



SocrelNews

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Issue 7

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Welcome

Welcome to the seventh issue of SocrelNews. I would like to start this issue by thanking all the Committee Officers for their commitment to Socrel and their ongoing hard work: Josh Bullock, who is currently organising our next [PG and ECR Workshop](#) entitled *Religion and the Researcher*; Peter Gee, who does a sterling job at keeping the [Socrel membership](#) steady year on year; Liam Metcalf-White, who launched our social media pages and helped launch our [new website](#); Michael Munnik who put together another great issue of [SocrelNews](#); and Rachael Shillitoe whose organisational skills were once again invaluable at the last [BSA Annual Conference](#) and [Chair's Response Day](#), *Faiths & Civil Society: Building Bridges or Wall?* In this issue, Rachael offers an insight into the latter event, which also marked the return of Adam Dinham as Chair of Socrel, who was on parental leave. I am sure you will join me in congratulating Adam on the arrival of baby Zach!

Congratulations are also in order to Dr Dawn Llewellyn, who was recently awarded the [Seed Corn Funding](#) prize. As part of our ongoing effort to invest in its membership, every year Socrel invites applications for Seed Corn Funding to support the development of significant and innovative work in the Sociology of Religion. In this issue, Dawn talks about her project, entitled *An Ethnography of Churching: The Revival of a Ritual for Mothers in the Church of England*.

Last year, the prize was awarded to Dr Sarah-Jane Page, who will be presenting her preliminary findings at our annual conference, which will be held at the University of Strathclyde from 10-12 July 2018. The theme for this year's conference is *Religion and Education*. Registration is now open, so do [book your place](#)! We look forward to seeing many of you there, and in the meantime, follow us on Facebook or Twitter to keep the conversation going!

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I would like to end by thanking all of you, Socrel members, for your continuous support. When our webpage went down last year, many of you emailed us to offer help and guidance, which we greatly appreciated. It really is an honour to be the Convenor of such a supportive community. I hope you enjoy the newsletter, and thank you for being part of Socrel.

Céline Benoit (Convenor)
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Socrel Annual Conference 2018

The theme for the 2018 Socrel Annual Conference is **Religion and Education**. The conference will take place at University of Strathclyde from 10–12 July 2018. Though the deadline for the early bird rate has passed, **registration remains open until 25 June 2018**. <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/events/key-bsa-events/socrel-annual-conference/>

We are delighted to announce our plenary speakers:

- ✦ Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen, Australian National University
- ✦ Dr Anna Strhan, University of Kent
- ✦ Professor Yvette Taylor, University of Strathclyde Associate
- ✦ Professor Liam Gearon, University of Oxford
- ✦ Dr Mathew Guest, Durham University

Contemporary geopolitics has shone a light on the extent to which religious identity is used, and abused, as a marker of social identity in the face of fracturing publics. Education is increasingly expected to carry the load, traditionally ascribed to religions, of providing social contexts that bind communities. Because education is both formative and informative, it is often regarded as a key mechanism through which identities and publics can be shaped, and where subversive tendencies, often framed in terms of extremism, can be monitored. How should we understand the role of education in forming religious identities (and communities) alongside other complex dimensions of identity formation?

Questions of indoctrination, or of competing rights (between parents, children, religious groups and state authorities) are relevant in the current educational landscape, especially schooling. These questions frame religious identity in particular ways, displacing or excluding certain marginal religious voices. Beyond schooling, education entails formative processes from pre-school parenting to lifelong learning, from formal educational spaces, to more progressive and informal spaces. It is among these complex and contested settings that certain questions come to the fore: Are religious identities in tension with other aspects of identity, such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, etc? How do forms of social change affect the ways religious identities shape, and are shaped by, education? How do children and young people situate themselves in relation to religion? How can we best mediate the competing rights of children, parents, religious groups, and state authorities? In what ways do secularism and 'postsecularism' relate to education? What are the places for humanism, atheism, or non-religion within these debates? What opportunities are there for the inclusion of diversity of religious practice and identity in public

schooling? How does the way we frame religion and education affect the social problems that emerge from their relations?



