

Religion(s) and Power(s)

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Lithuanian Society for
the Study of Religions



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**The program of the Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions international conference co-organized with Latvian Society for the Study of Religions and Estonian Society for the Study of Religions
“Religion(s) and Power(s)”**

Vytautas Magnus University, Putvinskio str. 23, Kaunas, Lithuania
October 5-6, 2017

Opening plenary session

Chair: Milda Ališauskienė

Welcoming speech. Ineta Dabašinskienė, vice-rector, Vytautas Magnus University.

Welcoming speech. Milda Ališauskienė, president of Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions.

Plenary lecture. Kathleen M. Moore, University of California Santa Barbara, USA

The Re-Turn of Religion: Why Publics Matter

The Re-Turn of Religion: Why Publics Matter

Kathleen M. Moore

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Abstract

Religious engagement has returned to center stage in social life, marking personal expression and political commitment in new ways. Religious and national identities intersect, influence and impact each other as they are inflected by the politics of race and secularization. As globalizing processes have proliferated, people have moved increasingly across borders and boundaries, prompted by environmental and political events, throwing into the public sphere contestations around the intersections of religious affiliation and expression, ethnoracial identification, national culture and social expectation. Religious identities are connected in new ways to complicated attachments to new sites of habitation and not altogether departed histories, affiliations and commitments. This presentation will explore how sharp shifts at the interface of religious and political lives raise questions about cohabiting across political-religious commitments, their cultural expression, and social management.

1st parallel session

“Religions and Identities”

Chair: Kathleen M. Moore

Interaction between esotericism and the radical right: Gender issues

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Abstract

The gender issues figure prominently in the interaction between esotericism and the right-wing radicalism. In fact, esotericism stands out in terms of the number of females who played and still play a leading role both from the organizational and doctrinal point of view. In the case of Theosophy, which was established by Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), the key religious authority was assigned to a woman. The ideas of Blavatsky were taken up by the next-generation theosophists, including Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) and Helena Roerich (1879–1955), who developed a new form of Theosophy – Agni Yoga/Living Ethics. With the collapse of the Soviet regime, Latvia's

followers of Roerich gained legal status in 1988 as the Latvian Roerich Society. Later the movement split according to geopolitical orientation, and this explains the existence currently of a number of groups of Roerich followers in Latvia. Aivars Garda's group, which is attracting radicals of the right, strives for political power in Latvia. A theosophist and publisher of esoteric literature Garda is a Chairperson at the Latvian National Front since 2001. Firstly, the presentation will address the interrelationship between esotericism (Theosophy) and politics in case of Garda group. Secondly, the paper will discuss the role of females in the Latvian National Front: how power is distributed and shared within group between genders; what are the determinant factors for female dominance in the group; how does gender matter for group activities; what are gender responsibilities in the Latvian National Front?

Sisters in the Troubles

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Abstract

The paper would present and discuss filmed extracts from a witness seminar project devoted to exploring the experiences of women of faith during the Northern Ireland conflict. The project, which is ongoing, explored the challenges confronting female Christians living and working at the grass roots level in the communities most impacted by the Troubles. The participants to date have been mainly Roman Catholic sisters brought together to discuss with one another their experiences of the conflict. The project is collaborative and interdisciplinary.

Witness testimony has a vital role in contributing to the academic integrity required for a comprehensive understanding of the period in question, especially the experiences of women of faith. Openness to and respect for different experiences and views arising from diverse vantage points are imperative for this research. The format is that of a conversation that evolves naturally to bring out personal and shared recollections, the nuances of different memories and perspectives. The outcome has been a remarkable and largely untold story of courage and compassion that brings to life an unknown dimension in the history of the Troubles and the Church and the experience of women in both.

The value of the witness seminar is that it complements and enriches academic data and archives by drawing on the indispensable knowledge and experiences of those who were actively involved with church activities in the recent past. Witness testimony is of exceptional value in addressing major questions essential to a full understanding of the very complex demands placed on all people of faith, within and without the Churches. As well as addressing the larger questions, witness testimony is essential for addressing the more personal questions that highlight the experiences and contributions of individuals whose voices all too often remain unrecorded and undocumented in terms of archival evidence, which in many instances means subsequent interpretations of the latter can hence be misleading. Without witness testimony, individual actions and initiatives can 'perish as though they had never been,' detracting from full knowledge and understanding and the deeper insights they provide.

Sharing the power: priest, parent, professional

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Abstract

There are certain public spaces that are shared between religious and secular. This division can be seen in Durkheimian perspective as a dichotomy, but today more commonly we see how religious and secular intertwined and influence each other.

One of such spaces is contemporary hospital. As for post-Soviet Russia, priests' access to such public institutions like schools, army or hospitals is rather a recent development. Looking at the case of children hospital we can see that three sources of authority coexist there: parents, priests and other religious experts, and medical staff.

How in this case is authority shared and delegated? With a case of one hospital in Moscow we will see the different patterns with churched and agnostic parents and describe the role of faith and religious practices from the perspective of priests and medical professionals.

Kingship, Prophecy, and Priesthood: Divine Kinship and Power in Ancient Israel

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Abstract

The departure point of this paper are kings Saul and David as described in the two Books of Samuel. First Saul and then David were reportedly both anointed by the prophet Samuel as kings over ancient Israel at the divine order. However, both of them had also their own followers who acclaimed them kings – apparently independently and without knowing their leaders had already received divine mandate. However, the Israelites lost their national kingship: at first, the Northern (Israelite) kingdom fell in 722 BCE, while the Southern (Judean) kingdom fell in 587 BCE. After the return from the Babylonian exile, under the Persian dominion, the sacred anointment was the sole prerogative of the Aaronide high priest who eventually became the sole national leader of the post-exilic Judean community. The research focus of this paper is the issue regarding the characteristics, importance and the function of the sacred anointment as means of expression of the divine power on the one hand, and political, military, religious and legislation control of the anointed over his fellow subjects, on the other. The investigation shall proceed by making comparison with the literature from the Ancient Near East which is more or less both similar and contemporary to the biblical events implied in the stories under discussion. In this context, particular emphasis will be given to the so-called 'Law of the King' in the Book of Deuteronomy 17, in comparison with other ANE legislations regarding the kingship.

The interpretation of the migration crisis as a securitization issue following the discourse of a religious and ethnic conflict in the Hungarian public sphere

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Abstract

In the study of ethnic and religious (or both) conflicts academics defined three main causes which serves as explanations of the conflict: primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism or social constructivism – however there are rather idealtypes and in reality they appear as overlapping categories.

Based on my research I would claim that the recent refugee crisis – in Hungary the so called migration crisis - and its changing interpretation since its beginning in 2016 can be understood through those categories where the crisis is presented also as a religious and ethnic conflict. In my research I am focusing on the role of religion in the interpretation of the crisis in the Hungarian

public sphere: interpretation of politics and the media – media is considered to be an actor and not a mediator – as well as the various interpretations of different major religious organizations.

I analyze the speeches and interviews with political and religious leaders as well as the relevant articles in the most important offline newspapers and online portals in Hungary with content and discourse analysis. I intend to enhance not only the different interpretation of migration, but the different interpretations of religion by those actors shaping the image of migration as conflict, and migrants in many cases as threats, referring to a very broad definitions of religion as faith, culture, tradition, worldview, power, part of civilization or even civilization as such.

2nd parallel session

“Cults”, Anti-Cultists, and Power in Russia. Anti-Extremism Laws and the Case of the Church of Scientology”

Chair: Donatas Glodenis

Discussant: PierLuigi Zoccatelli, Pontifical Salesian University, Italy

A New Definition of “Extremism” in Russia: From the Jehovah’s Witnesses to the Church of Scientology

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Abstract

The paper discusses the re-definition of the notion of “extremism” in Russia (originally introduced to allow quick action against extreme Islamic fundamentalist organizations) to outlaw unpopular non-Islamic religious minorities, and the role in this re-definition of the anti-cult movement, the Orthodox Church, the judiciary, and the government. In the case leading to the “liquidation” of the Jehovah’s Witnesses three tests of “extremism” were proposed. The first was “exclusiveness,” defining as extremist any religious organization that claims to offer a unique way to salvation and implies, even without saying it explicitly, that the other religions (including the Russian Orthodox Church) are not good enough. The second is “breaking the families,” i.e. creating situations where one member of the family joins or leaves the religion while others don’t, thus favoring familial disagreements and divorces. The third is “violating the human dignity of ex-members,” by harshly criticizing them and inciting members to cease relationships with those who have left the group. In 2017, the same tests were applied against the Church of Scientology in an endeavor to “liquidate” it as well. The paper examines in which context this semantic, cultural, and legal evolution became possible, and discusses its problematic nature in view of international conventions on religious liberty.

