, Solomon Tekah, an 18-year-old Ethiopian Jew in Israel, was killed by Israeli Police. At least four, and possibly up to eleven, Ethiopian Jews in Israel have been killed under suspicious circumstances since 1997. The death of Solomon Tekah has become a rallying moment for the emerging Black Lives Matter movement in Israel. This paper explores the unique situation of Ethiopian Jews, who call themselves the Beta Israel (House of Israel), within Israeli society, tracing the motivations and goals of the newly emerging BLM movement in Israel through an analysis of both implicit bias and institutional racism within Israeli society. The paper shows that while rooted in the global BLM movement, the Beta Israel's BLM response to the death of Solomon Tekah is unique given their status as a marginalized Jewish minority in the Jewish Homeland.

### **“We’re Always Expected to Forgive:” Forgiveness as a Reaction to State Violence and Hate Crimes against Black People**

Authors: Priscilla McCutcheon\*, *University of Kentucky*

Topics: Cultural Geography, Geographic Thought

Keywords: Black geographies, state violence, justice, liberation, Black liberation theology, Beloved community,

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 3:05 PM / 4:20 PM

Room: Virtual 39

This paper explores the aftermath of death through forgiveness, by Black people who have been the victims of hate crimes and police violence. I first question the extent to which forgiveness can ever be considered a radical act, drawing from the tragic case of Emanuel A.M.E., where a white supremacist gunned down nine Black churchgoers during prayer meeting. Before being convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death, some family members of those murdered publicly forgave him. I analyze this moment of forgiveness through Black liberation theology and King’s beloved community, where forgiveness is predicated on the oppressor eventually seeing the oppressed as fully human. Second, I consider the physical act of forgiveness through the 2018 killing of Botham Jean in his own home by a white officer. After a tearful testimony following the officer’s conviction, the victim’s brother forgave the officer and hugged her. The officer was then hugged by the judge. I argue that the visceral reaction by many to these two hugs were that they offered the white officer bodily contact, narrowing a spatial separation that many deemed necessary to preserve the line between victim and aggressor. I conclude with recent reflections on the police killings of Black people in the summer of 2020, and what

happens when Black people either refuse to offer forgiveness or such forgiveness is conditionally based on justice and liberation.

### **Bricolage, Buffering, COVID-19 and the Reconfiguration of the Relationships between Church, People, Place and Home**

Authors: John Bryson\*, *University of Birmingham*, Lauren Andres, *University College London* , Andrew Davies, *University of Birmingham*

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

Keywords: COVID-19, inclusion and access, online services, improvisation, churches, religion

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/11/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 39

Churches play an important role in supporting and connecting people in place. This role includes baptisms, funerals and supporting families through lifechanging events. During COVID-19, across the globe, churches played a critical role in providing pastoral care to congregants and members of the wider community, providing meals for those sheltering as well as food and medical supplies along with support to enhance mental wellbeing for those afraid and lonely. When lockdown and wider restriction measures, linked to social distancing, led to the closure of places of worship, churches had to improvise alternative solution.

The paper develops a multidisciplinary analysis combining geography, theology and planning to explore the reconfiguration of the relationships between church, people, and place in response to the impacts of pandemic regulations. Multi-level adaptation by churches to COVID-19 is explored by drawing upon bricolage and improvisation and co-evolutionary adaptation as frameworks to interpret the lived experience of churches who reconfigured new pathways to support households and their parishes. This includes understanding the evolutionary nature of these adaptations as pandemic regulations altered, including the introduction of online or virtual services and then the development of bi-modal approaches combining church-based with online provision. Improvisations in pastoral and social care intended to support the post-COVID-19 recovery process are explored including visitation, wellbeing support and food delivery programmes, sometimes delivered collaboratively. The paper also explores the emergence of a new geography of the home focusing on worship spaces, moving beyond our July 2020 paper on this topic (Bryson et al., 2020).

### **Closure and Consolidation: Reorganization of Institutional Resources in South Dakota**

Authors: Janet Gritzner\*, *South Dakota State University*

Topics: Rural Geography, Cultural Geography, Population Geography

Keywords: Small towns, Midwest US, Community Life, Schools, Churches

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 24

School closure and consolidation have a long history in rural South Dakota. School district reorganization is on-going in the 21st Century as rural populations continue to decline. Church closures are a relatively recent phenomenon, although many independent rural churches in the state have seen dwindling membership for decades and have ceased to hold

services on a regular basis. A number of failing churches have sold their church buildings or have seen them fall into ruin. Even larger churches are impacted. In 2014, in response to priest shortages, the catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls implemented plans for a series of parish mergers and pastoral linkages throughout eastern South Dakota. This move, which would inevitably lead to church closures, has been resisted to date by many of the affected parishes. Other closures have come from decisions of state government and private-local entities. This includes the radical move to close the University of South Dakota at Springfield in 1984, and reopen the facility as Mike Dufee State Prison and the sale and resale of Huron University, Huron, SD.

Closures and consolidations of schools, colleges, and churches are profoundly altering community life in small South Dakota communities. Schools and colleges are at the heart of town life. Church-centered towns lose their focus. Small towns in South Dakota, however, are coping and adapting. School consolidation is shifting focus to regional loyalties and churches in various communities are sharing pastoral services and church buildings.

### **Spiritual Land Governance & Political Ecologies of Mapping Episcopal Church-owned Land**

Authors: Emma Lietz Bilecky\*

Topics: Land Use, Religion and Belief Systems , Cultural and Political Ecology

Keywords: land technologies, land governance, church land, race, religion

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 31

My paper interrogates the uses of spiritual land governance for resisting, but also expanding various forms of resource extraction and ecosystem disturbance. I compare common property ownership and governance in the Episcopal Church (TEC), originating through royal land grant, and sacred natural sites (SNS) maintained by tribal and federal governments. As opposed to spiritual land governance approaches which establish legal relationship with other-than-human persons and “enspirited land” (Studley 2019), TEC land governance and property ownership reflects its settler-colonial history and a financialized view of land (Fairbairn 2020), privileging “stewardship” of church buildings, and distinguishing church “congregations” from broader land/soil communities whose various labors are enlisted as a resource in the maintenance of threatened institutions (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, Krzwosynska 2020). While churches reflect a version of common property ownership and use land to address environmental justice, they also reinforce whiteness as property when church property is considered “assets” (Harris 1993).

