BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

16TH ISORECEA CONFERENCE

"RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND BEYOND"

APRIL 25–27, 2024

TIRANA, ALBANIA

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Gergely Rosta

Milda Ališauskienė

Annette Leis-Peters

Siniša Zrinščak

Gjergj Sinani

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Genti Kruja

Agata Rejowska

Ana Uka

Isa Erbas

Gintarė Pocė

Hysni Skura

MIKLÓS TOMKA AWARD COMMITTEE

Barbara Thériault

Katarzyna Zielińska

Miroslav Tižik

SOLIDARITY FUND COMMITTEE

Anna Mariya Basauri Ziuzina

Dorota Hall

Olaf Müller

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska is full professor of psychology at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow, Poland. She is chair of Department of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality. She is also a professor emerita at the Jagiellonian University.

Her research and teaching areas include psychology of culture, psychology of migration (with 25 years of experience in refugee research), psychology of religion and spirituality.

She was visiting professor in USA (at Santa Barbara University and Rochester University) and in Norway (Hamar Research Institute). She has been guest lecturer at several European universities. She is the past president of the International Association for the Psychology of Religion (2019-2023).

Marian Burchardt is professor of Sociology at Leipzig University, senior research partner of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, and associate fellow of the Humanities Center of Advanced Studies "Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities". As a cultural sociologist, he is interested in how diversity shapes institutions and everyday life. His research engages with the sociology of knowledge, the sociology of religion, urban sociology and theories of modernity, and draws on qualitative and ethnographic methods. He is especially interested in how notions of diversity influence social life and public space through nation-state regulations, law and urban policy. He is the author of Regulating Difference: Religious Diversity and Nationhood in the Secular West (Rutgers University Press, 2020) and Faith in the Time of AIDS: Religion, Biopolitics and Modernity in South Africa (Palgrave Macmillan 2015).

Johann Hafner is full professor for "Religious Studies with a focus on Christianity" at the University of Potsdam.

He studied in Philosophy and Catholic Theology in Augsburg, Munich, Vigan (Philippines). He wrote his master thesis (1990) on Heidegger's influence on philosophy of religion, and his dissertation (1996) on the philosophical concept of living beings. His habilitation (2001) dealt with system theory applied to Gnostic and Catholic groups in 2nd cent. CE.

He was Visiting Lecturer at the University of Dayton (USA) and Visiting Researcher at the University of Southern California (USA). Since 2018 he is Director of the Centre "Forum Religionen im Kontext"

He is involved in cooperations and exchange-programs with universities in Dayton/USA, Bangalore/India, Qom/Iran, Erbil/Irak.

His fields of research are local religious communities, history of angels and heavens, system theory of religion, religious and physical cosmologies.

PLENARY SESSION 1. CONFERENCE OPENING AND KEYNOTE LECTURE

Welcoming speeches by:

University Beder College rector **Prof. Dr. Gjergj Sinani**,

IAHR president **Prof. Tim Jensen**,

ISORECEA president **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gergely Rosta**

COREnet chair **Prof. Dr. MildaAlišauskienė**

Member of the Organizing Committee **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Genti Kruja**

Miklós Tomka Award and COREnet Master's Thesis Award Ceremony

Moderator**: Nasibe Nur Karik**

Keynote lecture:

Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska - Jesuit University Ignatianum in Cracow

The Image of Refugees as One of the Factors Influencing the Social Cohesion: Insights from the Psychology of Culture and Religion

The image of refugees appearing in the public space through the media often precedes an actual encounter with these individuals by the citizens of a given country. The aim of this presentation is to point out the elements of this widespread image that a priori determine a negative attitude towards individuals who are absent in reality. Images of various refugee groups will be presented, which to varying degrees influence the formation of such negative attitudes. The approach to refugees, viewing them as victims, will be contrasted with portraying them as those who have shown resilience and agency despite traumatic experiences. The role of academics, NGOs, and politicians in shaping such an image will be presented, as well as the role of religion as a factor influencing the larger or shorter distance between refugees and the (potentially) receiving society.

Chair: **Olaf Müller**

PARALLEL SESSION 1: POLARIZING RELIGIONS – A201

Marjan Smrke - University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The Rupnik Scandal as a Factor in Intra-catholic Rifts

In the article, I describe the case of Father (or more appropriately ex-Father) Marko Rupnik, his ascent to the very peak of contemporary Catholic sacred art followed by his fall – namely, his expulsion from the Jesuit order because of alleged sexual offenses and the violation of canon law (2022/23). I am interested in the consequences of the scandal on the Catholic community internationally and above all in Rupnik's home country of Slovenia. The scandal triggered a range of responses in Slovenia: from denial, conspiracy theories, relativization or justification of the actions attributed to him, to disappointment, anger, and demands for consequential punishment in the context of cancel culture. The scandal deepened certain existing rifts and intrigues within the Catholic community in Slovenia which had resulted from two previous traumas: the 2010 financial scandal at the Archdiocese of Maribor, known as the "holy crash", and the removal of four Slovenian archbishops between 2009 and 2013. It is difficult to evaluate if the Rupnik scandal contributed to the decline in religious participation and trust in the Catholic Church in Slovenia that were observed in recent surveys. Unfortunately, this case did nothing either locally or internationally towards addressing the misguided Catholic attitude towards clergy and sexuality, one symptom of which is the Rupnik scandal in Slovenia.

Keywords: Catholic church, Slovenia, celibacy, sexual offences

Željko Pavić - Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia
Krunoslav Vukelić - Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

Religion and the Increase of Socio-political Polarization in Croatian Society

The authors start from the understanding of socio-political polarization as a situation in which there are overlapping sources of division concerning specific social and political issues that are not randomly distributed, implying that such polarization can be related to higher levels of social conflicts and threats to democratic consensus. Based on data taken from the European Values Study, the authors test several research questions related to the connections between religiosity, political orientation,

and attitudes on some morally contentious issues (homosexuality and abortion) and their time trends. The results show an increase in socio-political polarization, i.e. a significant increase in the connection between religiosity and the above-mentioned topics in the last wave of the European Values Study. The authors interpret the findings with a model of elite influence on the attitudes of the general population, i.e. by evoking a noticeable increase in the politicization of religion, as well as its role in the ongoing cultural wars in the Croatian society.

Keywords: Socio-political polarization, religion, political orientation, Croatia.

Nikolina Hazdovac Bajić - Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia
Dinka Marinović Jerolimov - Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia
Siniša Zrinščak - University of Zagreb, Croatia

Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church in Croatia: Between the Public and the Private

The paper focuses on the cases of sexual abuse committed by the Catholic clergy in Croatia. The subject of our research is how these cases have been discussed publicly and inside which frames. Theoretically, the paper follows the work of Céline Béraud and her analysis of how some sexual abuse cases in French Catholicism become scandals. Empirically, the paper is based on the cases of abuse covered by leading national and regional newspapers in Croatia. We want to establish: how and why different newspapers chose particular case to cover; what the main tone was, and for how long the covering lasted. While the analysis reveals important insights, it should be noted that, in the case of Croatia, evidence is generally very scarce. There is no systematic review of sexual abuse (by the Church or any independent bodies), and there are no victims' organizations. Taking all that into account the paper will discuss why sexual abuse cases did not provoke large-scale public reactions. This includes (1) the communist legacy (the dominance of "ethno-religious nationalism" and, maybe paradoxically, the fact that the Church was not allowed to run social institutions), (2) the controversial role of the Church in post-communism (its dominant role despite the declining trust and public debates about its social position), (3) slow development of the culture of human rights, in particular visible in the fragile victim's position, and (4)

controversies about what is public and what is private, and how the state should intervene in private areas.

Keywords: Sexual abuse cases, Catholic Church, Croatia, newspapers covering

Irena Borowik - Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

Two Faces of Catholicism in Poland? Religion in the Catholic Press Debates on Abortion, IVF and Homosexuality

The paper concerns the role of religion in debates on biopolitical issues on three biopolitical topics: abortion, IVF and homosexuality in two leading Catholic weeklies. The main aim is to look at the ways in which particular vision of religion is used to legitimize position taken in discourse and mobilize readers to share the presented views. The analysis shows that there are two different visions of religion. In one God has severe face of Old Testament characteristics, the Church as an institution is idealized, believers and in general all people should "obey" to God's will. In the other God is presented as merciful, the Church is seen both positively and critically while the believers are individualized, having their own will granted by God and responsible for their choices and implementation of faith in their lives. The potential and desired function of religion in both visions are also different. In the first religion serves as a source of division of Poles into "good" and "moral" and those "bad", "sinful" and immoral. While in the other religion is seen as a potential and desired bridge for seeking of mutual understanding and compromise.