Image: 'Strathclyde university' by Kosala Bandara, found on flickr.com; CC BY 2.0; <https://bit.ly/2KDKFRi>

Seed Corn Funding supports ethnography of Churching

Article by Michael Munnik

A study of new interpretations of an old ritual for mothers after childbirth has received funding support from Socrel.

Our annual Seed Corn Funding has been awarded to Dawn Llewellyn, senior lecturer in Christian studies and deputy director of the Institute of Gender Studies at the University of Chester. Llewellyn has been granted £5000 for her project, 'An Ethnography of Churching: The Revival of a Ritual for Mothers in the Church of England.'

Llewellyn says she learned of this revival from a graduate student at Chester, whom she was chatting with in the departmental copy room. 'She said, "My parish just brought back churching." And I kind of stopped dead in my tracks.' Llewellyn's impression at the time was that churching was an outdated ritual, seen with suspicion by many and even deemed misogynistic. Her grandmother and others of her generation might have been churched, "but it was pretty much a ritual that was forgotten."

The history of churching, Llewellyn says, is "loaded with meanings of purity, post-childbirth." The ritual took its cue from the Jewish tradition of presenting the newborn at the synagogue after ritual cleansing and a period of confinement. Historians are trying to show how the lived experience differed from scriptural injunctions.

"The meanings of purity might have been there in the official church teachings, but in practice – even in the 1600s, 1700s – the lived experience was quite different for women," says Llewellyn, noting it as a period of rest and a time to gather with other women.

In current times, there is a new emphasis on the mother's welfare. "It's a rite of thanksgiving for the woman surviving pregnancy. The Anglican Church doesn't have the language of purity that the ritual emerged from."

Something else Llewellyn hopes to observe is the hierarchical relationship between clergy and laity. She says the return of churching at this congregation emerged from the ground up: "Interestingly, they pretty much do it without the priest," though she notes that he has encouraged them to get on with it themselves. Space will also be an element of her study. The churching ritual happens in the church, and it's not very long – under half an hour. Llewellyn says the people involved are mindful of the presence of small children and account for it in the physical space. Afterwards, chairs are cleared away for tea and cakes; they don't disappear elsewhere for the social side of it, so the physical church building is used in a different way from the norm.

Most of all, Llewellyn wants to learn why these women wanted this ritual and what



Dawn Llewellyn, winner of this year's SocRel Seedcorn Funding. Image from University of Chester.

change it brings to them. With this exploratory seed corn money, she hopes to learn how widespread it is in Britain, either in Anglican circles, other Christian denominations, or even other faith traditions. “We know from other works in the sociology of religion that women are engaged in home rituals.” As examples, Llewellyn cites the Red Tent Movement and Sarah Harvey’s recent PhD work at the University of Kent on how women prepare for childbirth with family and friends.

The project fits with what Llewellyn calls her “general obsession with motherhood and childbirth and all things maternal.” Her past work has concerned how women narrate their reproductive choices in church contexts. After some conference talks and journal articles, a book on the subject is now under contract with Bloomsbury.

“If I had pots of money,” Llewellyn says, “I would like to interview couples from across Abrahamic traditions about their experiences of childlessness – whether that’s involuntary or by choice.” In the meantime, the seed corn funding from Socrel enables her to get back to ethnographic research and pick up on what was an incidental clue about the reinterpretation of an old tradition.

“It’s important that Socrel has these kinds of opportunities available, especially to someone like me who is not quite mid-career but early career. So to have that amount of money that just sets you on the funding ladder is extremely valuable.”