Emerging church land mapping technologies may resist this recoding via cartographic strategies which re-place “congregations” within an otherwise external but spiritually metabolized “nature” (Smith 1984): representing churches as agents in processes of dispossession, territorialization, and landscape transformations over time (Hervieu-Leger 2002, Ingold 2009, Latour 2018, Richter & Yaalon 2011). Resisting the violent logics of colonial and capitalist land governance through spiritual land governance requires recognizing such contexts in addition to historic and contemporary “architectures of theft,” processes of consent, land return, and a layered religious narratives (Basso 1996, Yellowhead Institute 2019, Whyte 2018).

### **The Christchurch Mosque Shootings: Performative Solidarity and Oppositional Identity**

Authors: Jibran Ludwig\*, *University of Wyoming*

Topics: Cultural Geography, Ethnicity and Race

Keywords: terrorism, white supremacy, identity, the West, geopolitics, political geography

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 41

In March 2019, Brenton Tarrant became the first person to livestream a mass shooting when he attacked two Mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. Within hours, state and corporate efforts to remove his livestream had scrubbed it from most major websites. In my research I use Max Abrahms' theory that terrorist violence is motivated by a desire for collective solidarity instead of rational political strategy to understand the significance of making violence visible in this particular way. Tarrant's livestream and manifesto are filled with memes and references meant to establish his membership within an internet savvy, international community of white supremacists. In the absence of a formal group, Tarrant must perform his collective solidarity visibly. In doing so he also attempts to incite other members of his community to commit acts of terrorism. In his manifesto, Tarrant lays out a worldview predicated on a hostile dichotomy between "the East" and "the West." "The West" is threatened by "the invaders" from "the East," who must be violently expelled. In this oppositional identity formation, Tarrant finds an unlikely ally in President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who used sections of Tarrant's footage at political rallies to generate a mirror narrative of the Muslim world threatened by Western invaders. What both Tarrant and Erdoğan have in common is a commitment to maintaining identities rooted in a rejection of the "other," with more concern for stability of group identity than with the well being of its members.

### **The Transformative Power of Human Rights Rhetoric: Progressive Talk in Catholic Spaces**

Authors: Justin Tse\*, *Singapore Management University*, Halyna Herasym\*,

Topics: Religion and Belief Systems , Human Rights, Political Geography

Keywords: Catholic, geopolitics, social movements, political geography, social geography, discourse, Hong Kong,

Ukraine, Euromaidan, protests, human rights

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 46

The Catholic Church is typically seen as a reactionary and inert institution. While this common wisdom is not completely out of place, the Church has actually shown the will to change due to major socio-political shifts challenging imperial powers in the contemporary world (Agnew 2010). In our presentation, we focus on two particular cases of rhetorical changes of local Catholic churches in post-colonial contexts: the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine and the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. We argue that in circumstances of major social turbulence -- in our cases, the Euromaidan and the Umbrella Movement, respectively -- those local Catholic churches not only found an unlikely ally among progressive civil rights groups, but also adopted some of the discourses used by secular (or even anti-religious) activists. Using preliminary research data drawn from our collaborative project "Catholic talk, social dreaming" on the interconnections between those local churches, activists and the Vatican, we show that discursive terms such as 'democracy,' 'rule of law,' and 'human rights' move from the language of secular civil society into the talk of the church. This appropriation of civil rights discourse might on the one hand serve reactionary arguments regarding abortion and sexuality, but we suggest through our interviews that they are having a potentially progressive transformative effect on conceptions of ecclesial space. This paper contributes to ongoing conversations about the place of religion in contemporary social geographies and critical geopolitics.

**Transportation, Medical Care Utilization and Health Intervention Exposure among an African American Church Population**

Authors: Noah Price\*, *University of Missouri Kansas City*, Jannette Berkley-Patton, *University of Missouri Kansas City*, Tacia Burgin, *University of Missouri Kansas City*, Salome Wilfred, *University of Missouri Kansas City*, Carole Bowe Thompson, *University of Missouri Kansas City*

Topics: Health and Medical, Transportation Geography

Keywords: Public Transportation, African American, Health Care

Session Type: Virtual Guided Poster

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 53

In 2017, 5.8 million Americans delayed medical care due to transportation barriers. Studies show that African Americans (AAs) experience twice the rate of transportation barriers as Whites. Nineteen percent of AA households lack access to a personal vehicle, and AAs using public bus systems are twice as likely to report a missed appointment. Yet, studies show environmental and structural interventions can reduce missed appointments. It is critical to understand possible transportation barriers to determine the most appropriate intervention strategies to improve access to health services. Using baseline data from Faith Influencing Transformation (FIT) project, an AA church-based intervention, this study examined relationships between transportation mode and access to annual doctor visits and exposure to FIT's culturally-tailored intervention strategies (sermons, bulletins, weight loss classes). The participants (N=66) were primarily female (90.9%) with an average age of 57 (SD=10.9). Most (95.5%) had vehicle access, while 3% used public transportation, and 1.5% relied on others. An independent t-test indicated no significant transportation barriers to doctor visits among those with and without vehicles  $t(64)=-1.133, p=.261$ . Correlational analysis indicated that exposure to FIT intervention strategies was negatively related to doctor visits ( $r = -.313, p < .05$ ). These findings indicated no transportation barriers to medical care, possibly due to the high percentage of those with a car, suggesting the advantage of personal vehicle access. Also, intervention exposure was related to doctor visits. This finding needs further exploration to understand the impact of FIT strategies on health service utilization. Future work could examine multiple interventions to mitigate AA transportation barriers.

**Cast adrift with aqueous metaphors and mobilities: conceptualizing the Holocaust at sea**

Authors: Simone Gigliotti\*, *Royal Holloway, University of London*

Topics: Historical Geography, Cultural Geography, Geographic Thought

Keywords: Holocaust, maritime, ship, sea, flight

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 16

Aqueous metaphors have long framed canonical studies of Holocaust experiences, most visibly in Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved*, while scholars have interpreted diverse forms of Jewish resistance to Nazi persecution in terms of submergence, diving, and underground living. This still resonant yet un-critiqued vernacular reveals a contradiction in marking locations and routes of flight, movement and immobility. On the one hand it points to the appeal of experiential cartographies to frame overland survival landscapes in Europe. On the other, this vernacular has not yet pivoted to examining maritime trajectories of flight from European ports to global destinations, an approach that exposes the

ongoing neglect of, in particular, the tormenting durational bondage to the lived geography of seas and oceans. This trauma was foretold in ancient narratives of seafaring and continues in shocking accounts of present-day refugee crossings.