The Provisions against Religious Extremism as an Instrument for Outlawing Religious Minorities in Russia: The Case of the Church of Scientology

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Abstract

The attempt to outlaw the Church of Scientology in Russia started in 2016. The basic idea behind it was the claim that Scientology was not a religion. It went against the fact that the religious essence of Scientology was argued by religious scholars (including Bryan Wilson and J. Gordon Melton) and by courts of law throughout the world. In spite of expert opinions by Russian scholars (Nicolai

Shaburov, Ekaterina Elbakyan, and others), the court decided in favor of shutting down the Church of Scientology in Russia. However, Scientology went on to function while its appeal to the European Court of Human Rights was pending. In 2017, the government decided to use another instrument, article 282 against the threat of religious extremism. This article of Russian Criminal Code, as amended in 2006, is formulated so vaguely that it can be used practically against any religious organization the government wants to outlaw. The best example of its “effectiveness” was outlawing of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2017. Russian authorities now try to apply the case law about the Jehovah’s Witnesses to the Church of Scientology.

3rd parallel session
“Religion, Politics and Sustainable Development”
Chair: Agita Misane

Religion and the biopower. The Roman-Catholic Church and legitimation of in vitro fertilization. Analysis of selected Polish opinion magazines (2005-2015)

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Abstract

From the perspective of biopower, the reproduction and reproductive techniques are a field, rights to which are currently claimed by various institutions. It is no surprise therefore, that in the case of in vitro fertilization the social discourse related to justification of taken positions is so nuanced and lively.

Controversial issues concerning IVF are a subject of fierce public debate in many countries, including Poland. The position of the Roman-Catholic Church, unchanged for years, constitutes a significant voice in this discussion. Playing a vital role in the society, the Church is a source of justifications proposed in the media discourse. Legitimation and delegitimations of IVF techniques may originate from religion, as well as other sources. The fundamental question here is: “Who has the power to rule over life?”. In Poland, the dispute about in vitro fertilization revolves around conflicting definitions of the sources, limits and subject of this power over life.

This presentation constitutes an attempt to answer the questions about – 1) How the biopower manifests in legitimations and delegitimations of stances on IVF, and 2) What biopower subjects appear in the public debate on in vitro treatment in Poland – are they directly connected with religion or do they criticize religion?

A typology of legitimacy was developed based on modified Theo van Leuween’s model of legitimation strategies (2007).

Qualitative study, namely analysis of the content of selected opinion magazines i.e. “Gosc Niedzielny”, “Polityka”, Tygodnik Powszechny”, “Przegląd”, “Do Rzeczy” and “W sieci”, constitutes grounds for the presented results. The study covered years 2005 to 2015.

Between submission and subversion: sangha and its political entanglements in post-Soviet Buryat Buddhism

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Abstract

Buryatia (Russian Federation) is the northernmost Buddhist region, where Vajrayana Buddhism exists in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious environment. Buddhism has been widespread there since

mid-17th century, and the monastery network was expanding gradually until it was destroyed by the Soviets in the 1930s. Since the 1990s, there has been a revival of Buddhism in Buryatia, and a mass rebuilding of monasteries as well as institutional structures.

As elsewhere in the post-Soviet region, religion is seen in Buryatia as part of one's ethnic identity. In a multi-ethnic republic in increasingly centralised Russia, however, it is also inevitably tied with political matters. The Buddhist leaders, greatly respected and influential, openly criticise some local politicians and publicly support others, thus mixing in local politics. In relation to the federal government, however, lamas show their loyalty, which provides both sides legitimacy in the eyes of the laity. Indeed, the president of Russia is considered among Buryat Buddhists an incarnation of the deity White Tara, which suggests both submission to the central power and its subversion by appropriation. While the local Buddhist administration has played an important role of mediator to the imperial and later federal powers, the Buryat sangha is not a homogenous unit. Instead, various individuals and groups within it have pursued own political projects throughout history, such as a short-lived Buddhist theocratic state within Buryatia or a pan-Mongolist attempt of state-building in the early 20th century.

This paper explores the role of the sangha and its political entanglements in Buryatia today and historically, touching upon the local understandings of the relationship between politics and religion. The paper is based on one-year long ethnographic fieldwork in Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia, in 2015-2016.

Islam and the challenges of sustainable development

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Abstract

For long decades religions were ignored in the developmental discourse, which was strongly dominated by the modernisation paradigm. Only recently religion has been gaining recognition as a powerful, dynamic and heterogeneous force in the field of global development. The paper focuses on the ways Islamic leaders and activists engage in the discourse and practice of sustainable development. In particular, it examines recent initiatives, such as the The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change which was adopted by over 60 Muslim leaders from many corners of the world in August 2015 during the summit in Istanbul, and the engagement of the Organisation of Islamic Conference with the UN sustainable development agenda (e.g., OIC Program of Action for the next decade (2016-2025)). The discourses will be analyzed in the context of wider debates in the Islamic world on the search for more sustainable solutions, including growing environmental concerns.

"[...] by their fruits ye shall know them": Religious discourses and practices, and their relation to development indicators in Europe and the Americas (case studies: Switzerland, Cuba, Colombia, Uruguay)

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Abstract

*"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.
Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"*

*Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.
(Matthew 7, 15–20. King James Bible).*

High corruption and insecurity (homicides) rates are often common denominators in countries of a strong Roman Catholic tradition in the Americas.

Honduras and Venezuela are the best examples of this phenomenon. They show the highest population proportion of Roman Catholics (CIA 2015) and the concurrent highest homicide and corruption rates.

This contrasts with countries of Protestant background, which often have the lowest corruption and homicide rates in the Americas and Europe.

The latter countries also show higher levels of education, and in general, social progress and competitiveness. They are frequently associated with the label of “industrialized or developed” countries, such as Germany, UK, or the United States.

Jesus explained the parable “[...] **by their fruits ye shall know them**”, thousands of years ago referring to the fruits of truth and false prophets. This research might prove that this parable could be applied to institutions, values and the development of societies today. It addresses the following **research question**:

How does the Roman Catholic tradition influences the development indicators of a country, indicators such as inequality, corruption, homicides, and competitiveness, in comparison to Protestant tradition?”

To approach this phenomenon, it is necessary to draw upon a comprehensive methodological framework divided in different epistemological approaches (Mixed Methods). The first one intends to answer the research question through a correlation analysis model and time series for several countries.

A multiple correlation will show how the variables are related, but will not necessarily explain the causality of factors. Therefore, Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) will be used to infer causal relations. Likewise the qualitative methodological part intends to complement the quantitative by using historical tools and Critical Discourse Analysis—CDA in the case studies of Colombia, Cuba, Uruguay and Switzerland.

The Changing Role of Roman Catholic Church in Contemporary Lithuania?

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the analysis of the role of Roman Catholic Church in contemporary Lithuania. Grounding herself on social research data, both qualitative and quantitative the author states that RCC role within the public life of Lithuania is increasing, One can observe that Church participates in the public life as the commentator and evaluator of various events, participates in the civic society activities through establishing NGO’s and actively lobby for its interests. At the same time the power boundaries of the Church and State relations are moving closer as the Clergy representatives become state officials.

4th parallel session
“Theorizing Religion and Power”

Chair: PierLuigi Zocatelli

Is intrinsic religious toleration possible?

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Abstract

I'll try to argue that intrinsic religious toleration seems to be impossible but the very existence of religious systems still matters for being truly tolerant man. My talk will consist of three blocks: in the beginning I will concentrate on P. Nicholson's definition of toleration, then I'll reproduce A. Margalit's idea about impossibility of intrinsic religious toleration and a critique of that idea made by C. J. Nederman and M. B. Khomyakov and finally I'll check out if the criticism hits the mark or does not.

Peter Nicholson characterizes toleration as a value and attitude that consists of five most important elements: 1) Deviance. What is tolerated deviates from what the subject of toleration believes should be done (otherwise we would have acceptance); 2) Importance. The deviation is not trivial for a man who tolerates (otherwise we have indifference); 3) Moral disapproval. The tolerator disapproves morally of the deviation. This third element seems to be the most strong one and leads to the so called “paradox of toleration” – namely, that what you should tolerate your own morality imposes on you to stop); 4) Power. It is not your choice to tolerate the things you can not stop 5) Non-rejection. None the less, the tolerator doesn't exercise the power, thereby allowing the deviation to continue. If we agree with the definition, we may assume that intrinsic religious toleration requires some inner reasons for toleration in religion affairs. The reasons, I believe, have to be made only within religious discourse, in other words, they have to have an attitude only to the goals of religion itself.