Building Bridges or Walls? Socrel Chair’s Response Day

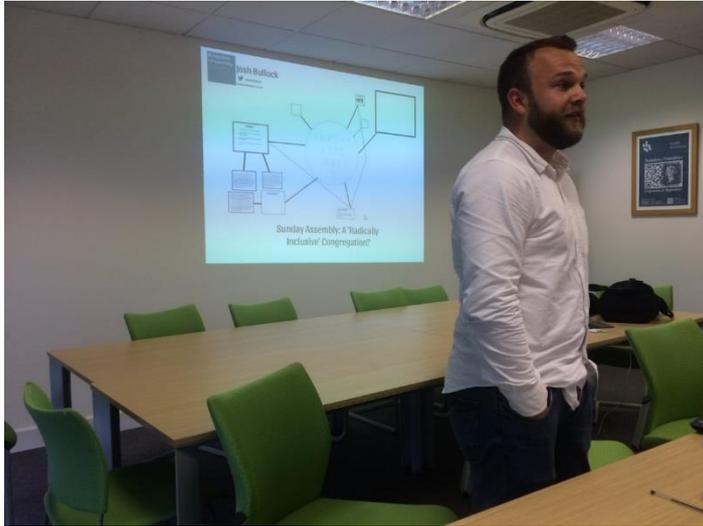
Article by Rachael Shillitoe

This year’s Socrel Chair’s Response Day, *Faiths & Civil Society: Building Bridges or Walls?*, held on 2 May 2018, sought to address faith-based engagement with civil society issues. With the various twists and turns of 2016 and 2017, the response day focused on how religion in the public sphere responds to these shifts in politics and society and how faith-based organisations can form part of new social movements, activism, digital spaces, the provision of services to meet need, critical voices, and emerging explorations of a new ‘common good’.

The day kicked off with a presentation from one of our keynote speakers, Dan DeHanas (Kings College London). DeHanas reflected on populism in relation to religion and drew on examples from Donald Trump’s presidency in America to Narendra Modi’s premiership in India, considering how religion can be used as a tool within such populist rhetoric. DeHanas’s paper explored the more regressive elements of how religion can be used and featured within such discourse to further and bolster ideas of the ‘other’ and in many cases, anti-Islamic prejudices. Religion in this way can paint the picture of the ‘other’ and the kinds of cultures that can be treasured in a society.

We then heard from Laura Jones, who presented her ethnographic research on ‘Iftar Together’. Jones argued that Iftar Together acts as a subaltern counter public in response to misconceptions, stereotypes and anti-Islamic discourse. In this way, the event was both responsive and resistant, on the one hand wanting to build bridges with wider civil society and on the other hand drawing lines between the negative perceptions about Islam.

Gwyneth Lonergan (University of Sheffield) and Emma Tomalin (Leeds University), presented their research on Faith Based Organisations' involvement in anti-trafficking campaigns and programmes. Focusing on questions of professional identity, Lonergan and Tomalin explored how some FBOs are forced to professionalise in order to secure contracts and partnerships with various funders, stakeholders and organisations. This process of professionalisation raises subsequent questions about the role of religion in FBOs and the secularising effects and dynamics of working in civil society and with non-faith organisations.



Josh Bullock on the Sunday Assembly. Image by Rachael Shillitoe

We also heard from Josh Bullock (Kingston University) about his PhD research on The Sunday Assembly. The Sunday Assembly is a secular congregation that celebrates life, with the motto: 'Live Better, Help Often and Wonder More.' Drawing upon a 15-month ethnographic study of the London Sunday Assembly, Bullock focused particular attention on the apolitical stance of his participants and who the Sunday Assembly are helping when they 'help often'. Bullock found that this help is often about helping congregants rather than others and as such, is more

inward-facing than outward: focusing on helping people to belong. Bullock also found that the congregation was relatively homogenous, being made up of mainly white middle class 30-year olds, and questioned the extent to which the Sunday Assembly is radically inclusive, given to the lack of diversity among the congregation studied.

Chris Baker (Goldsmiths), concluded our event by providing the second keynote of the day, reflecting on 'Religion and politics in a post disenchantment age'. Baker considered the current 'deformalisation' of religion and the secular in relation to globalisation, neoliberalism and digital capitalism, and then turned to ideas of re-enchantment and authenticity as ways to explain the changing religious and political landscape. Reflecting on how the 'iron cage' that Max Weber identified has been swapped for a gilded cage, Baker explored how conditions of alienation and disenchantment are reinforced through conditions of austerity. In response to this, Baker contends that a sense and desire for authenticity and re-enchantment emerges. Complementing DeHanas's keynote at the start of the day, Baker's paper provided a nice balance to the question of faith in civil society by exploring the more progressive elements of this turn and what possibilities and opportunities lie ahead. Drawing on Lori Beaman's thinking on 'deep equality', Baker drew particular attention to the everyday and people's daily micro practices as sites for social action and change.