This paper uses insights from cultural geography, studies of the sea and ocean, and Jewish refugee studies, to incubate approaches to maritime cartographies during the 1930s and 1940s at different scales and human impacts. It advances the compelling potential of thinking with and across a multi-sited Holocaust at sea - its volatile seascapes, colonial ports, passenger experiences at sea, humanitarian interventions, and European shipping history - as a destination of boundless cross-cultural knowledge generation, historiographical disruption, and globalizing connectivity.

### Defining Orthodox Jewish Suburbs

Authors: Joseph Huennekens\*, *Columbia University*

Topics: Ethnic Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, United States

Keywords: ethnoburbs, suburbs, Orthodox Jews, built environment

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 48

In the late 1990s, the geographer Wei Li coined the term “ethnoburb” to describe the growing concentration of prosperous, transnational, Asian immigrants in the San Gabriel Valley of southern California (Li, 1998). The concept was subsequently applied to other communities across the Anglosphere (Fittante, 2018; Kye, 2020; Xue et al., 2011). In this paper, I analyze and clarify the shifting definition of an “ethnoburb” by asking: are Orthodox Jewish suburbs ethnoburbs? After cataloging the definitions found in the literature, I assess Orthodox Jewish suburbs in the New York region against the various criteria. I find that a key (and undertheorized) criterion differentiating ethnoburbs from other types of suburban enclaves is built environment change. By this dimension, Orthodox Jewish suburbs often have more in common with contemporary Asian-American ethnoburbs than with previous models of assimilationist “white ethnic” suburbs. Ultimately, I find that combining the ethnoburb literature with the geography of Orthodox Jewish suburbs contributes to both areas of scholarship: it clarifies the importance of the built landscape in ethnoburbs and it contextualizes the land use conflicts that tend to follow Orthodox Jewish migration to the suburbs.

### Geographical Variations in the Demographics and Attitudes of American Jews from the Pew Research Center 2020 Study

Authors: Ira Sheskin\*, *University of Miami*

Topics: Ethnic Geography

Keywords: American Jews, ethnicity

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 48

The Pew Research Center conducted a survey of American Jews in 2013 which was followed by a similar effort in 2020. This paper examines the major results from this survey including basic demographics, issues of Jewish identity, religious beliefs and practices, connections and attitudes toward Israel, and social and political views concerning United States

policy. Particular attention is paid indicators of whether American Jews view themselves as an ethnic group, a religious group, or both and to geographic differences among the 4 Census Regions. The manner in which the American Jewish community has changed over the past 7 years and how the results for the American Jewish community differ from those of the general American public, particularly on social and political views, form another focus.

The survey was completed using an ABS (Address-Based Sampling) methodology, rather than the RDD methodology which has been used in other national Jewish surveys (the 1990 and 2000-01 National Jewish Population surveys and the Pew 2013).

### **Infrastructure for Mapping Holocaust Ghettos**

Authors: Maja Kruse\*, *University of Maine*

Topics: Historical Geography

Keywords: Historical GIS, historical gazetteer, digital infrastructure, Holocaust ghettos

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 16

One of the least appreciated aspects of building digital infrastructure for historical GIS projects is the difficulty of locating places and spatial structures in the past. The growing popularity of place-based research in the digital and spatial humanities has highlighted the value of careful, systematic development of base layers, including historical gazetteers and administrative boundaries. This paper describes how the author approached the specific problems of accurately locating approximately 650 Jewish ghettos in German-occupied Eastern Europe and improving the geographical and historical fidelity of administrative boundaries for the period 1938-1945. The ghettos were included in the core dataset provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, to the Holocaust Ghettos Project based at the University of Maine. While most locations were adequate for the locator maps for which the data were originally created, they contained too many errors and ambiguities to serve the Ghettos Project's purposes. Similarly, it was necessary to check the quality of month-by-month historical boundary changes to ensure the quality of the Ghettos Project's maps. The second half of the paper summarizes the multi-step procedures the author developed to produce more authoritative, reliable infrastructure layers for the use of the larger project and future researchers.

### **Kolektiv Goluboy Vagon - Mapping Migration and Memory**

Authors: Stepha Velednitsky\*, *University of Wisconsin - Madison*

Topics: Migration, Cartography, Queer and Trans Geographies

Keywords: migration, queer, Soviet, Jewish, story map, cartography

Session Type: Virtual Poster

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 52

Kolektiv Goluboy Vagon is a U.S./Canadian collective of gender-marginalized, queer and trans, post-Soviet Jewish first- and second-generation immigrant-settlers who have been gathering virtually in co-facilitated sessions since October 2019. Our group began in the context of a dissertation project on immigrant whiteness, but met a larger existing yearning for

connection around shared life experiences, positionalities, questions, and a politic of collective liberation. Our current work includes political education, cultural production, ritual-making, ancestral healing, mutual aid, and relationship building. As we articulate our values, we seek to form coalitions with other immigrant groups and to be in accountability to impacted people, including BIPOC, Palestinians, and post-Soviet Jews of color in the U.S. This poster showcases some of the maps and visualizations we have produced in the course of our time together. One map highlights the divergences and convergences in our families' migration paths. Another focuses on our family members' narratives of the Soviet spaces that were emotionally significant to them.

### **Participatory Action Research at the First Annual Gathering of the Jewish Farmer Network**

Authors: Anika Rice, *University of Wisconsin*, Zachary Goldberg\*, *Penn State University*

Topics: Cultural and Political Ecology, Agricultural Geography, Food Systems

Keywords: participatory action research, agroecology, Jewish farming, ethnography, scholar activism

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 10

The Jewish Farmer Network (JFN) is a North American grassroots organization with the goal of supporting the economic, social, and cultural vibrancy of Jewish agriculture by connecting Jewish farmers to resources and community around the world. This study combines event ethnography and participatory action research at JFN's inaugural conference to facilitate collective movement building and action. Through fieldwork completed in coordination with JFN founders and roughly 90 members in October 2019 - February 2020, we use PAR to explore tensions around (1) the politics of identity in movement building and (2) agroecological knowledge production and exchange. Our 'thick PAR' (ethnography plus PAR) highlights JFN's challenges with navigating broad inclusion across race, sexual orientation, gender identities, Jewish identities, age and geography in the building of a niche social movement. We explore the rifts related to politicization and depoliticization of the movement and what this means for enacting structural and social change in the food system: while some members find it imperative to center decolonization, diaspora, critical place-making and indigenous solidarity, others may feel alienated by an explicit political call. Secondly, shared interests in the production and dissemination of Jewish agroecological knowledge is a uniting factor. We examine the potential that PAR holds for catalyzing collective action at a conference of Jewish farmers. We use PAR to both frame our practice of ethical and sustainable scholar activism and to ask questions about how we can improve our accountability as both researchers and participants of a social movement.