Considering the possibility of religious toleration, Avishai Margalit writes that “A religion based on constitutive, redemptive, revealed truths cannot ascribe value to a religion that contradicts these truths. Thus each religion sees itself as the only true religion and ascribes no value to the others. In other words, there is no room for religious pluralism”. This argumentation is based on the following premises: 1) revelation is propositional, that is it is expressed in a form which involves considering it either as true or as false; 2) revealed truths are constitutive of religion and of redemption through religion (that is redemption through religion depends upon the truth of a religious belief); 3) Religions acquire their intrinsic value by providing a framework for redemption (that is, for achieving religious perfection); 4) There are contradictions between the constitutive revealed truths of each pair of the three traditional religions; 5) The fact that the source of religious truths is revelation implies that false religious propositions are valueless (as opposed to scientific errors, for example, which could have some value); 6) Premises 1-5 fit the historical reality of the three religions. Maxim Khomiakov believes that in order to prove we should and we can find out some historical examples and theoretical possibilities to weak or even break down these premises. He argues that the possibilities which may underpin the opposite to A. Margalit's thesis lie in 1) Skepticism. Theological skepticism, according to Maxim implies that while revealed truths are propositional that is they are either true or false, we cannot be quite certain if they are true or false; 2) Theories of indifferent things in religion (they are tolerated because they are not constitutive of redemption through religion); 3) Rational reductionism. In this case, Maxim argues, the content of the religions can be reduced to one common ground (Maxim refers to Nicholas of Cusa's *De Pace Fidei* here). As for the rites, they may remain different, because salvation depends upon faith and not upon the rites; 4) Mysticism (God is present in all things and in all religions); 5) Early nationalism, can also be considered as a source of religious toleration because every nation takes local pride in observing its own rites and, by the same token, it worships God more devotedly.

Having established these points, Maxim comes to the conclusion that “these arguments alone cannot underpin religious toleration because these modes of establishing toleration in society are not stable. The point is that if toleration is reached by reducing the disagreement between the beliefs of the tolerator and those of the ‘deviant’, that cannot guarantee against intolerance and persecution on other (for instance, pragmatic) grounds. This is why liberal secular society grounds toleration not on the reduction of disagreement, but rather on reinforcing the equal respect owed to agents as moral persons’. That is why to defend religious toleration, Maxim adds, we should also take into consideration 6) “Negative” pragmatism (toleration to infidels is possible if intolerant attitude to them is too costly either in material or moral expenses); 7) Functionalism, which implies that every part of the society, which contributes to its well-being, should be respected; 8) Classical liberal version of toleration grounded upon recognition of unalienable human rights. Maxim’s paper ends with the final conclusion that we should be more flexible in our ways of promoting religious toleration in contemporary multicultural world.

In my opinion, all these arguments are quite coherent, but not all of them hit the mark. Skepticism seems to be quite strange strategy to underpin the possibility of inner religious toleration if *revealed truths are constitutive of religion and of redemption through religion*. In other words, we cannot strongly believe in Sacred and be suspicious about that in the same time. In my opinion religious faith contradicts with skepticism. Theories of indifferent things in religion don’t fit in the second and the third points of P. Nicholson’s definition of toleration. Rational reductionism looks good if we agree that religious truth is the matter of ratio or simply might be analyzed logically. Even so, the first point in Nicholson’s definition comes to naught in the case of successful reductionism. Mysticism might be considered as truly religious, but very ‘narrow’ argument for toleration; because it is still unclear for me how medieval mysticism can be incorporated into contemporary religious systems? Finally, early nationalism had religious specificity – should we say the same about modern nationalism? And where is the room for *moral disapproval* toward to differentials in rites in the case of early nationalism?

It is clear that negative pragmatism and functionalism are not the religious arguments – they don’t rely on any understanding of religious truth. The same thing we may say taking into account liberal political philosophy. What follows from that? I agree with the idea that we need to be more plural in arguing for toleration and C. Nederman’s view on different ways how to be plural, but still have suspicion in possibility of religious toleration as inner religion attitude toward to infidels. But, nevertheless, my point is that namely and probably only religion supports the very possibility of toleration in different non-religious spheres of contemporary liberally oriented societies because religion not only includes morality as coherent systems of values and virtues but grounds it on some transcendental truth and therefore allows *moral disapproval* to exist.

Conceptual History of Power

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Abstract

I would discuss the evolvement of the concepts underlying the state-centred consensual model of public international law, which model also served as the model for the League of Nations and UN systems, and the turn to the system of public international law as understood today, where states are gradually giving more and more powers to international organizations and other non-state actors. The idea is to discuss how the understandings of the concepts of state sovereignty and conferral of powers by states on other international actors have emerged and changed. I would do this with help of the theory of social contract, the birth of which theory has frequently been connected with the period of modernism, because some authors claim that the birth of states (in their contemporary meaning), and consequently of state sovereignty, could be situated within that period. Although

such explanation would, perhaps, presume focusing most on Thomas Hobbes's, John Locke's, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas of social contract, I would try to situate their ideas in an even broader context in order to show how the nuances of their thought may have been changed, beginning with the elements of social contract between God and people on Mount Sinai reflected in the Old Testament, thereafter in the ancient thought, in the pre-modern Catholic thought, and how these understandings have influenced the later different schools, and how the ideas of social contract and of state sovereignty are gradually being reconstructed by what may be called globalization and change. I began my background research with ideas of pre-modern, modern, and postmodern authors of state and social contract since the XV century, for example: Niccolò Machiavelli because of his 'Prince' and understandings of Christian ethics and „good“ and „bad“ state, Francisco De Vitoria for his understandings of international law and just war, Jean Bodin for his theory of sovereignty, Alberico Gentili for 'On the Laws of War and Peace', Hugo Grotius for his theory of social contract between human beings, and for the system of universal law, Thomas Hobbes for the theory of social contract between people and state, Samuel Pufendorf for continuing the theory of social contract, John Locke for liberal understanding of social contract between men and governors, Charles De Montesquieu for developing the theory of separation of powers, Abbe De Mably for his understandings of federalist public law, Emer De Vattel for understandings of international law, Jean-Jacques Rousseau for his theory of social contract between an individual and the society, Immanuel Kant for ideas on universal democracy, international cooperation, and universal history, Georg Hegel for ideas on civil society and state, Carl von Clausewitz for developing these ideas from realist viewpoint, Karl Marx for explaining Democritus and Epicurus, and Friedrich Nietzsche for showing the will of power. Having been that way contextualized, my background research selectively shows later reflections by Robert Lee Hale focusing on the central position of human beings, Lassa Oppenheim and the modern discipline of international law, Hans Kelsen's ideas of social contract and international law, Karl Barth's ideas of God's sovereignty, Carl Schmitt's understandings of the sovereign dictatorship, Philip Jessup's idea of transnational law substituting international law, C. Wilfred Jenks's idea of cosmopolitan common law of mankind substituting international law, John Rawls's idea of individual-based world order substituting the state-centred world order, and how these developments have been recently interpreted and complemented by Samuel P. Huntington who brought in problems related to extra-Western values, Jürgen Habermas by explaining legitimacy and communication, Rafael Domingo Oslé by building models for the global law of the Third Millennium, etc. Although this framework and the authors shown in it are well-known, I consider this framework inevitably relevant for understanding the development of most political ideas. I aimed at shifting the research borders backwards to the extent it would allow to understand and explain contemporary specific developments. Therefore, I would situate my research into the frame of understandings of classical Greek philosophers and of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

Religious Feelings, Religious Liberties and Religious Believers' Rights in presentation a Secular State

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Abstract

Presently, Russian criminal code is severely criticized by both legal scholars and experts in Religious Studies for a novelty in its article 148 (revised in 2013), in which "public action that demonstrates overt disrespect to society and is aimed at insulting religious feelings of the believers" was penalized. This legal innovation has been alternately viewed as a resurrection of blasphemy laws or as yet another instrument to suppress any form of dissent by authoritarian regime. It is often omitted that similar felony charges existed in Criminal code until 1997, supposedly the golden age of Russian democracy, and still exist in legal systems across the globe and UN documents. It is also worth noting

that the language in which this offence is articulated is specifically the language of human rights and not that of blasphemy laws. In my presentation, I would like to discuss the conflict between freedom of conscience and freedom of expression, which has become apparent in many instances (Danish and French cartoons, Pokemon hunter in Ekaterinburg, etc.), and will focus on current debates in political philosophy that seek to address this conflict from both religious and non-religious perspectives. Broadly speaking, two approaches are possible: one would involve constitutional hierarchy of human rights, another approach would leave the specific conflicts to be settled in legal practice. I will then cite some cases in which the efficiency of these approaches can be assessed.