The response day was a great success, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all contributors and speakers, and in particular to Céline Benoit and Adam Dinham for their help in organising the day.

Socrel Member Interviews



Sophie Gilliat-Ray
Professor in Religious and Theological Studies
Director, Centre for the Study of Islam in the
UK
Cardiff University

With the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK, you've tried to de-emphasise questions of terrorism and radicalisation, looking at questions of everyday lived religion instead. What was behind that decision?

I've been researching Islam and Muslims in Britain for the best part of 25 years (!), long before it became 'fashionable', and long before Muslim communities began to be under such intense scrutiny. As a result of the friendships and relationships that I have formed with British Muslims across this period of time, I've become aware of the potential disconnect between academic and political interests, and the 'everyday' interests of Muslims themselves.

I am committed to research that works from the 'bottom-up', and not the 'top-down', and I believe that our research priorities should be shaped in dialogue with Muslim communities. There are so many things about Muslim communities that are interesting, but unknown. For example, who has really explored in any depth the significance of fasting for British Muslims (since at the time of writing we are in the month of Ramadan!) and the ways in which they manage their fasting practices amid their everyday working and family lives? These may not be especially exciting, high-impact, 'fundable' topics, but if we are interested in Muslim spirituality in the contemporary world, then I believe we should remain open to exploration of these questions, and situate our findings within a broad corpus of academic knowledge in the field of 'British Muslim Studies'.

Having said all that, I am absolutely alert to the challenges of radicalisation and terrorism, and like everyone else, I am horrified by the way in which these threats impact on Muslim communities. There is clear research evidence that incidents of Islamophobia 'spike' following terrorist incidents. I'm of course interested in these matters and the impact they have 'on the ground', but I believe that exploring these issues should be part and parcel of a much broader academic project. I also think that by now, there are some centres of excellence for the study of terrorism and radicalisation, and that colleagues in these fields are now better placed to consider these issues.

What is the research that is currently keeping you going?

Perhaps like many Socrel members, I've got a number of research 'irons in the fire' at the moment! I'm working on a couple of research grant applications with my colleague, Dr Riyaz Timol. We are interested in issues surrounding the careers and employability of students in British Islamic seminaries (darul uloom) and I'm keen to find out more about the impact of the PSHCE curriculum within and outside these institutions. Last year, I was working with colleagues from the Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies at Exeter University, and Bristol University, on a successful 'GW4' project about the work of Islamic legal professionals in Britain (people who often carry the title 'mufti'). Unfortunately, a large follow-on grant application submitted to the AHRC (on which we sweated for months!) has just been turned down, so we are currently revising it for re-submission elsewhere. So, for all you early-career researchers out there, rejections are, I'm sorry to say, a fact of academic life. One just has to get up again, brush oneself down and carry on, without becoming terminally disheartened!

In terms of publications, I've got four 'on the go' at the moment. One is about the distinctive (or not!) features of Welsh Muslim identity. Another is about the learning of Islam 'online' via MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). The Islam-UK Centre developed Cardiff University's first MOOC in 2014, called 'Muslims in Britain: Changes and Challenges', and it has run each year since. We have reached over 15,000 people through this programme, and along the way, collected a great deal of qualitative and quantitative data that is rich for analysis!

I am giving a keynote paper at a workshop at the University of Copenhagen as part of a Danish research programme on 'The Power of the Mosque'. I've offered to speak about the changing role of mosques and Muslim religious leadership in the UK, and I hope to write up my presentation into a journal article in due course. A paper that I am particularly excited about at the moment – and which will get its first 'airing' at the Socrel conference in July – is entitled: 'Sleeping on the Job: dreaming, ethnography and fieldwork'. I've had too many sleepless nights on account of my research to leave this bit of methodological virgin territory unexplored!