### **Studying the Graffiti Written on the Home That was Taken from my Grandfather in 1944: Doing Non-Holocaust-Related Fieldwork in Eastern and Central Europe as the Descendent of Holocaust Survivors**

Authors: Alexis Lerner\*, *University of Toronto*

Topics: Historical Geography

Keywords: Holocaust, Graffiti, Europe, Memory, Ethnography

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 16

From 2009 to 2019, I travelled throughout the post-Soviet and post-Communist Europe regions, studying how political graffiti could be used as a tool for circumventing censorship. In each city that I visited, I interviewed artists and read the walls to better understand popular opinion and local narratives.

The political narrative, as written on a city's walls, often touched upon Holocaust memory in Germany and in the so-called borderlands (Applebaum 1994). For example, in Lviv I recorded references to gas chambers, in Łódź I observed graffiti that read "Heil Hitler" in the old Jewish ghetto, and in Berlin one artist painted a rail-thin woman in striped pyjamas jumping rope with barbed wire. In Germany and in the borderlands, it became impossible to ignore that graffiti exists in a space saturated with Holocaust memory, and that reading graffiti inevitably meant discussing the Holocaust.

In this paper, I explore two questions. First, I ask what conclusion can be drawn from the prevalence of Holocaust-themed graffiti in particular regions (Germany and the borderlands) and not others (Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia)? Second, given that all four of my grandparents are Holocaust survivors and postwar refugees, is it plausible that I was more attuned to a particular narrative and therefore biased in my data collection? If this is true—that one's study of a particular region will inevitably be conflicted by their personal history in that same region—what steps need to be taken in order to mitigate this bias?

### **Tracing Jewish Slave Laborers through the Nazi Camp System**

Authors: Daan De Leeuw\*, *Clark University*

Topics: Historical Geography

Keywords: HGIS, Holocaust

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 16

The movement of Jewish slave laborers from camp to camp was a central feature of the Holocaust. Each relocation shattered the prisoners' networks and social structure as it affected the bonds that inmates created among themselves. This type of forced movement was pervasive, yet scholars have hardly scrutinized it. GIS, inductive visualization, and narrative cartography allow us to map the pathways and experiences of Jewish slave laborers and thus help us to understand Jews' plight during the Holocaust.

In this paper, I will analyze the daily lives of Jewish slave laborers, tracing their trajectories through the German concentration camps in the latter half of World War II. My starting point will be the deportation of 1,105 Dutch Jews from Westerbork transit camp to Sobibor on March 10, 1943. I will follow thirteen of the approximately thirty female Jews selected for slave labor and map their routes through the camp system. Drawing upon the spatial data obtained from wartime and postwar documents and survivor testimonies, I will reconstruct their pathways and experiences through geovisualizations. My paper will address questions such as what factors shaped these trajectories? Why did Jews on the same deportation train follow similar routes together whereas in other cases groups dispersed and people went through the camps more or less on an individual basis? How did relocations affect Jewish slave laborers and the social structure that obtained among them? And what, if any, patterns can we distill from the visualization of these paths?

### **Visualizing and Analyzing Family's Trajectories in the Holocaust: Representational Models**

Authors: Maël Le Noc\*, *Texas State University*, Alberto Giordano, *Texas State University*, Tim Cole, *Bristol University*

Topics: Historical Geography, Geographic Information Science and Systems

Keywords: Holocaust and genocide, geography of families, Hungary, Italy, GIScience

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 16

Throughout our multi-year collaboration on the geography of the Holocaust, we have often returned to questions related to the family, including family members separation, family structure, and household composition. From a methodological perspective, we strived to refine spatial analytical tools to study families and to develop models and visualizations applicable to diverse social and historical contexts. From a Holocaust perspective, we sought to understand how families fared during this genocidal event, and in particular how traditional family structures were reconfigured.

In this presentation, we briefly touch on all these aspects, with examples from Hungary and Italy. In the Hungarian case, we discuss a survey of Jewish survivors living in Budapest in the summer of 1945. We propose a model to identify and differentiate familial relationships that allow us to explore family structures and to map them at the level of individual housing unit. Results indicate a remarkable scarcity of the typical nuclear family structure in post-Holocaust Budapest, matched by the diversification of family structures (e.g., all females, all siblings). In the case of Italy, the model we propose allow us to investigate patterns of arrests of Jewish victims during the Holocaust while simultaneously exploring the three dimensions of geographical data—spatial, temporal, and thematical. Our results highlight the systematic extent to which perpetrators targeted families as opposed to individual victims. Although the two models differ in terms of scale, unit of analysis, type of representation, and family characteristics explored, we believe both can be generalized to other contexts.

### **Collaborative Mapping of sacred and archaeological places in Cotzal, Guatemala**

Authors: Adriana Linares Palma\*, *The University of Texas At Austin*

Topics: Indigenous Peoples, Landscape

Keywords: collaborative mapping, Ixil ontologies, ancestry, sacred landscape

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/11/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 22

This presentation focuses on my dissertation research at San Juan Cotzal, Guatemala. My work collaborates with the Ixil ancestral authorities and Ixil University members to conduct an archaeological survey in their territory since they saw in archaeology a resource to support their social movements engaged towards Indigenous self-determination. I share how this participatory and collaborative mapping program addressed the sacred landscape from the Ixil ontologies in conversation with the archaeological perspective. On the one hand, a network shows a system of Ixil sacred places of origin that maintain the tiichajil, an Ixil philosophy of living well. On the other hand, the ancient site network provides evidence of socio-political organization in the Postclassic period (1200 – 1530 CE). These sacred and archaeological places remain the source of strength to Ixil spirituality to this day.

I also address how intersectionality brings to the core of our researches an essential discussion about the politics of knowledge production, pushing us to a position in awareness of the power dynamics in academia and society. I share my experience on the collaborative mapping program at Cotzal to illustrate the tensions among academic research, the diversity of contexts with a structural violent history, and the risks of perpetuating colonialism through our methods.