Religious Foundations of Power in Agamben and Foucault

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Abstract

The report is supposed to consider various contexts which indicate the ontological connection between this or that form of power and (Christian) religion. In this regard, one can recall the criticism of J.Habermas, undertaken by D.Zaret and C.Taylor. They pointed to some difficulties associated with the public sphere conceived as free from religion since historical analysis shows the dependence of the emergence of publicity on certain religious currents and practices. Christian connotations are also obvious in the distinction between the territorial and pastoral power developed by Foucault. Despite the fact that the image of the shepherd and the flock is not an invention of Christianity, only here, according to Foucault, it begins to play such an important role. Meanwhile, it is in this constellation that Foucault sees the origins of the governmentality he describes.

In his book "The Kingdom and the Glory" G.Agamben continues Foucault's project on the analysis of the governmentality advancing it further and deeper. In particular, he demonstrates that the power structures characteristic of the modern West are rooted in Christian theology. From his point of view, Christian theology abandoned the ancient logic of opposing "polis" and "oikos" and demonstrated a strong desire to combine the economic function of administration with the sacrament of divine power - the Government and the Kingdom, "power as a government and effective management and power as ceremonial and liturgical regality." It was only externally that modern political thought could be secularized having got rid of direct references to the divine authority. However, the essential change appeared to be beyond her power, and the old logic which ascends genealogically to the interpretation of the Trinity by the Fathers of the Church, though latent, is still present in discourse. The overwhelming erudition of the author could not save him from critics of his approach who questioned the validity of his conclusions. Nevertheless, Agamben's approach provides a new way to look for the Christian roots of Western politics.

Two Models of the Pastorate: Michel Foucault and Ignatius of Loyola

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Abstract

When we take a closer look to the modern Catholic teaching the bigger freedom in questions of laity private religious practice can be noticed. The Catholic Church has established the "minimum" laws and given some recommendations, and now laity themselves control many spheres of religious life, such as frequency of prayers and their types, frequency of confessions, etc. The tradition of spiritual guidance is a same question too. Even if the Catholic tradition recognizes utility and, to some extent, the necessity of spiritual guidance, the practice itself for many laity appears problematic. The obedience to spiritual director is one of aspects of this.

In his genealogy of power Michel Foucault saw the pastorate and in particular spiritual guidance as a source of bio-power. The pastorate is saved in modern society but mainly in the Church sphere. For Foucault, spiritual guidance is the situation of the complete dependence of the flock on the shepherd, who at the same time is fully accountable for the affairs of his “sheep”. At the same time, the authority of the spiritual director appears as an institutional one: it results from the Sacrament of Confession. Moreover, Foucault identifies two models: the Protestant individual and the Catholics hierarchical. At the same time, he ignores the changes that took place in the Catholicism. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits monastic order, develops his concept of the relationship between the shepherd and the flock in the framework of spiritual exercises. It is closer to the individual pastorate of the Protestants, even though it started and developed in the Catholic tradition. The spiritual director is not the one who connects the individual with the transcendental God. He is like a sovereign who reigns, but does not rule.

5th parallel session
“Religion, Power and Education”

Chair: Rasa Pranskevičiūtė

Religiosity/non-religiosity and education in Hungary

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Abstract

The relationship between religiousness and education is well documented, but scholars don't usually emphasize that this relationship is far from being linear. The non-linearity is even more pronounced if we also take non-religiousness into account. Using data from surveys conducted over the past decade, the present study employs logistic regression to test the hypothesis that, contrary to what is asserted by a simplified secularization theory, in Hungary both religiousness and non-religiousness have a Janus face in that both groups simultaneously contain more people with high and low levels of education than the average population does. Our results demonstrate the complex nature of the relationship between religious position and education and highlight the fact that in order to accommodate this complexity, researchers should consider entering both education and religiousness as categorical variables in the analysis and use methods that are appropriate for such variables.

The Soviet Education and Religion: Teachers' Case in the Latvian SSR (1944-1985)

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Abstract

The Soviet education was based on the communist ideology, which rejects God and any religious manifestations, recognized as a norm atheistic world outlook with the respective conduct of society members including teachers and schoolchildren. The aim of the paper is to specify how teachers in Latvia treated the positions of the communist ideology in the sphere of religion as well as reconstruct their religious conduct in the Soviet period of the history of Latvia.

Source materials for this research are composed of archival documents from the State Archives of Latvia and memories of teachers from the Eastern Latvia represented in the collection of the Oral History Centre of the Daugavpils University. Archival materials represent the situation

from the official power position yet oral history sources provide an opportunity of investigating the individual understanding in the sphere of religion and faith.

Teachers who worked in the Soviet period publicly rejected religion. At the same time there are many testimonies of teacher's secret visits to the church for baptisms and marriages, which took place under circumstances resembling a conspiracy. For participation in religious ceremonies they would often pay with their jobs or their CPSU membership card.

Effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching in church-run schools during the communist era in Hungary

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Abstract

There are a number of sharply contrasting views on the respective roles of the Church and the State in education in Hungary. Church schools have played a fundamental role in Hungarian education for centuries. As a result of the Communist take-over, however, church schools were nationalized in 1948. Only 10 of them were allowed to exist under strict constraints, mainly as a display for the West.

The lecture presents the mechanism of the state control of national church schools working in the decades of communism, their financial troubles, the formation of the students' numbers and the results of researches related to the students' social background.

First of all, we look for an answer for the question, how they became - during the decades of communism - from the sanctuary of layers deprived of their learning opportunities and forced into a marginal situation in the 1950s into partly elite schools by the 1980s, and how this role change determined their seeking ways after the political transformation of 1989-90. The communist power wished to utilize the churches' activity in the 1980's on such areas that had crisis because of the economic difficulties eg.: on looking after the handicapped, old, deviant and the poor. The ideological and political loss of the layers on the edge of society was unimportant for the system, but certain churches started to get experiences in this field that time eg.: in gypsy mission, which have been used in the educational system in recent years. Our research wishes to point out that the present situation of denominational schools in Hungary and their seeking ways can be interpreted only in the knowledge of the past of public educational role-taking of churches.

From Apocalyptic Expectations to New Educational Visions: Changing Education Policies of the Last Testament Church

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Abstract

This paper discusses the relationship between religion and education within a clearly structured, small-scale religious community that seeks to develop and consolidate its own education system. The focus is on an endogenously Russian new religious movement, namely the Last Testament Church (the Vissarion movement) and its Siberian headquarters. Education is understood in wide terms including upbringing and schooling children from the early age to their teens.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Last Testament Church adherents have been building and maintaining their communal existence and separation from the "world" deep in the Southern Siberian taiga. The so-called "Promised Land" consists of roughly 30 ecovillages, inhabited by 4000-5000 believers. The community is regarded as a place where the faithful will survive the Apocalypse, taking the remaining humanity onto a new stage of development. In recent few years,

education has been a major topic for discussion among Vissarion's followers. As the pioneering followers age and since the end seems to lag, the community has begun to pay special attention to the future; the new cultural tradition needs to be transmitted to the next generation.

The education issue, being in a constant flux, is affected by several factors. Firstly, the Last Testament Church principles, objectives and resources need to be reconciled with state regulations. Secondly, as "the Living Word of God", Vissarion has the final say over communal decisions. Like the community as a whole, its educational policy is experimental and, in the Russian context, rather controversial. Today, the community seeks to organize single-sex education.

This paper explores how and why Vissarionites' attitudes towards education have developed over the years. How do internal and external changes challenge the ways education – a connecting factor between the present and the future, and the private and the public – is dealt with in the community?

6th parallel session **"Religion, Power and (Re)Location"**

Chair: Michael Strmiska

Power and Religion: The Kakure Kirishitan Transformation of Early Modern Christianity in Japan

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Abstract

After the ban of Christianity in Early Modern Japan, Christianity went underground. There it transformed into Kirishitanism that evolved in a context where Christianity not being the norm, and could, thus, survive within the framework of approved religiosity. Christian objects have until this day been used as containers for supernatural healing power. With time, the Trinitarian Christian God, as well as Christian ancestors or martyrs came to be venerated as gods (*kami*), who were able to protect their followers from accidents, sickness, or other misfortunes. Through their embracing presence, irrespectively their Christian or non-Christian origin, these *kami* participates in the world of the living, and function as a unifying force also among the members of a group not being in a focus of political power. The Kakure Kirishitan tradition is a good example of extensive adaptation into a new reality, in a time of political turmoil and religious change. The underground Christians believed that their salvation was partly due to the mediating power of the merciful mother of God, the Virgin Mary, whose presence in the Holy Family became more important than her Son. The Kakure Kirishitan faith is also characterized by a belief in the power of the dead who are recognized as ancestors, and the following of rituals based on this belief. Originally a Christian image, Virgin Mary, continues to be a powerful protector against misfortune, sickness and accidents to descendants of early modern Japanese Christians. In a Kakure Kirishitan context, the sacred objects of the house [manifesting the *kami*] have the power to protect the family.