Keywords: religion, Catholicism, Poland, abortion, in vitro, homosexual orientation

Valdis Teraudkalns - University of Latvia, Latvia

On a Narrow Footbridge Between Different Loyalties: Status of the Latvian Orthodox Church (LOC)

Aim of this paper is to present research done on the LOC in 20th and 21st century. Its history as the separate legal and ecclesial entity goes back to 20-ies of the 20th century. In 1921 Patriarch Tikhon declared its self-governance. From 1936 to 1940 the LOC was under jurisdiction of Constantinople. In Soviet period it was eparchy but in 1992 Patriarch Alexei II reaffirmed Tikhon's decision. The LOC in the recent past carefully have stressed both aspects – loyalty to the state of Latvia as well as canonical

ties with Moscow. Situation dramatically changed with a start of aggression of Russia towards Ukraine. In 2022, the parliament adopted the amendments to the Law of the LOC and proclaimed its independence. However, situation remains ambivalent – there was a controversy about Kirill's name still mentioned in the liturgy. Changes in canonical status was not something debated by the church. It has no political theology which would encourage critical thinking about social-political processes (except when the LOC together with other Christian leaders expressed concerns about what they saw as a threat to Christian values).

PARALLEL SESSION 2: RESILIENT RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS - A203

András Máté-Tóth - University of Szeged, Hungary

Rita Figus-Illinyi - University of Szeged, Hungary

Collective Resilience of Religious Institutions

In our presentation, we will discuss the problem of the credibility of religious institutions using the analytical framework of collective resilience. Religious communities in our region are burdened with a substantial historical legacy that goes back to the entire 20th century, not only to the period of communist persecution of religion and churches. After the regime change, churches are still uncertain about how to adapt to the complex system of post-communist social challenges without compromising their own collective identity. Collective resilience is partly an ability to cope with traumatic challenges and partly a description of the coping process. We analyze the resilience of religious communities in four aspects: the capacity for ecclesial self-critique, the capacity for pluralist understanding of religious truth, the capacity for political orientation, and the counter-controversiality of the role of victimhood. We argue that religious sources and traditions can strengthen and hinder collective resilience. In our presentation, we aim to present an analytical approach that can provide a new way of approaching the problem of the authenticity of religious communities in Central and Eastern European countries. In parallel, by increasing the collective resilience of religious communities, churches can contribute constructively to developing the social common good.

Keywords: resilience, religious institutions, Central and Eastern Europe

Ruzica Cubela - Independent Scholar, Lecturer, Austria

Social Identities of Religious Leaders and the Complex Dynamics of Religious Diversity: Insights from Bosnia and Herzegovina

This research delves into the intricate interplay between the social identities of religious leaders and the broader context of religious diversity, focusing on insights gained from Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). The contribution may illuminate the challenges and opportunities of religious diversity in the region. Building upon the research framework of Social Identity Theory (SIT) and employing thematic analysis,

the study investigates the social identities of religious leaders from the Islamic community (IZ), the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vrhbosna, and the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) in B&H and their attitudes towards EU integration, which is an under-researched topic. The findings reveal a nuanced relationship between social identity, religious beliefs, and perceptions of the EU society, showcasing both positive and negative dimensions.

This presentation contributes to the broader discourse, exploring the complex dynamics of religious diversity and its implications for social cohesion. Drawing on empirical data from B&H, the discussion will touch upon the impact of social identities on attitudes toward religious diversity, the role of religion in social cohesion, and the potential influences of religious leaders on broader societal perceptions. Through the lens of B&H, this contribution aims to stimulate further discussion on the factors influencing religious diversity and its role in shaping cohesive societies in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond.

Keywords: Religious leaders, Social Identity Theory, EU integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Religious diversity, Social cohesion, Central and Eastern Europe, Thematic analysis.

Róbert Zoltán - Institute of Religious Studies, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Changes in the Role of Romanian Protestant Ministers Bálint

The political, economic and social changes in post-communist Romania have brought significant changes in the everyday lofe of religious denominations. The extreme exile of churches and religion from the life of society (previously their activities had been strictly limited to the internal life of the church) has been ended. Churches have been allowed to operate in the public sphere, in the institutional sphere of the state and to play a wider role in society. Along with the organisational changes in the churches brought about by social transformations, there has also been a transformation of ministerial activity.

The changes in ministerial roles have taken place in response to the expectations and opportunities of the social context, alongside the actions determined by the changes in the church organisation, but equally important has been the evolution of the ministerial vocation in this respect. I see the minister as a self-reflecting, self-

interpreting actor who shapes his or her vocational image through reflection on his or her identity, roles and activities, along the lines of specific values that are important to him or her. This, in turn, in its own way reflects on his activities and the roles he or she assumes. The change in the roles of ministers after 1989 was not only the result of a need in the church organisation or the environment, but also of the tension between the necessary and the real vocational image, or in other definitions, the tension between the desired and the lived vocational image. In my research, I am exploring how pastoral roles have been shaped by the rapid changes in the social environment and other aspect. Firstly, I conceptualise ministerial roles (based on Samuel L Blizzard's typologisation) and then I examine the challenges that ministers face in fulfilling their vocation (role).

The aim of the research is to explore the new tasks that Protestant ministers face in their work, the problems/stresses that arise in the course of these tasks. What seems to be emerging is that, in addition to specific roles related to institutional religiosity, in the context of Romania, the work of ministers involves responding to individual or changing community religiosity needs, which require new ways and forms of organising congregational life. In addition, the cultural and community needs of communities, especially in settlements that are disconnected from the institutional network, pose new challenges.

Keywords: protestant minister, role, social change, Romania

Rita Figus-Illinyi - J. Selye University, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary
Credibility and Resilience

In our presentation, we will discuss the problem of the credibility of religious institutions using the analytical framework of collective resilience. Religious communities in our region are burdened with a substantial historical legacy that goes back to the entire 20th century, not only to the period of communist persecution of religion and churches. After the regime change, churches are still uncertain about how to adapt to the complex system of post-communist social challenges without compromising their own collective identity. Collective resilience is partly an ability to cope with traumatic challenges and partly a description of the coping process. We analyze the resilience of religious communities in four aspects: the capacity for ecclesial self-critique, the

capacity for pluralist understanding of religious truth, the capacity for political orientation, and the counter-controversiality of the role of victimhood. We argue that religious sources and traditions can strengthen and hinder collective resilience. In our presentation, we aim to present an analytical approach that can provide a new way of approaching the problem of the authenticity of religious communities in Central and Eastern European countries. In parallel, by increasing the collective resilience of religious communities, churches can contribute constructively to developing the social common good.

Keywords: Religious Institutions, credibility, resilience.

Zsuzsanna Demeter–Karászi - University of Debrecen, Hungary
Gabriella Pusztai - University of Debrecen, Hungary

Institutional Culture as a Channel for Religious Ethos in Higher Education

Religious communities establish and maintain a large number of religiously affiliated higher education institutions throughout the world. These institutions, operating within the higher education system, bear religious attributes in their formally and/or informally undertaken missions. International research shows that religiously affiliated higher education in the 21st century can exhibit much more distinctive features than in the past, as the increasing competition for students forces the sector to respond, the religious affiliated sector can either become uniform or assume an individual profile. The need to respond brings about a diversity within the religious affiliated sector, and although religiously affiliated higher education is represented almost globally, it serves fundamentally different functions in various geographical, regional-societal, and cultural segments. The diversity within the religious affiliated sector can be grasped at several levels, it is most evident, however, in the institutional culture, as institutions utilize the channels of institutional culture to emphasize diversity and various functions. The following question may therefore arise: inasmuch as, in response to the challenges, a distinct institutional culture is truly perceptible in religious affiliated institutions, how attractive can the examined institutions be as alternatives to public sector higher education institutions in the globalized, pluralistic, post-Christian era. Additionally, considering the continuously narrowing pool of higher education

applicants, which institutional culture might different groups of prospective students be most open to.