## **Fluid Hauntings: Techno-Legal Boundaries of Containment and Excess**

Authors: Oviya Govindan\*,

Topics: Economic Geography

Keywords: Temporalities, Coastal landscape, Legal and spiritual geographies, Fluidity, Resistance

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 30

This paper examines the material and discursive ways in which techno-legal instruments of zoning and property law separate coastal land into private property and coastal waters into public resources. I show that modernist understandings of time and space inform these cartographic separations of land and water, as well as nature and culture. Based on what I call “spatial oral histories”—fishers’ sensory narratives of landscape change told over the course of walking and boating tours—I show that fishers’ sacred and spiritual geographies of coastal territory exceeds techno-legal separations of land and water, as well as categories of private and public, and suggests a rethinking of cartographic understandings of property and resistance at the coast. Thinking with scholars and activists working on building resistance against large infrastructure projects at the coast, my paper seeks to de-center legal geographies and spectacular events such as the moment of enclosure coastal lands, and ask what possibilities might open up when enclosures are contextualized within fishers’ spiritual geographies of coastal lands as spaces haunted by spirits and fluid movements.

## **In Between a Rock and a Third Space: The Hidden Cultural Spaces Facilitating Somali Youth Entry into Post-Secondary Education.**

Authors: Isma Yusuf\*, *University of Western Ontario*, Dr. Emmanuel Kyeremeh, *University of Western Ontario*, Dr. Godwin Arku, *University of Western Ontario*, Eunice Akua Annan-Aggrey, *University of Western Ontario*

Topics: Ethnicity and Race, Education, Religion and Belief Systems

Keywords: Somali-Canadians, education, third place, forms of capital, geographies of belonging

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 3:05 PM / 4:20 PM

Room: Virtual 25

Much of the literature coming out of the new millennium on education and Somalis finds the Somali-Canadian academic trajectory as one rife with institutional racism and spatial exemption. Students experience academic marginalization in the form of schools streaming them into lower educational ranks (applied versus academic; special education programming; ESL classes even when fluent in English), higher suspension rates, as well as hostile interactions with teachers and students treating their black and Muslim identity as suspect. In response to this marginalization, diasporic Somalis have collectively turned inward to support and cultivate their youths’ pathways toward postsecondary schooling — a reality that is seldom unpacked. Using Oldenburg’s concept of “third place”, this qualitative study unpacks how Somali-Canadians rely and draw upon concealed cultural spaces within the city to facilitate entry into (or continuance within) higher education. Twenty-six semi-structured interviews were conducted with second-generation Somali-Canadian youth, aided by the data collection strategy of snowball sampling. Findings reveal that these culturally-unique, authentically Somali spaces (e.g. Qur'an classes, Somali mosques, and ethno-religious shops) provide second-generation Somalis with differing forms of capital — financial, spiritual, human capital and cultural resources— salient to their trajectories toward

higher education. This study reads Oldenburg's "third place" intertextually with Bourdieu's "forms of capital" to analyze the relationship with space, identity and collectivism within the diaspora.

### Mobilising Myth: Istanbul as Ottoman-Islamic city

Authors: Oznur Sahin\*, *Western Sydney University*

Topics: Political Geography, Qualitative Methods, Middle East

Keywords: place myth, built environment, staging of events, Istanbul

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 3:05 PM / 4:20 PM

Room: Virtual 8

This paper examines how politics is aestheticised performatively and symbolically in relation to the fabric of the city by focusing on the socio-political and spatial aspects of celebrations and commemorations in Istanbul. The AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi–Justice and Development Party) government mobilises the myth of Istanbul as Ottoman-Islamic city to produce and control socio-spatial practices and political actions. The Islamic nature of Istanbul, the former Imperial city, with its Ottoman mosques, tombs and buildings in the composition of its landscape, is essential to the AKP's politics. From planting tulips, the flower that decorated Ottoman gardens and arts, to Panorama Museum, where the Conquest of Istanbul is represented in a giant painting, and to Islamic commemorative and celebratory events, the AKP's commodification and consumption of the Ottoman heritage mediate politics. Relying on the fieldwork I conducted in 2015 and secondary sources, including the bulletins of the municipality and newspapers, this paper discusses the Islamic narrative of space and life in the city through the myth of Istanbul.

### "I don't have a bomb:" A Journey through Muslim Female Students' Everyday Life in the United States

Authors: Hanieh Haji Molana\*, *California State University, Sacramento*, Sarah Rose Beechboard, *Kent State University*

Topics: Feminist Geographies, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Muslim women, Islamic feminism, perception of hijab, religious identity, university campus

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 43

The institutional and individual discrimination toward Muslims, especially women with the hijab, have dramatically increased over the past few decades. By conducting semi-structured interviews with fourteen Muslim female students at one of the Midwest university campuses, we aimed to uncover the ways in which they have experienced any harassment or misconduct toward their religious identity. We employed Islamic feminism as a framework to depict their everyday lives. By coding the transcripts, we were able to identify common themes. These themes reflect the ways in which the experiences of veiled Muslim female students are affected by their intersectional identities. This makes our findings relevant both for the evaluation of university campuses in general and for the education of non-Muslim Americans. In today's Islamophobic climate, there is a lack of representation of Muslims, especially Muslim women, in academic scholarship; this paper was written to help fill that gap by amplifying their voices.

**Gendering The Researcher's Body: Ethno-Religious Identity, Femininity, and Participant Observation in Muslim Bridal Salons in Northwestern China**

Authors: Yang Yang\*, *National University of Singapore*

Topics: Qualitative Research, Gender, China

Keywords: Gender, body, Ethnography, Islam, China

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 43

In this paper, I examine the gendering of the researcher's body in the field to better understand the intersections of gender, class, religion, and ethnicity in the researcher's positionality in fieldwork. I ask how the gendered body of the researcher could become sites where multiple meanings of ethnic and religious identity are co-produced by both the researcher and the researched. I reflect on my positionality as a non-Muslim Han Chinese female researcher in the ethnographic fieldwork in urban Hui communities in northwestern China, especially the process of changing my everyday “non-Muslim-like” look into the Hui’s locally defined ideal bridal look that represents transnational Islam. Hui Muslim staff of bridal salons projected their visions of the appropriate and ideal bridal look on my body. This shift from the researcher’s gaze on the researched to the other way around did not only allow them to elaborate on their understandings of the ideal transnational Muslim-ness through their choices in colors, styles, fabrics, and cosmetic products. It also revealed how the assumed universal image of transnational Islam became localized and hence accessible to the local Hui people through compromises and choices aligned with the local Hui’s preferences in displaying specific versions of femininity that were not necessarily associated with Islamic values. Highlighting the production of “Muslim-ness” on my body in the gendered space of bridal salons, I suggest understanding the process of gendering the researcher’s body as an approach to unpack the gendered hierarchies and aspirations in spaces that are not codified as “religious.”