Influence of chishti sufism on the Mughal rule in the 13th century

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Abstract

Chishti Sufism is a unique religious strand of not just mysticism (and Sufism, for that matter), but a syncretic practice of art and religion. In 13th century India, the Mughal dynasty ruled the subcontinent, but the religious part of their doctrine had difficulty settling. In India, it wasn't just the

religions created in India (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, as well as many sects) that were to blame for this, but the peoples' affection for the mystical strands of Islam, as opposed to more orthodox Islam that the Mughal rulers would have preferred (at least for their people, if not for themselves).

A strand of Sufism that is unique to India is chishti Sufism, which in the 13th century, thanks in part to Hindavi and Persian poet and courtier Amir Khusro Dehlavi and his pir Nizamuddin Auliya, made its way into the government and made chishti Sufism not just more widespread but also more accepted among the people and the government, which in turn impacted how other non-islamic religions were viewed.

Amir Khusro's heritage is not only artistic, but also has to do with creating an air in the Mughal court of not just acceptance for the different, but unifying the local Indian aspects of religion and literature (as well as music and other native forms of art) with those that were held in high regard by the Muslim rulers, namely aspects of Persian art and literature. Amir Khusro's position is unique because he could unify these aspects not just in his poetry and writing, but in his DNA, since his mother was Indian Muslim, but father – an immigrant from Turkistan.

The Science of the Sacred: Geology, Mythology, and the Making of the Himalayan Mountains

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Abstract

All across the Himalayan region, local peoples of various faiths have their own spiritual explanations for how the world's greatest mountain range came to be. At first glance, such explanations would seem to have little in common with the modern science of plate tectonics. And yet, as anthropologists have noticed, the spiritual myths of Himalayan origin sometimes correspond strikingly well with the geological record. This paper, taken from a work-in-progress on the environmental history of the Himalaya, draws out these correspondences and argues that far from simply contradicting each other, science and myth complement one another and together provide a culturally powerful understanding of the birth of the Himalaya, literally the "abode of snow" but also the abode of the gods. Among the stated topics of this conference, the paper speaks to "religion and nationalism," "mythology, divine kinship, and power," and "religion and education." More directly, it speaks to the topic of religion and science and the power of mountain formation.

Contemporary deposits at sacred places in Estonia and Finland

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Abstract

Leaving of contemporary deposits at various sites has recently increased across Europe, among other countries also in Estonia. There are very different reasons why ribbons are tied to branches or coins and candles, seldom more personal objects, deposited at stones, springs or other natural places. This is a co-operation study to compare contemporary deposits in Finland and Estonia. Both countries are usually described as very similar, with common linguistic, cultural and ecological background. However, analysing of contemporary deposits shows significantly different understanding to the contemporary pagan ideologies, raising provocative questions about the usage of history and past in legitimising of such ideologies.

Secularization as a communication problem?

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Abstract

Estonia, the northernmost of the Baltic states, has a reputation of being one of the most secularized countries in Europe. Indeed, the visibility of religion in society is low and nonreligiosity is considered normative. The indicators for conventional religiosity (e.g. belief in God, belonging and religious practices) are also considerably low – in this regard about 75% of the Estonians could be considered “not religious” and most of them are not socialized into religion. Nevertheless, describing Estonian society as extremely secularized is far from being adequate since different beliefs and practices associated with alternative spirituality and indigenous “Earth belief” are very common. Thus, secularization in this context refers mostly to the distance from a conventional, theistic religion.

However, these assessments rely mostly on methods and questionnaires that are meant to study conventional religiosity. But what can we say about “nones” by asking the questions that may be irrelevant to them? By analyzing examples gathered during fieldwork and from media, the paper argues that widespread religious illiteracy (lack of knowledge about religion and inability to recognize its appearances) and secularization of language (vagueness of words concerning (non) religion or cases when words have ‘run dry’ of their original meaning, Remmel 2016) point to the possibility that up to some degree “secularization” of the society can be considered a communication problem. Also, vice versa, there’s a possibility that the answers that are interpreted as “religious” may have entirely secular content. This aspects should be taken into regard when interpreting the results of quantitative surveys.

7th parallel session

“Korean New Religions, Nationalism, and Society: From Kang Jeungsan to Daesoon Jinrihoe”

Chair: Anita Stasulane

From Kang Jeungsan to Daesoon Jinrihoe. From Kang Jeungsan to Daesoon Jinrihoe

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Abstract

Kang Jeungsan (1871-1909), a Korean spiritual teacher of the early 20th century, is regarded by his followers as the incarnation of the Supreme God (Sangje) on Earth. His disciples split into many groups and subgroups, generating more than 100 Korean new religions. Between World War I and II, the followers of Kang Jeungsan constituted the largest religious group in Korea, with more than six million adherents. They suffered because of Japanese repression but, although statistics are in themselves a matter of controversy, they still count themselves in the millions in present-day Korea. The largest group alone, Daesoon Jinrihoe, claims six million members. The paper explores inter alia Kang’s relations with Korean nationalism, the Donghak revolution, and Japanese imperialism, as well as how this heritage is assumed by contemporary Daesoon Jinrihoe.

Kang Jeungsan's Principle of "Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence"

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Abstract

The central concept of Kang Jeungsan's thought is *Haewon-sangsaeng*. *Sangsaeng* is a word that eludes English translation, although it is often rendered as "mutual beneficence." *Haewon-sangsaeng* is a very practical philosophy, which takes as its starting point the idea that we are liable to incur some grudges of others, and perhaps even the spirits of the universe. *Haewon-sangsaeng* teaches how to "resolve grievances," i.e. let these grudges go. Kang Jeungsan believed that everything in the universe, including but not limited to human beings, is interconnected. We receive love and benefits from other humans, animals, the nature, and the universe in general and are called to "repay" these favors. As humans follow this ethical imperative, a more harmonious world is built. The paper explores the principle of *haewon-sangsaeng* within the context of what Kang's followers believed to be his "reordering of the universe" while delineating some examples of this "reordering" and the resolution of grievances, and mentions his attitudes towards Korean society, social justice, and politics.

Kang Jeungsan's Principles in Action: Daesoon Jinrihoe and Social Welfare in Korea

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Abstract

Haewon-sangsaeng (Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence) and *boeun-sangsaeng* (Repaying the Favors for Mutual Beneficence), taken together, summarize Kang Jeungsan's teaching about living a harmonious and peaceful life. The paper analyzes Daesoon Jinrihoe's contemporary discourse and activities on social welfare and explores how the two principles became part of a millenarian narrative that is crucial for the movement's missionary expansion and globalization. In fact, *haewon-sangsaeng* and *boeun-sangsaeng* are much more than practical recipes for living quiet lives, and are presented as principles that, when followed, may usher in a new age of global peace and prosperity.

8th parallel session "Religions and Human Rights"

Chair: Katarzyna Zielinska

Pluriform accommodation: Justice beyond multiculturalism and freedom of religion?

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Abstract

In this paper we elaborate two central thoughts that we combine with the term 'pluriform accommodation'. The first is a plea for inclusive and consequential neutrality, the second is a closely linked plea for reasonable accommodation. With 'pluriform accommodation' we emphasize that the multicultural recognition scope should be expanded. The need for inclusive and accommodative rules, laws and practices is a matter of principle and as such cannot be reduced to the inclusion of people with an immigration background who bring with them all kinds of cultural and religious practices and traditions. Furthermore, the enshrined freedom of religion does not provide the needed

protection for the multiplicity of conscientious identifications, convictions and strong allegiances that might be central to one's sense of self. We argue that we should not engage in (top down) debates about the rights of individuals and groups of different types and think in terms of identity hierarchies, but instead should consider the various claims being made (bottom up), aiming for common standards and criteria to assess the validity of these claims and the reasonableness of the associated accommodations.

Religions, human rights and justice in contemporary Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey has implemented an authoritarian model of secularism since the establishment of the Republic until today. In Turkey, religious liberties such as wearing headscarf and political participation of Muslim majority have been restricted by the Turkish Constitutional Court (TCC) in the name of protecting secularism. Since 1980s until 2010 constitutional reforms the TCC rejected every legislative proposal (1989, 1990, 2008) allowing the headscarf in public and closed six political parties representing religious identities based on perceived threats to the secularism. However, in none of these decisions the TCC applied proportionality analyses between the benefit to the state's interest and the restriction of individual freedoms. The Court restricted these rights without assessing the balance between secularism and the free exercise of religion. I argue that if the Court applied proportionality standard, it would not limit the religious liberties unnecessarily and the problematic religious matters would be solved within the judicial boundary in Turkey. Applying proportionality standard in thorny cases such as religious liberties would enable the state's neutrality toward religion and stabilize the understanding of secularism in Turkey.