That's plenty, but what else is keeping you busy?

Beyond the day-job, I am in training for a major charity bike ride in India in November this year, organised by Dream Challenges. I am cycling between the Taj Mahal and Jaipur for 'Women V Cancer', a charity that supports women facing ovarian, breast, and cervical cancers. All the women I've met who are training for this challenge have 'a story' that is driving their commitment to fundraising. Last year, I successfully completed the 65-mile 'Ride the Night' challenge, cycling overnight through London with about 3,500 other women dressed in pink! I'm doing the RTN challenge again this year, next week in fact, so I had better not eat too much food in Denmark next week! If you feel like sponsoring me, I have a JustGiving page, where I periodically post updates on my training progress. You will see a picture on my page of one such training ride, undertaken with my friends Jim Beckford and Bob Jackson last summer (I've been in training for a while!), with a very necessary pit-stop in Coventry to see Eleanor Nesbitt. The most regular communications that I now have with Jim are about bikes, and we regularly swap news about biking on the cycling social media app 'Strava'. I will be really appreciative of any donation you can make. <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Sophie-Gilliat-Ray>



*Mathew Guest
Reader in the Sociology of Religion
Durham University
Keynote speaker at Socrel Annual Conference
2018*

University campuses are not just where you lecture and keep your office. They are also where you do your fieldwork. What effect has studying the campus done for your relationship to it as a workplace?

I suppose it's drawn my attention to aspects of campus life that had escaped me before, and enriched my engagement with it as a consequence. I've always enjoyed spending time on university campuses as they are such fascinating social spaces; they are even more so now. Researching campuses sociologically has also changed how I view the formal processes of university business, making much more visible the assumptions that underpin crucial decisions and the norms that govern patterns in the distribution of authority and power. The latter is especially interesting with respect to gender, and it has only been through researching universities alongside regular conversations with female colleagues that I have come to an appreciation of how radically gendered universities are. Departments of Theology and Religion – like my own – face their own distinct challenges in this respect, as they are historically and socially informed by religious norms, some of which reflect traditional understandings of gender roles. I think this reminds us of the moral and political dimension of scholarship, including the sociology of religion. It has a role not just in studying religious identities in wider social contexts, but in illuminating reflexively our own scholarly and professional environments. We call out inequality and injustice by using the tools of our trade.

You began your research career studying Christianity, and you've helped write a book on student Christianity. Your latest project, however, looks at Islam on campus. What have you had to learn in order to prepare for this transition?

Quite a bit, but I have benefited from working with excellent colleagues who know a lot more about Islam than I do. It's been a fascinating experience. I'd had an interest in Islam for some time and was familiar with some of the scholarship on Islam in Britain, but there's no substitute for working with scholars of Islam and learning from them directly. I've worked on several collaborative projects, and each one presents new opportunities and challenges, but this one has stretched my thinking more than any other. Researching the ways in which the lives of Muslims are shaped by wider perceptions of their status as a religious minority raises all sorts of questions about the cultural context of contemporary Britain. Religious tolerance has

become a bit of an empty cliché with western liberal democracies like our own, and we often cite the words without unpacking what they mean and how they work out in practice. Pursuing a project that examines how religious identities are constructed and negotiated both in light of those embodying those identities *and* those agents and contexts with whom they negotiate, enables us to get a much clearer sense of how religion functions as a discursive phenomenon. It also exposes barriers to understanding that might have otherwise remained invisible or obscured to a non-Muslim observer.

What insights from your work on Christianity give you an advantage in studying the Islamic tradition?