**Racializing refugees: Islamophobia, place, and translocal assemblages**

Authors: Lauren Fritzsche\*, *University of Arizona - Geography & Development*, Eden Kinkaid, *University of Arizona*

Topics: Ethnicity and Race, Migration, Social Theory

Keywords: Assemblage, feminist geopolitics, Islamophobia, racialization, refugees, place

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 1:30 PM / 2:45 PM

Room: Virtual 36

In this presentation, we use assemblage thinking to draw together scholarship on the geographies of Islamophobia and feminist geopolitics to illuminate how the racialization of refugees is both situated in place and linked to translocal discourses and imaginaries. We approach Islamophobia as a “racializing assemblage” that marks both Muslim and non-Muslim refugees as a threat to national security and the integrity of particular places and landscapes. Drawing from fieldwork on refugee resettlement in Missoula, Montana, and building on a wider body of interdisciplinary scholarship, we show how the racialization of refugees is intimately connected to imaginaries of place while also informed by broader political contexts and discourses. Understanding these geographic transmutations of Islamophobic discourse through the lens of assemblage thinking provides an analytical handle for understanding the translocal nature of the racialization of

refugees, while allowing for a complex account of the interconnected roles of discourse, embodiment, and place in processes and experiences of racialization.

**Challenging post-crucifixion geopolitical oppression: Who said the African Diaspora was welcome to Israel let alone Christianity?**

Authors: Quentin Stubbs\*, *Houston Community College*

Topics: Bible Geography, Africa, Cultural Geography

Keywords: African Diaspora, Bible, Eunuch, Apostle, conversion, crucifixion

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 56

The post-crucifixion era challenged local and regional geopolitical relations, cultural exchange, and religious conversion (voluntary and forced). As Israel struggled internally with challenges to traditional Judaistic beliefs (i.e. Christianity), it also struggled with how to address a new wave and spread of conversion to Christianity despite being under the tight grip of Rome. Public preaching and teaching of the "Good News" were nearly forbidden practices in Israel. With governors and local administrators enforcing anti-Christian policies and global socioeconomic oppression, how difficult was it for a foreigner, let alone an African sojourner, to come to Israel for commerce, knowledge transfer, and worship. This study investigates the fascinating conversion of the African Eunuch by God through Phillip the disciple after the crucifixion (Acts 8). In the end, the decision to minister to and convert the Eunuch was not made by the Rome or Judaistic clergy. God chose when and how to open His doors to the African Eunuch, which symbolized invitations to all foreigners and Gentiles, a culture altering move that would permanently rattle Christianity inside and outside of Israel.

**Famine in the Promised Land Signaled a Crisis in Leadership and Led to Critical Political Changes and Survival Responses: A Preliminary Study in Conflict Resolution**

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

Topics: Bible Geography, Political Geography, Cultural Geography

Keywords: famine, hunger, Abraham, Saul, Naomi, Paul,

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 56

Hunger and famine were prevalent in the Ancient Near East and in the Promised Land. Rural occurrences claimed few lives, but urban hunger and famine claimed many lives. The classic response to famine was to walk away from it. Food generally was available less than fifty miles away. Examples include: Abraham emigrated to Egypt; Issac was driven from his home; Jacob sent his sons to Egypt; Saul was blamed for a famine and his sons suffered death; Naomi fled to Moab where she met Ruth; prophets of Baal were massacred; cannibalism occurred; and international Christians, led by Paul and Barnabas, sent cash relief to Judea. Individual freedoms and community interests were impacted, and the amenities of urban life were destroyed. Famines disrupted family bonds and destroyed social support. Death of loved ones created unhappy and unhealthy isolation and nurtured urban crime. This presentation identifies food deficiency crises that led to socioeconomic devastation, political change, life-changing actions, and death.

**Pokot and Western Christian Missions: A Postcolonial Story of Place and Perception**

Authors: Julie Morris\*, *University of Kansas*

Topics: Africa, Cultural Geography

Keywords: Africa, Kenya, Pokot, history, culture, missions, Christianity, place, postcolonial, perspective

Session Type: Virtual Poster

Day: 4/10/2021

Start / End Time: 4:40 PM / 5:55 PM

Room: Virtual 51

In 1931, after decades of British colonial control, the first Western Christian missionary came to Pokot in western Kenya and eastern Uganda. For the past ninety years, missionaries, from England, Ireland, the United States, and other Western countries, have come to Pokot with a message of evangelism and initiatives for development. Throughout the decades, the mission organizations and missionaries working in Pokot and among the Pokot people have developed their own perceptions of Pokot which in turn informed the strategies they undertook. The Pokot people have responded with resistance, ambivalence, and hybridized acceptance to the message and mission of these outsiders. The layers of perceptions, strategies, and responses have helped inform a history of the contact zone between Western Christian missions and Pokot and develop and direct a dynamic sense of place at the contact zone. The story of this contact zone is told through a postcolonial perspective, highlighting power, agency, and ambivalence through the voices of the actors in place.

**Divine Antecedents of Contemporary Borders**

Authors: Kenneth Madsen\*, *The Ohio State University*

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

Keywords: boundaries, boundary markers, borders, border barriers, mythology, exclusion, national identity

Session Type: Virtual Poster

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 52

Despite the secular nature of many contemporary governments, God and country are frequently intertwined in the popular consciousness. This poster considers how ancient religious history informs our contemporary understanding of national borders. In Western political lineage, the Roman god of boundaries Terminus was an animistic character who resided in boundary stones and reflected the importance of providing heavenly protection for private property, and by extension the limits of Rome and the Roman Empire. Romans also consecrated pomerium or a sacred boundary around their cities, marking a clear line between cities themselves and territory beyond. But backing up political dividing lines with religious authority was not unique to the Romans. The Old Testament, various other Indo-European cultures, and many non-Western traditions demonstrate that the roots of divine justification for borders and bordering processes are more diverse and go much farther back in time. Today's claims of celestial authority and protection for borders draws on and parallels these ancient experiences.