The Court kept its authoritarian stance towards religious liberties until 2010 constitutional reforms. The 2010 constitutional amendments to the composition of the Court resulted in the shift of the ideological position of the Court. The post-2010 approach of the Court is characterized as pro-freedoms. However, I argue that since the Court does not apply proportionality standard yet, its decisions concerning religious liberties still lack the cohesion. While before amendments this approach of the Court affected religious liberties of Muslim majority, now it affects the rights of religious minorities. Thus, in the paper application of proportionality standard in religious liberty cases and its effect on secularism is introduced and examined.

Religious persecution under European asylum system

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Abstract

Over the past few years the suffering of individuals on account of their religious affiliation has taken on a staggering scale. The growing volume of restriction on religion and the raise of religious fundamentalism in certain countries have originated a severe migration crisis impacting Europe. Thus, the European Courts has dealt with many cases concerning the granting of asylum, particularly on the basis of religious persecution.

My paper will analyse the legal developments in Europe regarding the meaning of the concept of religious persecution under the European asylum law, taking into consideration both the normative and the jurisprudential ground.

First, it will consider the Qualification Directive 2004/83/EC, which seeks to clarify the notion of persecution with the aims to harmonizing the refugee definition among Member States of the EU.

The paper then will turn to the case law of the the European Court of Justice, which is increasingly called upon by national courts to interpret provision of the legal instrument setting up the EU asylum system. The focus will be especially on the landmark case *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v. Y. and Z.* With this ruling the CJEU dealt for the first time with the term “persecution” as enshrined in the Qualification Directive. Particularly, in this case the German authorities referred three question to the Court. First, do all restriction on the right of freedom of religion, or merely the violation of the core of that right, amount to a persecution? Second, if only the core is protected, what does it comprise? Third, is there a well-founded fear when a person would abstain from certain religious practice?

The paper finally seeks to highlight the notion of freedom of religion offered by the Court by defining religious persecution.

The possible reconciliations between freedom of religion and gender equality

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Abstract

My paper would focus on my Master’s thesis, which addresses the potential constitutional tension between gender equality and freedom of religion within the Canadian context, with an outlook on the European dynamics relating to freedom of religion. This interdisciplinary thesis combines theoretical frameworks founded equally in the fields of law, feminist theory, and the sociology of religion, in order to consider the constitutional tension between identity perspectives, feminism, and law. With this in mind, my thesis provides a framework to address this issue which concerns me and from which I wish to propose an avenue toward reconciling different critiques. From here, I take into account the manner by which the judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada and the civil courts address requests for reasonable accommodations, as well as public policies that handle freedom of religion. I subsequently address the significant differences between radical feminism and postcolonial feminism as they relate to the place of women within a religion. The constitutional tension between religious freedom and gender equality tends to be present at this level. In my thesis, I suggest that postcolonial feminism is a pertinent theoretical framework to use when reconciling demands for religious accommodation while respecting gender equality.

Freedom of Religion in China under Xi Jinping

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Abstract

Officially China is an atheist state, but gradually it has become more tolerant of religions and religious activities comparing to the Maoist times and the beginning of the „open door policy“ era. As the economy of China is steadily growing, society is facing the processes of modernization, urbanization and globalization, the Chinese perceive their freedoms and rights much better that used to be few decades ago. Religious moral systems and practices allow the Chinese to fulfill spiritual vacuum which emerged when more and more people could not find answers to their existential questions in the Communist ideology. Hundreds of millions of believers look for truths and meanings in the principles of Buddhism, Daosim, Islam, Catholicism and Protestant Christianity – the main official

religions allowed by the party-state. However, under the rule of Xi Jinping the Communist Party has intensified the control of religious beliefs and practices. Thus, this presentation is directed towards the review of *status quo* and analysis of the state of freedom of religion in China during the current years. The main questions to be answered: why the the government of Xi Jinping is restricting the control over the religious freedoms and rights, what is the response of society to the governmental actions, what are the prospects of state – society relations in the context of (non)liberalization of religious freedoms and rights? The analysis of this presentation is based on theory of institutionalism.

9th parallel session
“ Power, Russian Orthodoxy and Minority Religions ”
Chair: Massimo Introvigne

Confessional policy of the Russian Empire towards religious minorities

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Abstract

Russia was historically forging as multinational, multicultural and multi-confessional state. Russia was going by the way of increasing religious diversity: Finno-Ugric people with traditional beliefs from the very beginning, Muslims after annexation of Kazan and Astrakhan, Old Believers and Western Christians (Catholics and Protestants) since the middle of the 17th century. Number of Western Christians raised significantly by the beginning of the 19th century, when Poland and Finland became parts of the Empire.

Such diversity raised a problem how to deal with millions of subjects belonging to religious and national minorities in the Empire. These minorities could be majorities in separate regions (e.g. Catholic Lithuanians and Poles), play an important military and economical role in different regions (e.g. Old Believer Cossacks on the borders or Old Believer merchants, qualified workers and administrators in the Urals). Some of representatives of minorities could cause strong influence on the policy of the Russian state.

An Imperial government used to apply different models of policy towards mentioned minorities. The government policy was not straightforward and clear. At the same time and towards representatives of the same minority they could use both relatively liberal measures and severe persecutions.

The paper discusses reasons and factors influenced on the state religious policy, gives classification of the state relations towards religious minorities, and reaction of these minorities on the state policy.

The Image of the Persecuted Religious Minority in Their Own and Classical Music in Russian Empire

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Abstract

The article touches upon the destruction of the Old Believer Lavrient'ev monastery (Gomel region) in 1848 conducted by the authorities. It investigates how this event was reflected in a traditional musical culture of the persecuted minority (the Old Believers) and then was used for the presentation of the religious dissenters in a classical musical art – in the Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina* opera. The complex of different records of well-known Old Believer spiritual verse *God, the times have come*

to us is compared with opera's scores of "schismatics' choirs" based on this particular verse. The paper analyses how the Old Believers represented themselves in musical form. Further, it discusses a question how their own representation was rethought by M. P. Musorgsky for showing to the religious majority.

It is all about the choice and paths: Jewish community at the early Soviet era

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Abstract

At the beginning of the Soviet era religious emancipation was proclaimed and this emancipation was not a matter of choice. And there was a group of people whose identity depended heavily on their religious views. So among the questions of interests to me is how the official ideology of religious emancipation was perceived by Russian Jews and reflected in Jewish press, literature and other kind of texts. So I would like to analyze, on the one hand, the ways of preserving and developing "Jewishness" despite the ideology of religious emancipation and, on the other, the ways that led Russian Jews to the deprivation and alternation from their religion, traditions and, in some sense, identity in the late Soviet era. And these processes that took place both in private and public spheres reveal different strategies of communication inside and outside Jewish community as a minority group.

Although Jewish people aspired religious emancipation at the beginning of Soviet era they still preserved much knowledge about Judaism as childhood memories, kashrut, stories from secular (in some sense) literature and sources and so on. And this knowledge passed down in family from parents to children. Although religion and religious practices were forbidden in Soviet Union a lot of Jews did not want to reject their "Jewishness" and it has finally transformed into new kind of identity.

Orthodox mission as a method of struggle with the Old Belief in Latvia at the end of the 19th century

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Abstract

At the end of the 19th century on the territory of the Russian Empire there was singled out a particular direction in the Orthodox mission: specially trained missionaries were sent to Old Believers' inhabited areas to preach Orthodox values and persuade Old Believers to join Orthodoxy. Supported by local public and religious authorities and police Orthodox missionaries started active campaigns and in 1894 founded the Antisplit Committee that was dedicated to the issues of elimination of the "split" – the Old Belief. The missionaries had to be well educated in Orthodox theory and prepared to lead public debates. At the same time they had to know the Old Belief thoroughly, so that to be able to prepare argumentation to expose "misconceptions" of the Old Belief. On the whole Orthodox mission had two main directions: educating and preaching. Educating happened directly in the Orthodox parish schools that were attended by Orthodox and Old Believers' children. It was not successful, because the number of Old Believers' pupils was too small and the differences in religious practice often lead to conflicts between Orthodox teachers and parents of the pupils. Indirect educating was held through dissemination of special issues about Orthodoxy and the Old Belief. The widespread booklets and books generated interest among the Old Believers and inspired private discussions with Orthodox missionaries, but they had no meaningful results. Public and private preaching that was

organized by the Orthodox missionaries during major Christian holidays and on Sundays collected a considerable number of listeners – ordinary parishioners and spiritual leaders of the Old Believers' parishes. These meetings often lead to conflicts among Old Believers themselves, but in result only few of them decided to baptize into Orthodoxy. At the beginning of the 20th century it became clear that Orthodox mission lost in struggle with the Old Belief.