There's always something important to be gained from comparative research, as the distinctive features of a single case are brought to light more vividly in contrast with something different. That's certainly been the case as I've reflected on the current project in light of past research into Christian students. One of the most striking trends myself and my colleagues observed among Christians at university had to do with the destabilisation of Christianity as a category. Christian students assumed a great deal of freedom in ascribing meanings to their identities as Christians. True, some subscribed to fairly scripted accounts of their Christian identity – especially those shaped by the evangelical tradition – but the majority did not, and the spectrum of accounts of what it means to be a Christian suggested both an unsettling of Christianity as an identity resource, and a corresponding empowerment among those individuals who feel enabled to invest a variety of virtues, values and beliefs in this category. In stark contrast, Muslims students appear to have their experience framed largely by attempts by others to define their Muslim identity for them. Much of this has to do with securitisation, and attempts by the British state to address perceived issues of 'radicalisation' by absorbing 'good Islam' into a preconceived model of liberal democratic civility. This then seeps into the life of public bodies – like universities – who find themselves implementing the government's Prevent Strategy. But it also is bound up in equality and diversity discourse, which tends to assume a view from nowhere and construct minority identities as objects of social concern within a broader narrative of liberal tolerance. The media also plays a major part of course, and while Christianity is commonly treated by the press with indifference (unless sexual scandal is involved), Islam has emerged as a popular focus of suspicion or intrigue, depending on one's perspective. Using student life as a lens through which to reflect on broader social contexts, it is possible to see Christianity retreating from public interest and hence being freed from the meanings that previously defined it, while Muslims experience the opposite: increased public interest and a corresponding sense of being bound by the projected definitions of others.

You're speaking this summer at the Socrel annual conference at Strathclyde, which focuses on religion and education. What's the focus of your message?

I'll be bringing together research I've pursued over the past ten years or so in reflecting on how religious identities inhabit the social spaces of higher education. One aspect of this is about the sociology of institutions, which I feel has been neglected within the sociology of religion over recent decades. We've become deeply interested in individuals and the networks that connect them, and for good reasons to do with the conditions of late modernity. In the past, social science sometimes foregrounded organisations and as a consequence over-estimated their boundaries

and took insufficient account of individual agency. But I wonder whether we have gone too far in the opposite direction, and universities offer us a fascinating example of how institutions frame religious identities within a neo-liberal context, not in a deterministic sense, but in a way that illuminates relationships between the state, educational processes and the religious lives of individuals. Universities have very permeable boundaries, but that in itself tells us something important about the society in which we live, and the capacity of institutions to shape and limit the ways in which religion is negotiated within public spaces. I look forward to discussing this with fellow delegates at the Strathclyde conference in July.



*Matthew Vince
PhD Candidate in Sociology of Islam and
Education
Cardiff University*

What is your PhD about?

My doctoral research explores the identities and experiences of “Muslim Religious Education (RE) teachers” who work in secondary state school in England. I put “Muslim RE teachers” in quotations because it has turned out these participants hated the term! So much of my thesis is unpacking this relationship, considering how their personal faith relates to their work as teachers of non-confessional, “secular” RE. I find it quite striking that Muslim teachers have largely been left out of discussions surrounding Muslims in education. They are really interesting because they occupy this messy, seemingly paradoxical intersection between their faith – as politicised, racialised Muslims working in a non-confessional, “secular” role – and their role as educators – complicit in enacting the kind of educational policy that has been criticised for securitising Muslims, such as Prevent and Fundamental British Values (FBVs). What’s really interesting is how these teachers make their faith fit with their work, and vice versa, in a way that suggests a remarkable degree of alignment between these two aspects of their identity. This ‘lived religions’ approach to the pragmatic ways these Muslims are engaging with their educational context, I hope, will cast a new perspective on the experiences of Muslims in state education more widely.

You organised a symposium on Islam and education in Britain in January. What were some of the key themes that emerged from that event?

From the feedback, one of the main themes attendees took away was at how diverse the picture of “Islam and education in Britain” is. The major driver for the symposium was to get a bunch of people together who have looked at Muslims in a variety of educational settings, as there seems to be very little conversation between these contexts (see Alison Scott-Baumann and Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor, 2015). It was fascinating to see the similarity and differences between them, and a reminder of the sheer diversity of ways Islam, through Muslims, intersects with the educational landscape of Britain. We had presentations from Muslim and non-Muslim schools, primary up to University, grassroots educational initiatives, and from the views of teachers too, across England, Scotland, and Wales. This helped to foster discussion of the ways in which Muslims are engaging with these institutions at different levels, creating new ones, and seeing where there are successes as well as barriers, and what can be translated between these institutions.