In our research, we conducted a cross-sectoral comparison of higher education institutions in two countries. Our research was based on the SRAPHE 2019 (Students in Religious Affiliated and Public Higher Education) database, which has a total of 922 participants. We hypothesized that there would be differences between sectors when looking at the student dimensions of institutional culture, thus revealing a specific institutional culture in each sector. The dimensions of institutional culture perceived at the student level were identified as recruitment, learning characteristics and relational integration within the institution.

Based on our results, we can confirm that a specific function and institutional culture of religious affiliated higher education institutions has emerged from our research. The impact of these institutions on students can already be grasped in the anticipatory phase of student socialization and can then be seen in the students' academic and achievement constructs at several points.

Keywords: institutional culture, higher education, religious affiliated institutions.

PARALLEL SESSION 3: COEXISTING RELIGIONS – A301

Genti Kruja - University College Beder, Albania

The Interfaith Dialogue and Challenges of Religious Diversity in Germany

Germany is one of the largest countries in the European Union, which has the largest number of immigrants. Today it has a marked religious diversity and an important contribution to interreligious dialogue through a large number of organizations, NGOs and universities, which are working to strengthen and promote interreligious dialogue in Germany and beyond.

Germany also is a country of art, culture and music festivals has in recent years become a home for another kind of festival that focuses on dialogue between Jews and Muslims. These festivals offer a refreshing take on interfaith dialogue and appeal to new audiences by shifting the dialogue from the religious sphere to culture, politics, arts and music. This is important because many Jews and Muslims don't necessarily identify along religious lines. Further, going beyond the religious sphere allows participants to explore contemporary political themes and intersectional connections often relating to experiences of marginalization and migration.

Germany today is recognized as one of the countries that attracts more immigrants than almost any other country in Europe. This has increased religious and cultural diversity, encouraging not only the German government and state, but also many non-profit organizations and academic institutions towards interreligious dialogue.

Based on this point of view, this study, based on the developed questionnaire, will analyze the work and role of academic institutions and NGOs in Germany, which promote dialogue, as the only alternative against hate speech, which has an increase in Germany recently.

Keywords: interfaith, interreligious, harmony, diversity, religion, dialogue, Germany

Sophie Zviadadze - Ilia State University, Georgia

One God and Two Heaven – Some Features of Christian-Muslim Coexistence and Ambivalent role of religion in Adjara

A middle-aged woman in Adjara told me that she would not be baptized as a Christian because then she would not be able to meet her parents in heaven, who were Muslims.

The second woman converted to Christianity, still performs some Muslim rituals in honor of her parents. As she says, God is one. Adjara is a region in Georgia populated by ethnic Georgians who confess to Islam. To be Muslim in a Christian-dominated country, particularly when religion (Christianity) is perceived as a significant marker of national identity, is followed by discrimination and alienation. In the early 90-s, in the time of religious and national revival in Georgia, many Adjarians converted to Christianity, in their words, "to the religion their forefathers". However, many Ajarians "rediscover Islam" too, for them also as "a religion of their forefathers". The religious field shaped with this binarity reveals the ambivalent role of religion in everyday life. Under the dominance of the Christian national narrative in the public discourse Muslim identity for ethnic Georgians is perceived as "unacceptable" and causes several discrimination cases. Alongside this trend, the research demonstrates a particular religious culture among Muslims with high intercultural competencies and respect towards the choice of the religion of their family members. Muslims and converted Christians express the veneration for two religious' traditions, two sacralities, expressed in different forms in everyday life.

The presentation aims to discuss how the coexistence of two religions shapes the religious imaginations of Adjarians, how everyday religion transcends boundaries and bears the strong social ties between Muslims and Christians, and how religious nationalism and institutional religion may shift the vernacular religious reality.

Keywords: Georgia, Islam, Christianity, Everyday Religion, Cohabitation, Marginality, Religious Transformation

Oleksandra Bibik - University of Lille, CECILLE laboratory, France

Coexistence of Islam and Shintō in Taishō and Shōwa Period Japan: Case Study of Tanaka

The process of creating a background for coexistence with local religions is a necessary part of importing a foreign religion to Japan. In the case of importing Christianity and Islam, the background was designed by translating the sacred texts and theological concepts by using the terminology of local religions that was familiar to the wider Japanese audience.

Tanaka Ippei (1882-1934) was one of the first Japanese Muslims and pioneers of Islamic studies in Japan who significantly impacted both the construction of Japanese reception of Islam and its actual history. By referencing the ideas from Guan Zhong's (720-645 BC) political philosophy, Tanaka is trying to legitimize the necessity of Japan's acceptance of Islam. At the beginning of 1924, Tanaka also became interested in Pan-Asianism, ideas which he tended to use to formulate a new understanding of Islam as an Asian religion, that has common points with Shintō. While the theological aspect of those two religions was never a central topic for Tanaka's work, his religious worldview allowed him to assume that Islam and Shintō could be seen as the aligning religions. Comparing religious practice and theoretical concepts led Tanaka to conclude the existence of a shared root of those religions.

The presentation examines both Tanaka's ideas on Islam and Shintō and their impact on the future development of the actual coexistence of those religions in Taishō (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-1989) period Japan. The main resource for the study is Tanaka's texts on Islam ("The Pilgrim of Islam: The Travel Account of a White Cloud", "Islam and Pan-Asianism", "Future of Chinese Muslims and Japanese Shintō") and letter from his colleagues and following Japanese Muslims thinkers (Ōkawa Shūmei, Ariga Bunpachiro) who was influenced by Tanaka.

Keywords: Islam, Shinto, coexistence of religions, translation, adaptation

Indrek Pekko - University of Tartu, Estonia

Religious Diversity and Social Cohesion – Estonian Case

Estonia is a mostly non-religious country with a very secularised society, although new religious phenomena is quite common and beloved among Estonian people and its influence is growing.   General processes of religious change and religious individualization have affected majority religions, especially the Lutheran Church very badly by losing its members and importance in the society – it can't speak for all Estonian people anymore. This is a very painful development for the former people's church. There has been a lot of struggle and discussions about its identity and the Lutheran church has chosen a way of supporting conservative values and traditions. On the other hand, this secular society has a good impact on the coexistence of different religions and Christian denominations. Religions in general are among the

minorities, so instead of fighting each other, they are good partners (examples are relations between Jewish and Muslim communities, but also the activity of the Estonian Church Council and Roman Catholic church). Thereby a common enemy for traditional religious groups is new religious phenomena. This paper presents how the Lutheran church as one of the biggest churches in Estonia has lost its place and role in the society and how it has influenced religious diversity and social cohesion in Estonia.

Keywords: Lutheran church, Estonia, secularization, non-religion, new religious movements

Istvan Keul - University of Bergen, Norway

Ethno-Religious Dynamics in Context: Lutheranism and the Transylvanian Saxons

The presentation looks at ethno-religious diversification and proposes to inquire into the contextuality and situationality of majority-minority relations on an intermediary, intra-group level. The selected case study examines socio-religious dynamics within a largely homogenous ethno-religious community in late 20th-century Romania, the Lutheran Transylvanian Saxons. Often characterized as a culturally predominantly static intersectional minority, the community has experienced various forms of internal diversification in these past decades, processes that have affected the validity of widespread assumptions regarding the religious affiliation of the Transylvanian Saxons on the one hand, and the ethnic composition of the Lutheran Church in Romania on the other.

Keywords: ethno-religious communities; intersectional minorities; religious diversification; Romania; Transylvanian Saxons

PLENARY SESSION 2. KEYNOTE LECTURE

Marian Burchardt - Leipzig University

Fabricating Difference: Religious Diversity, Nationalism, Populism

Religious differences have shaped human societies across history to different degrees. But these differences have become subject to more systematic regulation and manipulation in contemporary nation-states, placed as they are at the intersection of multiple social forces. In my lecture, I explore the fabrication of religious differences within contemporary regimes of religious diversity, focusing on the role of nationalism, populism, migration and the global human rights framework. At the same time, I look at the ways in which these regulation affect the very ways in which people use religion as a category of classification in everyday life. My approach is premised on the idea that religious diversity is a form of neoliberal governmentality.