Peculiarities of Religious Experiences of Hare Krishna Devotees in the Soviet Lithuania: Sensation, Conversion and Transcendence

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Abstract

Religious experience appears as a complex phenomenon, and integral part of diverse religions. Along with the divine-human encounter, these experiences are also partly embodied, as together with information about some supernatural reality, they exceed sensory experience and ordinary perceptions of objects (Webb, 2011). Religious experiences may enhance personal transformation, sustained by religious practises and socialisation, and can lead to integrated well-being (Iyadurai, 2015). Though religious experiences may seem to be individual, they are grounded in culture and differ across religions.

This paper focuses on the phenomenon of religious experiences within the early Hare Krishna community in the Soviet Lithuania until its official registration in 1989. Using a thematic analysis method, the authors discuss peculiarities of religious experiences of individuals, such as sensational and transcendental aspects, as well as narratives of personal conversion and its consequences. The material in the paper comes mainly from in-depth life story interviews acquired from Lithuanian ISKCON archives. Devotees reported transcendental experiences in which they felt something unexplainable (e.g. feeling flowing in inexplicable energy, connection with the divine, etc.). Religious experiences involved sensory aspects, which were especially important in the beginning of involvement in the Hare Krishna movement. Intense practices and rituals, involving music, mantras, prasad food, evoked strong admiration feelings together with hearing, vision, taste, smell sensations, fulfilled with religious content. Another important experience was conversion and self-transformation. The transformation resulted in willingness to share experiences with others and further missionary activities. Religious experiences of Hare Krishna devotees were inseparable from intellectual and spiritual conversations with teachers, sacred texts readings, which strengthened the understanding that human life should be devoted to spiritual grow.

10th parallel session
“Religions, Powers and Conflicts”

Chair: Atko Remmel

“Blood and Soil” or “Love and Peace” in Modern Paganism? An Old Debate and a New Proposal

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Abstract

In this presentation, I will revisit an old issue in the study of modern Paganism that is taking on new relevance in the current political climate. This issue is the divide between Pagans who seek to construct a religion centered on old folkloric traditions linked to a particular ethnic identity based and those who hope to create a more universal religion inspired by such old traditions without the scope or the membership of the religion being limited to people of a single ethnic or racial identity. This divide echoes the nineteenth century competition between ethnic-centered nationalism and universal humanism, and is in many ways a descendant of that never fully resolved debate. Noting this parallel I will ponder whether twenty-first century Paganism has more to offer humanity than a new variation on old ideological battles.

The rising tide of pro-nativist, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment and rhetoric in contemporary European and American society is in harmony with certain views and values espoused by the more ethnically-oriented forms of Paganism, but there are also significant areas of discord. Ethnic-oriented Pagans and nativist rightists may stand together in opposing immigration by Muslims from the Middle East and other non-European or non-white peoples, but their views on religion diverge markedly, given the rightists' commitment to Christianity as a key feature of European culture and identity, and the Pagans' wish to promote revived forms of pre-Christian European religion.

I will close by suggesting that the tension between the more ethnically and universally oriented forms of Paganism can be resolved by Pagan movements retaining a sense of rootedness in old traditions while opening participation to people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. This last point will be elaborated with reference to modern Hindu and Buddhist movements that have done something similar in their recent history.

Valuespeak. References to values and related concepts within political and religious discourses in contemporary Latvia

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Abstract

This paper will discuss how concepts like ‘traditional values’, ‘Christian values’, ‘religious values’ are employed to target and achieve political goals in contemporary Latvia. The concepts of ‘Christian values’ and “traditional values’ first appeared in the media spotlight and social fora in Latvia in 2002, which coincided with the foundation of Latvias’ First party which named the Christian values as its paramount calling card. However, the apologists of the above concept found it difficult to explain the contents of the term. When called to help, Archbishop Jānis Vanags, defined them as follows: *„[...] respect for human life and awareness of the fact that God has created each individual for happiness, can be named as a Christian value. Strong family, healthy upbringing of children, just laws, fair state governance, responsibility for the resources provided by God for the benefit of all,*

equality and human mutual understanding and support, are at the service of the above condition.” This citation echoes the formulation found in the Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (which itself refers to the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XIII).

Empirical social research of values and value-orientations usually rely on the assumption that values are observable and measurable. The paper will refer to recent quantitative sociological data collected by University of Latvia and describe the values of the self identified Christians in comparison to the self-identified unchurched/secular population of the country using Schwartz's theory of basic human values (Schwartz 1994; Schwartz 2003). There are minimal differences in value orientation between self-identified Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Russian Orthodox, and the unchurched part of the Latvian population ('nones'). Any differences are nearly non-existent within the believers group irrespective of denominational affiliation.

Terror and the Evolution of Islam

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Abstract

Islamic terrorism is one of the burning issues of the 21st century. Is terrorism a phenomena *per se*, or Islam has certain inner structures which comparing to Christianity supports violence as a legitimate structure of the faith? This question is politically sensitive and therefore not much discussed.

From the academic point of view Islam as a religion contains structures, principles and tradition of violence and terror. Islam appeared as a religion in the nomadic society of Arabian Bedouins and therefore it inherited the social norms of the tribal society, legitimized them as religious dogmas. The further historic development was marked by more progressive borrowings from Greek philosophy and religions of surrounding Persian, or Christian civilizations. Under the influence of greater civilizations Islam developed humanistic philosophy and theology.

At the same time the Quran was never translated on the grounds similar to the Christianity. Quranic translation traditionally is seen as an 'interpretation' and translated version of Quran cannot be used as a liturgical text; exegesis of translated text is never acknowledged. The translation of the Scripture adjusts the text to the surrounding civilizations. It happened to Christianity, especially during the Reformation. In the case of Islam the primitive structures of tribal social regulation including the violence were kept intact. When Islamic teaching becomes popular in a society theologically 'less refined', as it happened in contemporary Africa, or in the case of IGIL ('Islamic State') the violent forms of tribal society are coming on the surface as religious requirements.

One of such structures is jihadism – the ideology of aggressive proselytism with terror as its integral part, based in Quran and Sunna, witnessed by historic narrative. Jihad has different dimensions, not necessarily including physical violence. Even so called peaceful Jihad is aggressive, first of all because of aggressive exclusiveness of Islamic faith as such. Aggressiveness of Islam one can trace in the surrounding life.

For technical reasons sometimes it is useful to qualify so called "Ideology of Islamism" as a radical political ideology, to qualify it as the hate ideology and ban it, as the Nazi ideology is banned. (There should be made a distinction between the mainstream Islam which has no practical connections with radicalism and terror and Islamism as a political Islam).

Folk religions as a means of empowerment

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Abstract

Folk religions, traditionally interpreted as authentic but primitive, count as second class religions compared to the so-called world religions. They might have developed as counter culture among the suppressed classes. For the German context e.g. in Mecklenburg and Schleswig, their religious elements can hardly be found before the Reformation Age. Instead they might have developed later. Between 1550 and 1800, free peasants lost their farms and became serfs on manors until the abolition of serfdom. Thus, one can assume that folk culture and religion emerged as a counter culture against their suppressors. Moreover, the Christian churches supported the suppressive system by moralistic control mechanisms. In the presentation, folkloric tales of Richard Wossidlo's collection from Mecklenburg in the 19th century will be discussed whether they can count as elements of a religious counter culture and means of emancipation and empowerment.

Against Paganism: Catholic struggles against Paganism in contemporary Lithuania

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Abstract

Researchers of contemporary Pagans have noticed their hostility to Christianity and their attempts to re-interpret religious history, while Christian hostility towards Pagans and corresponding interpretations usually are mentioned in discussions of much earlier times. However, as interpretations of religious history is an important part of narratives of many contemporary religious groups, some Christians still engage in struggles against contemporary Pagans and Paganism-related images in general. The presentation deals with anti-Pagan rhetoric of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals gathered around the publishing house Aidai and its journal Naujasis Židinys-Aidai. Discussion of areas and targets of Catholic critique, used strategies and community of critics, as well as their possible aims shows that this Catholic group uniting both academics and representatives of clergy feels concerned both about contemporary Lithuanian Pagans and about "Paganization" of Lithuanian history and contemporary culture in academia and society in general. In most cases, however, these Catholics worry not over contemporary Pagans as a religious community. Instead, they aim to establish a vision of Lithuanian culture and Lithuanian national identity as essentially Christian, presenting Pagan interpretations as remnants of the Soviet ideology. This case study provides many interesting insights about contemporary Lithuanian Catholicism, Paganism, secular culture and their interactions that depend much on a specific socio-historical context.