Following on from the theme of diversity, myself and Haroon Sidat (conference organisers) also wanted to have discussions beyond Prevent. I think there is this sense at the moment that the only way you can talk about Muslims is in reference to Prevent and Fundamental British Values, particularly in terms of state education. Whilst this is very important work, there are a plethora of other ways in which Islam and education are coming together on a daily basis, but these conversations are, at the moment, seemingly hidden from scholarly view. Papers exploring how Islamic psychology could be used to support Muslim students, or how halaqa circles blend both traditionally Islamic and modern pedagogy, really drew attention to this. Again, many of the attendees commented at how refreshing the day was because of these different foci.

This summer, Socrel is discussing religion and education at its annual conference. How unique do you think the circumstances are of Islam and education – what can scholars looking at other traditions learn from Muslim experiences?

There is a uniqueness in that Muslims are subject to politicisation and racialisation that other faith identities may not be subject to, but there are certainly other, more implicit convergences and conflicts that resonate. I think these hidden convergences are really important for scholars to recognise, and where many parallels can be drawn between those of different faiths. In my own research, the experiences of Christian RE teachers has been vital to unpicking the many ways in which faith “fits” with work.

News from our Members

- ✚ INFORM is moving from LSE to King's College, London. The new email address is inform@kcl.ac.uk and the new telephone number will be 0207 848 1132. The website will stay the same – <http://inform.ac/>– and the new postal address will be: INFORM, c/o Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies, Virginia Woolf Building, 22 Kingsway, London WC2B 6LE. Anyone wishing to receive information about forthcoming seminars should drop a line to inform@kcl.ac.uk to make sure they are on the mailing list.
- ✚ Some of the earliest and most prestigious universities around the world are rooted in religious tradition. And yet, modern universities, particularly in the West, are typically characterised by traditions of knowledge production that are often conceived as at odds with religious commitment. Religion and Secularism on Campus is the final event of the Re/presenting Islam on Campus project - a three-year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) that explores the complexities of lived experience, representation and perception of Islam on UK university and higher education campuses. The event takes place 6th and 7th September 2018 at SOAS, University of London. <https://www.soas.ac.uk/representingislamonthecampus/conference/>
- ✚ Routledge will publish *Materiality and the Study of Religion* in paperback this month. The volume, edited by Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzie, was first published in 2017 and gathers contributions from the Sacrel Annual Conference 2013 at Durham University, including an opening chapter from David Morgan and an afterword from Manuel Vásquez. <https://www.routledge.com/Materiality-and-the-Study-of-Religion-The-Stuff-of-the-Sacred/Hutchings-McKenzie/p/book/9781472477835>
- ✚ There is a new journal for research on religion on the market: The Journal for Religion, Society and Politics (ZRGP) explores the relationship between religion/religiosity and societal and political arrangements, encounters, and conflicts. The journal focuses on religion as a multidimensional concept beyond denominational attachment – religion is viewed broadly and inclusively comprising of religious beliefs, practices, religious groups, organisations, congregations, as well as occupational areas, hierarchical relationships, societal norm and social teachings. Against the background of immense religious pluralisation, old and new constellations of religions and governments, the religion-related discourses and struggles generate unique challenges for social research. The journal publishes original contributions addressing these challenges in substantial ways aiming at highlighting new developments in sociological theory, and new methodological innovations.

Editors invite submissions of original articles from a social science perspective. The location of publication is in Germany and articles can be submitted both in German or English language. The ZRGP is a double blind peer-reviewed and CNKI listed journal published by Springer and is edited by Gert Pickel (University of Leipzig) and Annette Schnabel (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf). Visit the journal website:

<https://www.springer.com/social+sciences/sociology/journal/41682>

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