Chair: **Dorota Hall**

CORENET SESSION 1: GRASSROOT RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND MIGRATION - SENATE ROOM

Kees de Groot - Tilburg University, Netherlands

Annette Leis Peters - VID Specialized University, Norway

Linnea Lundgren - Marie Cederschiöld Högskola, Sweden

Diaconia Going Liquid? Faith-based Initiatives for Migrants in Secularizing Welfare Societies

In the World Values Studies (Inglehart 2021) Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands are among the countries that stand out for a high degree of secularization and relatively strong welfare societies. Historically, Protestant and – in the case of the Netherlands – also Catholic, churches played a major role in the development of these welfare societies. Nowadays, faith-based organizations are still important actors in supporting (religiously diverse) migrants from, both from Central and Eastern Europe (EU-migrants) and beyond. What are the issues these 'diaconal' organizations face, considering the deinstitutionalization of religion, the transition of welfare states, and increasing migration from less secularized countries? Current approaches of social work are often caught up in a binary perspective on religious and non-religious organizations.

This paper presents an approach to research (secularizing) faith-based support by using a modified secularization theory that focusses on processes on the institutional level and asks about both the discontinuities and continuities between more and less secularized faith-based initiatives, focusing on the characteristics of their practices, including the implied practice theory.

Keywords: migrants, faith based, secularization, welfare society, diaconia, social work.

Majbritt Lyck-Bowen - University of Winchester, England

Creating a Sense of Belonging: Promising Practice from a Christian Faith-Based Language Café in Prague.

The importance of sensing they belong as part of successful integration of refugees and migrants is well established in the literature, but it is less known, how this can be

achieved. Based on a pilot study of a faith-based language café in Prague this paper will explore how the language café helps migrants and refugees develop a sense of belonging in the language cafes. This is considered an important first step in the process of developing a sense of belonging in the local community. Based on semi-structured interviews with refugees and migrants that attend the language café regularly the paper explores how practices in three different areas: space and timing; relationship building and dealing with religious and cultural differences contribute to the development of a sense of belonging in the language cafe. The paper will argue that staff play a vital role in all three areas and that despite the language café being funded by a faith-based institution, faith plays a relatively small role in their practices.

Keywords: Belonging, refugees, migrants' integration faith-based

Ksenia Medvedeva - Polish Academy of Sciences, IFIS, Poland

Environmental Activities of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Greece

The paper discusses environmental activities of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Greece and examines the process of "greening" of the Orthodox Church there. It is based on interviews and field work in Greek parishes and monasteries that are known for their ecological activities. The Orthodox were one of the first to react to the ecological critique of Lynn White (1967) towards Christianity by revising their attitude to nature and developing the so-called "eco-theology". John Zizoulas, an Orthodox theologian, used the term "ecological conversion" and called for "a change in priorities, life-styles, modes of production and consumerism" and "ecological conversion" (Zizioulas, 1997). The paper looks sociologically at ideals and values which motivate Orthodox believers to get engaged with eco agenda, applies "lived environmentalism" approach to show how these ideals are implemented into practice, what routine everyday eco habits exist in Orthodox communities, how environmentalism is lived out in religious communities in Greece. They provide us with some examples of changing religious habits, among them fasting. The paper shows that the idea of ethical consumption enters eco-theology and becomes important in the religious context. The paper points at differences in understanding of environmentalism among religious and secular actors, with Orthodox actors having diverse strategies: while the church

hierarchs are vocal about ecological crises in public talks, Orthodox actors on the ground oftentimes try to avoid being labelled as actively engaged in eco agenda.

Keyword: Eastern Orthodox Christianity, ecology, Greece

Antonio Montanes Jimenez - University of Oxford, England

Engaging with Social Media to Spread the Gospel in Pandemic Times: Gitanos, Christianity and the Digital World

The study of gender has played a significant role in developing anthropological work concerning Pentecostal churches and global Christianity. Based on an ethnographic study conducted in Madrid, I explore how religion, masculinity and ethnicity intertwine in Spanish Gitano Pentecostal churches. Adding to a growing scholarship interested in the interface between masculinity and Pentecostalism, I show that born-again Christian Gitano ideals build upon and reshape dominant Gitano secular gendered worldviews. I illustrate how Pentecostal churches remake men's authority within families and gender roles, ultimately transforming the notion of Gitano masculinity. By shedding light on how Gitano believers engage with novel forms of masculinity, I also contribute to advancing anthropological work on kinship, flirting practices, and the politics of marriage among Gitano communities in urban settings in Spain.

Keywords: Gender, Mascuilinity, Pentecostalism, Gitanos

Milda Ališauskienė - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Halina Grzymała-Moszczyńska - Jesuit University Ignatianum, Poland

Jacek Prusak - University of Zagreb, Croatia

Siniša Zrinščak - University of Zagreb, Croatia

Queer Migration in Three Catholic Countries

In this paper, we explore queer migration. We focus on three Catholic-majority countries – Croatia, Lithuania, and Poland – in which the topic of queer migration is not socially observed and is not adequately studied. The paper includes multidisciplinary approach from sociological, psychological and legal perspectives. It is divided into four parts. In the first one, we give an account of the existing scholarship. We take the notion that queer migration is a dynamic process based on the relationship between sexuality and migration and that there are many ways of in- and out-migration, with various outcomes in terms of sexual identity and migration experience. The second part of the paper presents, in a comparative manner, the religious landscape, migration patterns, and legal regulations of LGBTQI in these three countries. The third part, also in a comparative manner, is based on the existing research on a) social attitudes toward LGBTQI communities and b) specific research on queer migration. The main goal is to reveal the social circumstances inside which migration motivations occur. There is not much research in that respect. Still, those existing indicate how sexual identity is one of the reasons for migration (though in different ways) and how a diversity of sexual identities questions the perceived boundary between "religious heterosexual" and "non-religious homosexual". The fourth part of the paper explores different patterns between these three countries. The main question is if and how different observed social attitudes and legal frameworks can be explained by the level of religiosity, the social position of the dominant Catholic Church, and the activities of religious actors (the Church and other religious NGOs) in three countries.

Keywords: Catholic majority, Queer migration, post-communist society, social inclusion and discrimination

Elad Ben David - Bar-Ilan University, Israel

American Muslim Clerics Against the LGBTQ Agenda: Does the Alliance Between the Democrats and the Muslim Community Has Been Polarized?

The September 11 attacks that sparked the rise of Islamophobia in the United States, have exacerbated the anti-Muslim grudge, especially within the Republican Party. This new reality marked a watershed moment for Islam in America, that attracted many in the Muslim Community to coalesce with the Democratic Party, which manifested tolerance and empathy towards their fragile situation, and joined their battle against Islamophobia. However, the salient support of the Democrats for the LGBTQ community and progressive values in the last decade, has challenged many segments within the Muslim community, who have difficulty aligning with an agenda that explicitly contradicts fundamental Islamic values.

In this presentation, I argue that the impact of the LGBTQ community has influenced the prolonged coalition between the Democratic Party and the Muslim community, by exploring the discourse of influential American clerics, who represent mainstream American Islam, and gained much influence and popularity in the post-9/11 era. These American Muslim leaders have manifested over the years relatively moderate attitudes towards the LGBTQ community, and even supported a mutual cautious cooperation on social-political aspects, such as battling Islamophobia. However, recent incidents have clashed the LGBTQ agenda with fundamental Islamic values, such as the increasing "attempts" to redefine norms of gender and sexuality among Muslim children at schools. This sparked clear objections to the LGBTQ ideology, and criticism towards the increasing progressive values that the Democratic party supports.

The methodology for this presentation is based on qualitative research methods, analyzing the discourse of American Muslim clerics on various social media platforms, especially on YouTube, which will be complemented by contemporary studies on Islam in the United States. Exploring various aspects and examples of these clerics's discourse, will stress the critical influence of the LGBTQ community on contemporary American Islam, and its implication on future social-political coalitions.

Keywords: LGBTQ, American Muslim community, post-9/11 era, Democratic Party, Islamophobia.