11th parallel session
“Religions, Powers and Nationalisms”

Chair: Eglė Aleknaitė

Religion and power - at the edge of epochs (N. Berdyaev and S. Frank about revolution, nationalism, war and spiritual freedom of mankind)

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Abstract

Religion and power are two important forms of social consciousness that determine the development of society at all its stages. Religion can take on the role of a real historical force that influences the becoming of the individuals and their worldview. At the same time, religion can be in completely different relation with the authorities, it can be in opposition to the existing power and power politics, it can be repressed, etc.

Political problems (as manifestations of the problem of power and ideology) and religious problems (primarily as problems of world-view) have always been in the focus for determining the historical prospects for the development of society.

Great philosophers of the past in their studies tried to determine the place and the role of religion and politics in the spiritual life of society and the patterns of their interconnection. Russian philosophers of the Silver Age of Russian Philosophy were also inquired about these problems. Differently assessing the essence of religion and politics, they pointed to their special significance in the history of Russia, focusing primarily on the study of the state, the nation, religion, the church and other, from their point of view, system-forming elements of society. Here the concepts of Nikolai Berdyaev and Semyon Frank seem to be interest. Both philosophers were influenced by Vladimir Solovyov's ideas, nevertheless each of them developed the original philosophical system, which contains answers to questions about the relationship of religion and power in society, and tackles the problems of nationalism and the national idea. Not the last place in the philosophy of both of them is occupied with comprehension of the Russian revolution and the phenomenon of revolution as a whole. In this connection, we can mark out the problem of the correlation of religious and power in transitional societies and in transitional epochs.

For example, Frank is negative about collectivism, which, according to his thought, suppresses the one's personality. Any dictate, by Frank's opinion, is contrary to the spiritual freedom of man. Berdyaev writes about the temptation of unlimited power and also insists on the need for man's spiritual freedom.

What is characteristic, the development of the ideas of S. Frank and N. Berdyaev shows us the main horizons of Russian thought of the 1st half of the 20th century and allows us to trace the development of philosophical and religious thought of an entire epoch.

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Abstract

Bishop Andrei (Ukhtomskii) was one of the most celebrated public figures in the last decades of Tsarist Russia. Famed for his very open opposition to Rasputin, his leading role in the Church under the Provisional Government in 1917, and his alleged conversion to the Old Believer schism in 1925, Andrei was also well known as a missionary in the Volga, Urals, and Caucasus, where he interacted

with the Muslims and polytheistic peoples of the Russian Empire. On the one hand, Andrei was a self-declared Russian 'patriot' with pronounced Slavophile views: he frequently regarded the missionary struggle with Islam as a war between the Russian and Tatar nations. On the other, however, Andrei regarded those peoples who had converted to Orthodoxy as part of the Russian nation, without regard for their language or ethnicity. This led him to clash with secular nationalistic groups and their post-1905 rallying cry 'Russia for the Russians!'. In this paper, I will examine how Andrei's views on religion and nation reflected a larger crisis in the Orthodox Church as it engaged in the complex problem of harnessing Russian nationalism to its own cause. These attitudes also prefigured Andrei's sympathy for the Old Believers, whom he came to regard as a more authentic version of Russian Orthodoxy than that embodied by the official Church, especially given that his ecclesiastical reform programme was frequently undermined by those he regarded as too willing to compromise with secular authorities and ethnocentric nationalism. In other words, this paper considers the deeply difficult problem of how religion and nationalism interacted in revolutionary Russia through the eyes of an extremely prolific and influential prelate.

The impact of Ashura rituals Practiced by Shia Iraqis on Iraqi Nationalism

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Abstract

This academic study endeavours to explore the impact of the annual commemoration of Ashura practised by millions of Iraqi Shia Muslims on Iraqi nationalism. In 680, on Ashura, the name of the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic lunar calendar Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed was killed in Karbala, Iraq by an army of a Muslim leader generally regarded in today's nomenclature as a Sunni (Shia and Sunni are the main two branches of Islam). The Shia regards Husayn as one of their spiritual leaders.

The episode of Karbala has created a tradition of commemoration and mourning (Ashura rituals) among Shia Muslims. In Iraq, these commemorations have become so powerful that they were first restricted by successive Sunni-dominated governments (1920s-1970s), and then ultimately banned (1970s-2003) under the rule of the Baath Party (1968-2003). As a result, the majority of Iraqi Shias felt marginalised. Nevertheless, under the rule of the Baath Party, the notion of Iraqi nationalism was relatively strong.

In 2003, this dynamic has changed due to the US invasion of Iraq. Since 2003, the Shia majority has assumed power and tensions between Shias and Sunnis have soared. Consequently, Iraqi nationalism has been replaced by sectarianism. This new dynamic of sectarianism is clearly manifested during Ashura. Whilst they were banned during the regime of Saddam Hussein, these rituals have emerged as the most powerful cultural, religious, and political event in Iraq. It has been estimated that over 20 million Shia pilgrims -Iraqi and from abroad- commemorated Ashura in Iraq in 2015. Iranians, for example, have been participating in unprecedented numbers in these rituals in Iraq whilst Iraqi Sunnis feel excluded. This warrants exploration in order to understand how Ashura rituals have affected Iraqi nationalism.

Religious Affiliation and Arab Nationalism in Arab Emigration Literature

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Abstract

In Arab emigration literature, the writer's religious affiliation appears to be the defining factor that sets the tone of a literary work, including such important aspects as intertextuality, the intended

audience, integration in Western society, taboo topics, promoted values, and sometimes even the choice of words. The reason of such a great influence of religious affiliation on all aspects of a writer's life and work might be that, in Arab countries, it is displayed in a person's civil registry data and affects both career and personal life, e.g., marriage. Furthermore, each religious group is also characterized by a specific outlook on the nature of Arabs as a nation and the definition of own place within it, politics and development of Arab countries, their relationship with foreign countries, for instance, France, Iran, Russia, or the U.S. It must be noted that these views usually appear in Arab literature, in particular, in Arab emigration literary works as, for example, political statements pronounced by literary characters, description of positive and negative patterns of behavior, or explicit discussion with the writer's opponents. The study explores various religious affiliation and national identity combinations that appear in Arab emigration literature written in different times, countries, and languages as well as methods that the writers choose to expose their views or defend their cause.

The Cult of Divine Mercy and the Case of Two National Identities

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Abstract

In 1931, Sister Faustina Kowalska, a nun in the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Plock, Poland, received a vision of Jesus who commanded her to paint his image exactly as he appeared to her and to have it blessed on the first Sunday after Easter, a day to be designated as the Feast of Mercy. While visions of Christ were not a new experience for Sister Faustina, this episode acquired particular significance for both her and the Catholic Church as it marked the beginning of the development of the Cult of Divine Mercy, a devotion especially popular in Poland and Lithuania, places connected to Sister Faustina's life, visions, and the history of the image of Divine Mercy. Painted in 1934 in Vilnius under Sister Faustina's guidance by a Polish painter and blessed by a Polish priest, the image remained in Lithuania, housed in a predominantly Polish parish. Meanwhile, in Krakow, Poland a second image was created in 1938, stirring a controversy about the authenticity of representation of Sister Faustina's vision – and of the ownership of the cult.

This paper uses the cult of Divine Mercy in Poland and Lithuania as a prism to explore questions of national identity. It argues that the cult became an important gathering point in these countries' struggles for the preservation of their national identities as they were incorporated into the Soviet bloc, but also as they defined their identities against each other. These issues were clearly articulated as both countries fought over the ownership of Sister Faustina's legacy, of the image of the Divine Mercy – and of the devotion itself.

Closing plenary session

Chair: Milda Ališauskienė

Katarzyna Zielinska, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

Religion in the Public Sphere – a Discursive Approach

Religion in the Public Sphere – a Discursive Approach

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Abstract

José Casanova's influential book *Religion in Modern Times* marks a shift in the conceptualisation of the role and presence of religion in the public sphere. By challenging the assumptions lying at the root of the secularisation thesis – predicting privatisation of religion and its declining social influence in modern, democratic societies – Casanova initiated vigorous discussions in the field of social sciences, in both European and non-European contexts, opening up a new field of research. However, recent critical reassessments of Casanova's work challenge the way he conceptualised and operationalised public presence of religion, and point to some shortcomings.

In my presentation I aim to contribute to this ongoing discussion. Drawing on the existing literature that critically assesses the way public presence of religion is conceptualised, I argue that a discursive approach to religion and the public sphere could help to overcome at least some of the identified limitations. My recent research about religion in the Polish parliament will serve to illustrate this.