**Crossed Worlds: reflecting experiences of social mapping of sacred territories of the enchanted.**

Authors: Davi Pereira Junior\*, *University of Texas - Austin*

Topics: Cartography, Cultural Geography, Ethnic Geography

Keywords: Mapping, Territory, Walking, Encantados

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/11/2021

Start / End Time: 8:00 AM / 9:15 AM

Room: Virtual 22

My paper will discuss the limits and possibilities of social mapping processes based on experience of crossing territories with people who define their identity based on the relationships with the territories, with sacred the natural resources. The experience that I will narrate will be about the black community of Camaputia, located in the state of Maranhão in Northeast Brazil. The territory of Camaputiua is famous for their mysticism due to the relationship among the inhabitants with sacred supernatural beings called encantados. There relationship between people and territory is extremely influenced by ancestral developed through generations. I was taken for a walk through the territory of the communities by community leaders Cabeça. While we were walking, he pointed to different directions showing that each place within the territory belonged to each encantado. Although their history made perfect sense to me, I couldn't see the boundaries that he trying show me. The explanation for my limitation in seeing the boundaries as he described was epistemological, and I can't trespass. When we arrived at the sacred place he knelt and began to pray to the encantados, and he introduced me to them. Them a crystal-clear water began to pour from the ground toward us, the leaves of the trees around us began to sway with a calm from the north. Then he stood up smiling and said you are welcome. My body was shaking inside, we started walking back.

**The permeable nature of perception: moving between the sacred and secular along the henro michi**

Authors: L Jesse Rouse\*, *UNC Pembroke*

Topics: Cultural Geography, Religion and Belief Systems

Keywords: pilgrimage, experience, japan

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 11:10 AM / 12:25 PM

Room: Virtual 24

In our everyday movement we transition between different experiences, landscapes, and even perspectives on what is around us. Often, we are not conscious of these transitions and how they impact our encounters with the world. But that does not mean that we are unaffected by these changes. If we are in a moment of consideration or reflection, these changes can make themselves, and their impacts, known.

For example, the Shingon Buddhist pilgrimage around the island of Shikoku, Japan sees participants move almost seamlessly from the sacred to the secular as pilgrims (henro) visit temples and walk the streets and trails between the temples. The physical path is a near constant shift from sacred to secular, and the henro's thoughts and focus similarly shift between the secular and sacred. Part of the journey of the pilgrimage is linked to reflection of not only the temple spaces, but also of the routes in between temples which wind through countryside and city streets alike.

The experience of the Shikoku pilgrimage is only one example of the permeable nature of landscape and place, and our perceptions. Our shifting focus as we move through space means that our experience and perspective transition over time, and in this case that often means a scale of minutes, not weeks or years. This presentation will use the example of a personal account of the henro michi, or pilgrims' route, through Tokushima Prefecture to highlight the transitions in reflection, perspective, and experience while visiting temples and moving between them.

### **The production of a new spatial consciousness of the Sacred city of Anuradhapura in later-19th century British Colonial incorporation of Lanka**

Authors: Pradeep Sangapala\*, *University of Alberta*

Topics: Cultural Geography, Geographic Theory, Historical Geography

Keywords: Anuradhapura, Colonial Spatialization, Sacred Space, Spatial Fetishism, Sri Lanka

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/7/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 25

Anuradhapura, the ancient and sacred city in Sri Lanka, has multiple representations as a pilgrim place, archaeological site, and tourist destination. These representations are created and contested by multiple actors within specific political, cultural, and historical contexts. The modern constructions go back to the late-nineteenth century when the British colonial officers made Anuradhapura a significant place. The British produced new knowledge about Anuradhapura, which substantially reconceptualized the people's existing social relations with the place's historical and religious materials. Along with materializing the colonial order, the British familiarization of the place reproduces Anuradhapura's history, which was inconsistent with the native Sinhalese Buddhist consciousness.

This study explores how the British approached the then 'unknown' territory of Anuradhapura in the backdrop of the colonial incorporation of the island to the British Empire. It aims to understand how the British familiarized Anuradhapura using multiple spatial practices, such as surveying, cartography, and archaeology. The study's broader aim is to theorize the 19th-century transformation of Anuradhapura and understand the 'fetishization' of place from a 'social space' perspective.

I will consult archival materials such as British colonial administration reports, maps and statics of the colonial government, and correspondence between natives and colonial authority. Also, the study rests on two extensive field studies in Anuradhapura in 2017 and 2019. The research suggests that the British colonial order 'spatially fetishized' and 'objectified' Anuradhapura. It expands the contemporary scholarship of planning, geography, and social space in postcolonial Sri Lanka

## The Unruly Commodification of Ayahuasca

Authors: Laura Dev\*, *University of California - Merced*

Topics: Cultural and Political Ecology, Indigenous Peoples, Resources

Keywords: more-than-human, ayahuasca, Indigenous, commodification

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 17

A growing international economy structured around the use of ayahuasca, a psychedelic and sacred plant brew from the Amazon, has made ayahuasca tourism an important industry for rural Amazonian communities. In addition to the plant materials, ayahuasca entered global circulation accompanied by Indigenous ceremonial forms and cultural practices that constitute particular plant-human relations. Ayahuasca is thus an object of cultural density, laden with cultural value, significance, and practices (Owens 1999). I show, from fieldwork based in Shipibo communities of Peru, that the pathways this plant mixture takes through commodity networks is different than the paths taken by other forest products or even other psychoactive plants. Ayahuasca displays “unruliness” as a commodity (George 1999), in that it does not follow a smooth or linear trajectory of commodification, and has moved beyond its original intended use to become an object of international desire. While extractive and colonial histories constrain the commodification of ayahuasca and the ability for Shipibo communities to benefit, plant beings also engage in relations that shape their own pathways of commodification. Specifically, ayahuasca has particular ecological, social, and physiological relations that pose resistances to commodification. I argue that the unruly emergent properties in these relationships structure ayahuasca’s trajectory as a commodity and reveal ways that plant agency displays itself in various sites of commodity formation. The particularities of how ayahuasca relates with humans allow us to see more clearly how plant beings, and more-than-human actors more broadly, participate in both regional and global economies through tendencies to resist commodification.

## Identity, Social Interaction, and Networks in the Region of Wisconsin's Holyland

Authors: Beth Schlemper\*, *University of Toledo*, Kimberly A. Panozzo, *University of Toledo*

Topics: Cultural Geography, Qualitative Methods, Regional Geography

Keywords: Regions, Boundaries, Social Interaction, Social Network Analysis

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/11/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 35

This paper focuses on how a sense of identity, social interaction, and networks contribute to the construction and maintenance of regions. Using Wisconsin’s Holyland as a case study, we collected primary data from residents and utilized social network analysis (SNA) and GIS to determine how the region is defined by the people who live there. We conducted fieldwork in the region and implemented a survey through a stratified random sample of current residents. The questionnaire included questions related to the meaning of the term "Holyland" (asking for defining characteristics and what towns they believe are included in the region), the types of social and cultural activities that contribute to regional identity, and the frequency of their interactions in specific places within the region. While there appeared to be consensus regarding the key defining characteristics of Wisconsin’s Holyland on the surface, our data analysis revealed contrasting perceptions and definitions of the region. In addition, a network analysis of self-reported social interactions by residents highlighted a complex cultural geography with the existence of subregions within the region. Because social networks are

complex and multi-scalar in nature, they need to be understood within the historical context in which they were created and from the perspective of the people who live within them. As such, we used a mixed methods approach integrating qualitative analysis, SNA, and GIS to illustrate how social interaction and a sense of belonging contribute to regional identity and boundaries.