Anna Szwed - Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

Infiltration. Religion, Culture of Individualism and Therapeutic Culture in Roman Catholic Women's Practices

My presentation focuses on the infiltration of religion by elements of secular practices, including meanings, know-hows, materiality. The result of these processes is both infiltrated religion and consequently religion which infiltrates everyday practices. Using a praxeological lived religion approach (Ammerman 2021) as the theoretical framework I demonstrate the impact of individualistic culture and therapeutic culture on women's practising of Catholicism. I point out the particular role that social media play in this process. I treat them as hubs enabling not only the flow of ideas, meanings and know-hows, but also the legitimisation of the emerging hybrid entities as Catholic. In the presentation, I refer to data collected in individual in-depth interviews with big-city, educated and religiously committed Roman Catholic women in Poland and to the results of ethnography conducted in an online community for Catholic women. I argue that infiltration can be interpreted not necessarily as a form of undermining or displacement of religion by secular ideas or practices, but rather as a process by which religion adapts to late modernity. Infiltrated religion (and infiltrating religion) allows individuals to maintain their religious identity under conditions of increasing secularisation. It is in this often hybrid form that religion is re-integrated into modern women's everyday lives.

Keywords: lived religion, religious practices, culture of individualism, therapeutic culture, women, Catholicism

Morta Vidūnaitė - Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

The Agency and Leadership of Pious Lithuanian Catholic and Lutheran Women: Challenging the Dichotomy of the Religious and Secular

The secular is often presented as rational, progressive, and associated with the public and male sphere, while the religious is seen as irrational, backward, and associated with the private and female sphere (Asad 2003; Knibbe and Bartelink 2019). Nevertheless, the relationship between the religious and non-religious or secular is a boundary zone that is heavily contested (Beckford; 2003) and neither secularism nor religion are uniformly progressive or backward (Asad 2003; Knibbe and Bartelink

2019). The "secular" and "religious" concepts of agency reflect a dichotomy between the secular and the religious as influenced by classical secularization theory, centered on Europe, Christianity, modernization, and male religiosity (Beckford 2003; Woodhead 2003, 2008).

There has long been a perception in social sciences that secular people have the most agency and religious women have the least (Mack 2003). Feminist theory has used the notion of false consciousness to describe religious women and has associated agency with female emancipation, liberation, and resistance (Mahmood 2005). From a secular liberal point of view, agency lies in individual autonomy and freedom (Giddens 1976, 1984).

However, more recently feminist scholars have acknowledged that pious women might have goals other than feminist ones, such as piety, morality, the observance of their religion, care for others, fulfilling relationships, etc., and their agency can exist even in their subordination to patriarchy (Abu-Lughod 2002; Avishai 2008; Davidman and Greil 1994; Mack 2003; Mahmood 2005; Orsi 1997; Ozorak 1996).

Based on the open and modal concept of agency (encompassing both religious goals of piety, moral norms, observance, etc., as well as secular, liberal, and feminist ambitions) and semi-structural qualitative interview data (2022-2024), the presentation explores, how religion provides the pious Lithuanian Catholic and Lutheran women with agency for leadership in church, career, family and elsewhere, challenging the dichotomy of the religious and secular.

Keywords: Agency, leadership, religious, secular, gender, Lithuanian Catholic and Lutheran women

CORENET SESSION 2: RELIGIOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - A203

Laura Diaconu (Maxim) - University of Iasi, Romania

Elena Toader - University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Gr.T.Popa" Iași, Romania

Mihai-Bogdan Petrișor - University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Gr.T.Popa" Iași, Romania

The Impact of Religion on the Socio-economic Development

If we talk about a direct relationship between the development of a nation and its culture, then we see the influence of religion on the nation's prosperity. When referring to religion as a cultural vector, some analysts noticed that there are significant differences between Catholics and Protestants in the way the economic activities are performed. Moreover, it was considered that the Jews' success in business is closely connected to religion. Recent studies underline the positive impact of the religious beliefs on the economic commitment. For example, it was argued that religion has a direct influence on the economic growth because it promotes values with a great adherence among population. Yet, when the impact that the different religions have on the intention to become an entrepreneur is discussed, the opinions are divided. On one hand, there are studies which certify that the Christianity and the Islam favor these intentions, while the Hinduism does not. On the other hand, others found that the Buddhists and the Christians are more inclined to develop the entrepreneurial activities, while the Muslims do not have this preoccupation. Considering these aspects, the purpose of the present paper is to investigate the impact that religion has on the socio-economic development of Romania by enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of the young adults.

Keywords: Religion, socio-economic development, entrepreneurship, Romania

Marko Galić - University of Belgrade, Serbia

Working Saturday and the Growth of Small-Scale Entrepreneurship Among the Yugoslavian Adventists

Until the second half of the '60s, Saturday was the common workday for the population of former Yugoslavia. Due to this, many Adventists encountered problems, primarily

for not sending their children to school and for avoiding work on this day, which they considered holy. In order to both work and observe Saturday as their Sabbath, Yugoslavian Adventists began opening private stores and shops, allowing them to select the days they would work. The challenge of working on Saturday naturally fostered greater solidarity among Adventists, prompting older members to teach younger one's various crafts that enabled them to initiate their own private enterprises. Although Saturday eventually became a non-working day in Yugoslavia by the late '60s, the fall of socialism and the subsequent dissolution of the state in the '90s, followed by the expansion of the private sector, reinstated Saturday as a regular workday for many citizens of former Yugoslav states. Confronted once again with the old dilemma, numerous Adventists began seeking alternatives through private entrepreneurship. This paper centers on the narratives of Adventists who embarked on private business ventures to avoid working on Saturday, examining both socialist and present contexts.

Keywords: Adventists, working Saturday, entrepreneurship

Davide Nicola Carnevale - University of Ferrara, Italy

Socio-economic Ties and Transnational Religious Belonging of Georgian Migrant Women. Orthodox Parishes, Multi-local Engagement, and Religious-based Paths of Empowerment, from Italy to Georgia

This paper results from a scientific mission linked to the Corenet COST action, an it is part of a multi-site collaborative research project dedicated to the transnational forms of religious belonging and socio-economic engagement of women of Georgian origins who migrated to Italy. The research has been based on fieldwork activities and interviews with women with a migration background and representatives of local Orthodox communities. After a preliminary fieldwork activity carried out in Bari, an Italian city among the top destinations for migrants with Georgian origins, the project followed their social and religious biographies backward. The presentation will introduce elements from their biographies and analyze the transnational socio-economic ties they enacted, with a focus on the transformations of their forms of belonging and participation in Christian Orthodox religious groups.

The research project supports the aim to strengthen intersectional perspectives in research about migration and religious diversity, especially concerning gender diversity. Secondly, it introduces the role and positionality of Georgian migrant women within the Orthodox congregations in Italy and Georgia, enlarging the scientific state-of-the-art of research in the field of migration and religious diversity.

Keywords: Migrations, Christian Orthodoxy, Gender, Religious diversity

Laura Diaconu (Maxim) - University of Iasi, Romania

Cristian C. Popescu - University of Iasi, Romania

Religious Orientation and Entrepreneurial Initiatives. A study on Romania

If we talk about a direct relationship between the development of a nation and its culture, then we see the influence of religion on the nation's prosperity. When referring to religion as a cultural vector, some analysts noticed that there are significant differences between Catholics and Protestants in the way the economic activities are performed. Moreover, it was considered that the Jews' success in business is closely connected to religion. Recent studies underline the positive impact of the religious beliefs on the economic commitment. For example, it was argued that religion has a direct influence on the economic growth because it promotes values with a great adherence among population. Yet, when the impact that the different religions have on the intention to become an entrepreneur is discussed, the opinions are divided. On one hand, there are studies which certify that the Christianity and the Islam favor these intentions, while the Hinduism does not. On the other hand, others found that the Buddhists and the Christians are more inclined to develop the entrepreneurial activities, while the Muslims do not have this preoccupation. Considering these aspects, the purpose of the present paper is to investigate the impact that religion has on the socio-economic development of Romania by enhancing the entrepreneurial intentions of the young adults.

Keywords: Religion, socio-economic development, entrepreneurship, Romania

PARALLEL SESSION 5: THE CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE CRISES: A CASE STUDY OF ROMANIA - A301

Laurentiu D. Tanase - University of Bucharest, Romania

Religion, Democracy and Social Crises in Contemporary Romania

The social crises experienced by Romanian society in the last five years have also influenced religious behaviour and affected social cohesion. The pandemic crisis of Covid 19 has generally caused numerous tensions in social cohesion and caused cleavages, including in the relations between the State and the religious Denominations. With a still fragile democracy in Romania and with social mechanisms insufficiently prepared for intervention in the field of religious life, the premises were created for the emergence of populist and even extremist political tendencies. The cleavages deepened even more when social activity was resumed after the Pandemic because the fear of getting sick continued to exist. A new social challenge within religious diversity has generated the military conflict in Ukraine. How have religious denominations positioned themselves concerning social crises? Was the process of religious secularization diminished or accelerated? Are relations between religious denominations affected, and therefore religious pluralism, because of social crises? These are just some of the questions that our study wants to answer. Field observation or qualitative interviews and media analysis will be the primary means of research from a religious studies perspective.

Keywords: Romanians, social crises, religious tensions, religious pluralism, social cohesion

Cezar Dascalu - Institute of Research for Quality of Life (ICCV), Romania

Relation Between Social Crises and Secularization in Romania

One of the relevant factors in increasing religiosity in Romania in the 1990s was the perpetuation of social crises. These were part of the social and political mosaic specific to ex-communist states and positively influenced the degree of religiosity of the population. In Romania, the census data after 1990 highlight a percentage of over 99 religious' affiliations, and the level of trust in the Church was over 80% until 2014,

which made religious cults important social actors. Moreover, Romanians are still among the most religious Europeans today in terms of beliefs and religious practices. If, in the 90s, the social crises supported the amplification of religiosity, starting from 2010, they no longer had the same effect. This text tries to clarify the relationship between social crises and the process of secularization in Romania. Two significant crises will be addressed: the Collective case and the COVID-19 Pandemic, which directly influenced the decrease in religiosity and the amplification of anticlericalism. Keywords: social crises, religiosity, Romania, secularization

Daniel Cergan - "Gheorghe Şincai" National College, Ministry of Education, Romania

Obstacles in the School Integration of Ukrainian Refugee Children in Romania

The war in Ukraine caused waves of refugees who crossed into countries neighboring the conflict and tried to continue a seemingly everyday life, especially for the school education of children who came accompanied only by their mothers because their fathers were at war. Children from Ukraine came to schools in Romania to continue their education. The educational approach, however, turned out to be highly complicated, with many obstacles. First of all, there was the difficulty of communicating through a native language translator. Then, the Romanian school system had to be adapted to the Ukrainian one, which is structured differently. The overcrowding of Romanian schools with the children of refugees from Ukraine created tension among Romanian parents who saw their children's school placement threatened. This situation considerably diminished the empathy towards refugee communities among Romanian citizens. How did the school integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania succeed? Who were the main actors who managed the resulting school tensions? What are the conclusions of the educational approach to integration? Here are just a few of the questions I will try to answer.

Keywords: Romania, school education, Ukrainian refugees, social integration, war in Ukraine

Raymond Horchos - Institute for the Quality of Life, Romania

Breaking Bread Together: Islam and Shared National Identity in Romania

The peaceful coexistence of different religions is crucial in today's world, especially with the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Levant and the arrival of new refugees and immigrants with diverse faith traditions. In Romania, while immigrants may face challenges integrating into the predominantly Romanian Orthodox religious majority, the Dobrogean Model of Religious Pluralism is a unique example of inter-religious coexistence with the potential to clarify the critical factors needed to facilitate peaceful pluralism among religious groups. This paper will investigate the necessary historical and institutional elements for promoting peaceful coexistence, particularly with an eye toward the Islamic minority in the Dobruja region, but not limited to it. The study will also investigate the crucial role of state and affiliated institutions in promoting tolerance and coexistence by protecting freedom of religion. Romania's location at the crossroads of the East and West and the Dobruja region's reputation as a model of religious pluralism makes it an excellent case study for identifying critical factors for the peaceful coexistence of religions in contemporary societies.

Keywords: Christianity, Islam, freedom of religion, religious pluralism, social cohesion

CORENET SESSION 3: THE STATE'S RELIGION POLICY AND RELIGIOUS ACTORS: COOPERATION AND NON-COOPERATION

Ansgar Jödicke - University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Humanitarian Action and Religion. Reasons for and Consequences of Cooperation and Non-Cooperation

In the realm of humanitarian assistance, the role of religious groups is complex, as they can either emerge as crucial allies for state actors or pose potential threats to society and the state. This contribution aims to address the question of why, under what circumstances, and how cooperation between religious and state actors proves effective. Through an examination of case studies from several regions of the South Caucasus and Southeastern Europe, this paper will reveal the pivotal role of the political circumstances in which religious groups undertake humanitarian initiatives. First, the state's approach to religious policy can limit or foster religious engagement in humanitarian endeavors. Second, political power struggles can influence the possibilities of humanitarian action. Third, dominant groups and minority groups face different challenges in humanitarian action. The comparative analysis of regional contexts and cases aims to provide valuable insights into the broader discourse surrounding the interdependence of religious and state entities.

Keywords: Humanitarian aid; religious policy; South Caucasus; religion and politics.

Egdūnas Račius - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Churchification of Muslim Religious Organizations in Central-Eastern Europe and Securitization of Islam

Governance of Islam in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) arguably bears features of what may be labeled as 'churchification of Islam' (Račius 2020). Churchification here is understood as a state-pursued policy strategy in governing of religious plurality, whereby the national legislation pertaining to governance of religions, including Islam, foresees institutional and structural churchification of registered religious collectivities along the lines of the (once) dominant (national) Christian Churches. On the other hand, in a number of the CEE countries, one also observes increasing securitization

of Islam and Muslims, particularly of migrant background, by both state and non-state actors.

At a first glance, it may appear that the two – churchification and securitization – go at each other's expense but, after a closer look, one realizes that the two may also be employed as two parallel strategies on the side of the national governments in their attempts at segregation of 'bad' (immigrant and revivalist-leaning indigenous) Muslims from the 'good' (less observant and more liberal in their lifestyle) ones; finally, churchification of Islam may also be seen as an instrument in the broader securitization strategy (kicked-off in reaction to 9/11 and enhanced in the face of the so-called 'European migrant crisis' of 2015/6) in governing of religious diversity. The paper will consider the spectrum of relations between the churchification of Islam and the securitization of Islam / Muslims as it unfolds in the CEE region in the human security perspective.

Keywords: Churchification of Islam, governance of Islam, Islam in Eastern Europe.

Daniel Vékony - Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary

Muslims in Hungary: Asymmetric Interdependence and the Multiple Dimensions of Human Security in a Post-secular Setting

Unlike in Western Europe, the post-secular moment for post-communist Central European states, including Hungary, did not necessarily bring the liberal and varyingly neutral attitude of the state towards religious organisations. Instead, it brought a less liberal attitude, in which the state acts as a normative power shaping the relationship vis-á-vis religious communities based on clear value sets based on traditional and historical reference points.

In Hungary, this process manifests in the governing elite's shaping the constitutional system to grant Christianity a special status. For Muslim communities in Hungary this situation poses challenges. Although Muslim organizations are free to operate and two of them are recognized as established churches, the most favourable in a multi-tiered recognition system. The government uses Islam and Muslims for their security discourse, in which Muslims, migration and terrorism are presented in the same securitized framework.

For the government, the small Muslim population of Hungary serve as the representation of an almost non-existent significant other, that is very useful for the governing elite's securitized discourse. Accordingly, the government positions itself as the security guarantor for the wider population, rejecting migration and the growth of the Muslim community in Hungary. This could be linked to domains such as personal and community security, but it also has relevance for ontological security, too. On the side of the Muslim communities, issues concerning political and personal security come up in the context of unfavourable playing field, in which Muslim churches are not treated the same way as other politically favoured churches are.

In this setup, Muslim churches are useful for the governing elite, as they act as a reference point for the government discourse of the ultimate security guarantor for all including Muslims, which brings the governing elite further legitimacy in its effort to hold on to power.