### Mapping the Holy Land

Authors: Bharath Ganesh Babu\*, *Valparaiso University*

Topics: Bible Geography, Cartography, Historical Geography

Keywords: Holy Land, Bible, Cartography, Open Access, Digital Maps, Maps, Atlas, Historical Maps

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/8/2021

Start / End Time: 9:35 AM / 10:50 AM

Room: Virtual 56

During the graphics and cartographic editing of volume 3 of Geography of the Holy Land, a need for high quality digital historical maps of the holy land became apparent. As we embark on a new project to develop a open access digital atlas of the Holy Land, this paper explores the current state and scope of maps of this region, data sources, limitations, and the vision for the open access atlas.

### Sanctuary and Insurgent Memory

Authors: Katharyne Mitchell\*, *University of California, Santa Cruz*

Topics: Political Geography, Cultural Geography, Immigration/Transnationalism

Keywords: sanctuary, memory, politics, feminist, insurgency

Session Type: Virtual Paper

Day: 4/9/2021

Start / End Time: 3:05 PM / 4:20 PM

Room: Virtual 42

Recently there has been a resurgence of sanctuary practices in contemporary struggles over migration. With the rise of far-right populism and the spread of white nationalist sentiment worldwide, refugees are increasingly at risk. To combat the violence of the present, and to carve out zones of safety, migrant activists have turned to the ethics, practices, and spaces of sanctuary. Sanctuary, which comes from the Latin *sancus*, meaning “holy,” has played a strategic role in political resistance for hundreds of years. Today the concept has returned as one of vital importance in the terrain of radical politics. I am interested in how this terrain relies on what I, along with my co-author Key MacFarlane, term “memories of insurgency,” where older concepts and practices (such as sanctuary) are used to transform the spaces and possibilities of the present. Drawing on the feminist perspectives of the geosocial and the global intimate, we look at the importance of sanctuary as a strategy for radical politics. As a concept and set of practices, sanctuary possesses the capacity to contest the existing “order” of things – to open up another world. This world is not found in the future. Spaces of sanctuary reach back to the past. They draw on and “recollect” older, alternative relationships and traditions of resistance. One of the main implications of this thinking is that in order to understand sanctuary and insurgency we need to reinvestigate questions of space and time.

## Minutes of GORABS Remote Business Meeting, April 2020

*The annual business meeting of the Geography of Religions and Belief Systems (GORABS) specialty group of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) was held virtually on Friday April 10, 2020, 2:00-3:00 PM (ET)*

*Present: Vincent Artman (VA), Chair; Max Samson (MS), Secretary & Vice-Chair; Nathan Burtch (NB), Assistant Secretary; David Rutherford (DR), Treasurer; David Butler (DB), Immediate Past Chair; Ed Davis (ED), Ordinary Board Member, Steven Silvern (SS), Ordinary Board Member; Samuel Nielson (SN), Graduate Student Ordinary Board Member*

*Minutes recorded by Max Samson.*

### I. Information pertaining to AAG 2020

- Introduction by VA: It is good to meet remotely. Had been talk of having online GORABS sessions at AAG but in the end we opted not to proceed with them this year. Would be a good idea to send out a short GORABS newsletter to keep people updated however. ED suggests that it may be good to make a link between COVID-19 and work relevant to GORABS, given the ways in which many religious organizations are responding. DB mentions that Stanley Brunn is even submitting an atlas on these issues, so he may want to contribute something. ED notes that there are debates about the religious right and a refusal to let the pandemic affect their rights to practice. Contributors will include VA, NB, ED, MS, SS).
- VA requests that a couple of people read the one Sopher application in the next few weeks. DB and ED volunteer to do so by May 1, 2020.
- Ken Foote is happy to provide the Annual Guest Lecture for next year in Seattle.
- VA will send some information to pass on to our webmaster regarding the canceled AAG.

### II. Online presence

- VA notes that the Facebook group attracts hits so there is some interest.
- NB queries whether the Assistant Secretary position should take responsibility for web duties as far as possible. VA says it is a possibility but does not want to provide too many obligations, especially at this stage, but it is certainly a good idea we can consider more for the next meeting.
- DB queries current status of website ([gorabsaag.org](http://gorabsaag.org)). Good progress has been made here, although we should add more in terms of publications as well as contact details. DB suggests adding who has won the Sopher and Zelinsky awards in the past. NB suggests adding executive board members' contact details and social media information.
- DR has records of previous award winners for the website and will provide a list.

### III. Looking to 2021

- Book on religion, place and sustainability by ED and SS is continuing to take shape and will have a section at the AAG in Seattle in 2021. Expected publication date is February 2021 but there has been some slowdown in publishing in general due to the pandemic.
- Annual report has already been compiled and sent to the necessary people.
- Next meeting can be tentatively scheduled for late June or early July 2020.

- Elections of board members will be postponed.
- ED suggests that it might be worth trying to encourage people who don't or can't normally attend in-person AAG meetings to engage in these remote meetings, especially if they live far from the USA. NB suggests we could encourage people with relevant research and interests to take part. VA will reach out to board members who have not participated frequently in an effort to get them involved.
- ED suggests that newsletter might be a good place to start an early CFP for papers and sessions, whether COVID-19 related or otherwise.
- DB wonders whether we could ask former speakers if they would be willing for recordings of their lectures to be added, possibly in a secure way, on the website. VA suggests uploading them to YouTube. NB adds that we may be able to ask future speakers in sessions if they would be willing to be recorded so that we can continue to build a repository (although DR notes that we will need permission in advance from the AAG as it has rules about this). SN suggests that a podcast would be another possibility.
- VA suggests 'notes from the field' in which scholars discuss their current fieldwork for 10-15 minutes, although we may have to explore the ethical issues.

#### **IV. Any Other Business**

There being no further business, the 2020 Annual GORABS Business Meeting closed at 3:00 p.m.