Keywords: post-secular, Muslims, religion, security, securitization, human security

Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović - Institute for Balkan Studies SASA, Serbia

Faith-Based Organizations and Refugees in Serbia: the (In)visible Collaboration and Social Inclusion Efforts

In the paper I will present the role of humanitarian faith-based organization in refugee and migrant support in Serbia since 2015. This contribution is based on the research conducted in 2017 and qualitative semi-structured interviews with the representatives of five faith-based organizations which are associated with churches and religious communities that have active base of believers in Serbia and a network of churches across its territory. Namely, these are Čovekoljublje, faith-based organization associated with the Serbian Orthodox Church, Jesuit Refugee Service associated with the Roman Catholic Church, Gajret organization within the Islamic Community of Serbia and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Besides the interviews and information spread through the specific media of these organizations (web pages), for the description of the context in which these organisations operate we also used other relevant data, such as the reports on refugees and migrants in migration in Serbia. The main argument of the paper is that, although significant efforts of the faith-based organizations in Serbia has been achieved, these are very often not visible in the public and the state institutions working in the refugee and migration policy. The research examines how faith-based organisations function as (in)visible support to the state.

Keywords: religious groups, migration, refugees, Serbia

Maija Grizāne

Daugavpils University, Latvia

The Right to the Last Farewell: Resisting Forced Secularization in Soviet Latvia

The Soviet regime in Latvia (1944-1990/1991) led to serious changes in various spheres of life, including forced secularization as part of the propaganda of the atheistic worldview. Any kind of religiosity was declared obscurantism. Funerals, as the most conservative rituals of transition, were the last to be introduced to the new Soviet traditions. The funeral service in the church with priests had to be replaced by secular ceremony with a funeral conductor, speeches of proper communists and orchestra accompaniment. People, especially those, who occupied important positions during their lifetime, were required to be buried in accordance with the communist traditions despite the fact that the Constitution of the USSR proclaimed the right of every Soviet citizen to freedom of religion.

By analyzing the records of the life-stories from the collection of the Oral History Centre of Daugavpils University, Latvia, it is possible to observe the changes in funeral traditions that took place in Christian communities (Catholic, Protestant, Russian Orthodox, Old Believers) on the territory of eastern Latvia. Individual experiences of organizing a farewell to the deceased represent the attitude of the interviewees to restrictions of religious practice: submit to forced innovations or invent new ways to preserve the old traditions. If a secular funeral became inevitable, as a rule, people tried to organize a religious ceremony in secret contributing to the emergence of such a phenomenon as combined funerals. Although religious freedom was subject to prohibitions, believing people tried to give the last tribute to the dead even if other Christian traditions were not followed. For some people preservation of religious rites had become an instrument of resistance to Sovietization and maintaining loyalty to the former, independent and democratic Latvia.

Keywords: Latvia, forced secularization, Sovietization, funeral traditions

Nadezhda Beliakova - University of Bielefeld, Germany

Perceptions of Religious Freedom in the Late Soviet Lithuania

This paper discusses how official church leaders and religious dissent movement in Lithuania during the Late Soviet period initiated the discussion and presented in open letters their understanding of religious freedom in 1977 (in the context of the discussion of the new Soviet Constitution). The proposals of leadership of the Catholic Church of Lithuania to the Soviet government followed the same logic that the Holy See made proposals in the documents produced during the Helsinki process and made direct reference to point 7 of "basket 1" of the Helsinki Final Act (free change of information) and much less to "basket 3" (which dealt with human rights). Whereas letters from opposition priests focused more on family values and religious education of children, the manifestation of religious freedom as a human right seemed to be interpreted in the context of violent secularization, soviet concept of freedom of conscience and diversity of religious landscape in the republics of the Soviet Union. The paper discusses the problem of cohesion among religious minorities in the late USSR considering the challenges of religious manifestation and different historical approaches to the analysis of claiming religious freedom during that period. The paper suggests that the socio-historical analysis of the experiences of declaration of the right to freedom of religion, used by different groups of religious minorities during the Late Soviet period, allows to differentiate motives and patterns of violations of religious freedom in non-democratic societies.

Keywords: religious freedom, religious diversity, history of religious minorities

Magdalena Ratajczak - University of Wrocław, Poland

Olga Breskaya - University of Padova, Italy

Andrea Porcarelli - University of Padova, Italy

Exploring Social Perceptions of Religious Freedom and Pluralism among Polish and Italian Youth

This paper questions to which degree perceptions of religious freedom and positive attitudes toward religious diversity by youth are conditioned by individual religiosity and political socialization in predominantly Catholic Poland and Italy. By comparing the samples of Polish (n = 693) and Italian (n = 1035) youth, the authors delve into the

broader social, political, and religious dynamic of assessed countries and address two questions. First, if and how religious affiliation (and specifically the status of being 'religious none'), belief, worship, and socialization in the family influence perceptions of religious freedom and pluralism? Second, how does political socialization of young people (analyzed through the concepts of political orientation (left/right), participation in elections and political engagement) contribute to advancement of ideas of social cohesion, religious freedom and endorsement of religious pluralism? The paper highlights the importance of comparative perspective in the study of the role of religious freedom in societies and pluralistic values, as shared by young people, thus examining the patterns of establishment of stronger culture of social cohesion and inclusion.

Keywords: religious freedom, religious pluralism, religious nones, social cohesion, political socialization

James T. Richardson - University of Nevada, Reno

Jehovah's Witnesses in Central and Eastern Europe: Political and Legal Concerns

My presentation will first offer some overall information concerning Jehovah's Witnesses in Central and Eastern European countries. Data will be presented demonstrating that Witnesses are active in all Central and Eastern European countries, and that this has been the case for many decades. Then the presentation will focus on selected C&E countries to highlight various concerns that have arisen as the Witnesses have attempted to practice their beliefs and activities openly and to seek to win others to their faith. Included in this focus on specific countries will be a discussion of Witness experiences in Albania, the host country for the conference. Comparisons will also be offered to how Witnesses have been dealt with in other parts of Europe and in Russia, including especially within the judicial arm of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Keywords: Jehovah's Witnesses, Albania, Central and Eastern European countries, court cases, laws limiting religious activities

Márk Nemes - University of Szeged, Hungary

Attila Miklowicz - University of Pécs, Hungary

Contributions in Crisis: A Cross-Cultural Examination of The Church of Scientology's Volunteer Minister Program and COVID-19 in Hungary and South Africa

In 1976, the founder of the Church of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, introduced the Volunteer Minister program with the publishing of the Volunteer Minister's Handbook. Based on a previous study conducted in New York's hospitals and social service centers, this new initiative strived to serve as a more direct method of reaching new possible converts and aiding society in times of uncertainty or turmoil. These functions of the movement became highly important during the 2019-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, with the overwhelming stress on established religious and societal relief services. The paper focuses on the Hungarian situation and analyses the actions of the volunteer ministers after the lockdowns in March 2020. Our research aimed to uncover the alternative methods for maintaining the volunteer ministers' activity and their contributions to the relief processes during the early lockdown period. To complement these findings, we incorporated results of a representative mixed-method investigation conducted by Ipsos, as well as other international investigations (such as Rosita Šoryte's study of Scientology and COVID-10). Lastly, by elaborating on the results of similar research conducted in the South African Republic, we will offer possible cross-cultural comparisons focusing on the utilized relief measures and methods.

Keywords: Scientology, Scientology in Hungary, Scientology in South Africa, Scientology and COVID-19

Rosita Šorytė - European Federation for Freedom of Belief (FOB)

Scientology, African Style I: Scientology's Volunteer Ministers in Africa, During and After COVID-19

South African media covered the Volunteer Ministers of the Church of Scientology during the COVID-19 pandemic for their cooperation in sanitizing public spaces and education campaigns. The coverage was generally favorable, and in South Africa in general controversies about the Church of Scientology are not as present in the media as in the United States or Europe, including Central and Eastern Europe. The story of the Volunteer Ministers of Scientology in Africa, however, goes beyond COVID-19 and offers a significant window from where to understand how the Church of Scientology adapts itself to the African context.

Keywords: Church of Scientology, Scientology, Scientology and COVID-19, Scientology Volunteer Ministers, Scientology in Africa

Massimo Introvigne - CESNUR (Center for Studies on New Religions), Italy

Scientology, African Style II: Scientology's Interfaith Work in Africa

In December 2023, a Scientology became Deputy Chair of the African Federation for Religious and Spirituality Liberty, whose Chair is the leader of a traditional African spirituality group while the Secretary is a Pentecostal pastor. This is one among many examples of Scientology's participation in interfaith activities in Africa. The cooperation with other churches and religious extends beyond a common struggle for religious liberty and includes "classic" inter-religious dialogue. The paper explores how Scientology's interfaith work principles are adapted to the African context and offers a comparison with Central and other areas of Europe.

Keywords: Scientology, New Religious Movements' Interfaith Activities, Interfaith Activities in Africa, African Federation for Religious and Spirituality Liberty

Eric Roux - European Interreligious Forum for Religious Freedom (EIFRF)

A Response to the Papers by Nemes & Miklovicz, Šorytė, and Introvigne

As both a religious liberty activist and a member of the Church of Scientology, who has travelled extensively through Africa and Central and Eastern Europe, the author will offer an emic response to the papers presented in the session.

Keywords: Scientology, Church of Scientology, Scientology in Hungary, Scientology in Africa, Scientology Interfaith Activities

PARALLEL SESSION 8: SOCIALIZING INTO RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION - A301

Monica Roman - Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Germany

Exploring the Religiosity's Influence on Youth Vaccination. Insights from South Caucasian Countries

Studies and surveys have indicated that there can be a correlation between religiosity and attitudes towards vaccination, although the relationship can be complex and multifaceted, varying across different religious groups and regions. In some cases, religious beliefs or cultural factors may influence attitudes towards vaccination. Some religious groups may express concerns about vaccines due to perceived conflicts with their faith, concerns about the ingredients in vaccines, or beliefs about health and healing that differ from mainstream medical practices. Given such mixed results, this study aims to analyze the relationship between religiosity and perception on vaccination, in the context of the recent COVID-19 pandemic crises. The research is focused on two countries with high religiosity, and also with high homogeneity in terms of religious denominations. We use data from two national surveys from Armenia and Georgia, surveys representative for young national population and conducted in 2022. The methodology relies on quantitative analysis and employs non-parametric measures for correlation and logistic regression models. The initial results suggest a rather low association between religiosity and the perception on vaccination in the two countries, however statistically significant.

Keywords: Religiosity, Youth, COVID-19, Vaccination, survey, quantitative analysis

Riho Altnurme - University of Tartu. Estonia

Religious Diversity Through the Eyes of Europe's Youth

The European Commission's Horizon 2020 project RETOPEA (retopea.eu) explored in 2018-2022 the possibilities of contributing to religious tolerance among young people (ages 12-18) by providing examples from history and present-day situation and teaching how to make short films, where the knowledge gained could be used. Pilot workshops were conducted in schools and youth centres, during which the short films (docutubes) were made and views of young people were also learned. To the extent

that the project partners operated in eight different European countries, it is possible to compare them. From Central and Eastern Europe, there were participants from Estonia, Poland and North Macedonia. Among the most religiously diverse countries are also those countries where non-believers make up the majority – like Estonia. How do different contexts - a different form of religious diversity - affect young people's views and perceptions? Is there more in common or different when comparing Western and Eastern Europe – or should we rather compare North and South? The presentation offers an opportunity to search for answers to these questions through the experiences in the RETOPEA project.

Keywords: religious diversity, tolerance, youth, history

Arniika Kuusisto - University of Helsinki, Finland

Researching Children's and Young People's Values and Worldviews in Religiously Diverse Finland

This presentation focuses on children's and young people's values and value learning trajectories, and the role of educational institutions from Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) to upper secondary schools in guiding their worldview construction. The topic is particularly relevant in the present sociopolitical world situation and the trajectories of constructing existential resilience and well-being during childhood and youth. Resilience has a central role in maintaining sustainable well-being in crises or difficult situations such as pandemics, and at present, not only the pandemic and climate crisis but also the wars have contributed to many children and youths' existential anxiety.

The empirical and conceptual developments presented derive from three research projects, funded by the Academy of Finland. Namely, (1) Technology Assisted Multi-Method Autobiographical Approach to Value Learning during Transition to School (2016-2018; participant ages 3-8, N=42 digital audiovisual autobiographical accounts and life history interviews, T1-T3, and puppet survey on values), carried out in Finnish ECEC and comprehensive school, (2) Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction (participant ages 16-19, N=4025 survey; N=1667 written exam accounts; N=45 in-depth interviews), and (3)

Child-in-Time: Existential Resilience in Early Childhood (2023-2027; intervention, audiovisual data; participant ages 2-6).

The presented empirical examples contribute to further understanding of children's and youths' values, worldviews, resilience and well-being, as well as their views on the elements influencing their value learning and worldview development trajectories. The aim was also to bring new insights and methodological openings into the field. Besides advancing the knowledge in this interdisciplinary field, the findings have important contributions to educational policy and practice for supporting social cohesion through education.

Keywords: children, youth, education, values, religion, worldview

Gergely Rosta - Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary

Religious Socialization: The Role of Family Members and Others

Religious socialization within the family is a key factor in the transmission of religion between generations. (Bengtson et al. 2009, 2013; Chatters and Taylor 2005; Manning 2015; McIntosh and Spilka 1995; Smith et al. 2009, 2014) The literature on religious change identifies the weakening of religious socialization as a key mechanism of secularization. (Davie 2007; Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere 1993; Pollack 2008; Voas and Doebler 2011; Voas and Chaves 2016)

Especially parents play a central role in religious socialization. However, the transmission of religion within families is a matter not only of the nuclear family but also of the extended family, with parents and grandparents being agents of religious socialization both separately and jointly (Bengtson et al. 2013, 2018; Manning 2015). The theoretical model of intergenerational religious transfer (Bengtson et al. 2013) also emphasises the socialising role of persons from the wider environment, including, among others, clergy and religious professionals, teachers and peer group members. This paper investigates, in a cross-generational comparison of countries with different religious traditions, which individuals have typically been involved in religious socialization within and outside the family and what the detectable effects of their involvement on adult religiosity are. I also use cohort comparisons to examine the changing roles of individuals.

In order to answer these questions, quantitative data from five countries (Germany, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Canada) is analysed. The survey data is collected within the international research project "The transmission of religion across generations: a comparative international study of continuities and discontinuities in family socialization ", funded by the John Templeton Foundation.

Keywords: religious socialization, religion and family, secularization

CORENET SESSION 4: CONFLICTS, RELIGIONS AND SOCIAL COHESION - SENATE ROOM

Olena Panych - Technical University of Dresden, Germany

War, Migration, and Social Cohesion: Examining the Response of Ukrainian Evangelicals

This study explores the response of Ukrainian evangelical communities to the ongoing Russia's war against Ukraine. It is based upon presumption that the war has caused a deep collective trauma to Ukrainian society and has significantly influenced migration and displacement patterns, with many individuals relocating to escape the warzone. The situation also presents numerous moral and ethical questions, for which religious perspectives may offer insights. The evangelical community offers a range of resources aimed at promoting social cohesion within the war-torn society. These resources, grounded in religious teachings and community engagement, are designed to facilitate healing and unity in the midst of ongoing conflict.

Prior to the war, the evangelical community in Ukraine tended to operate with a degree of internal focus. However, the hostile military invasion has brought about a closer alignment with the broader Ukrainian society in addressing the shared experience of trauma. The incursion has compelled these religious communities to redirect their resources towards providing essential aid and security for those affected, transforming prayer houses into shelters for the displaced and centers for humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the resource mobilization of evangelical churches has shown to be effective in supporting and mitigating the migration of people forced to leave their homes due to the war. This research analyzes the personal accounts of believers who have faced the double hardship of displacement and war, initially leaving the Donbas region during the early stages of Russian aggression in 2014, and later experiencing forced migration from Ukraine due to the full-scale invasion in 2022. Data for this analysis are derived from interviews with Ukrainian believers, examining the moral and cultural challenges they face in forced emigration, and exploring how their faith and religious beliefs assist them in coping with these challenges.

Keywords: Russia's war on Ukraine, collective trauma, evangelicals, migration, religion

Yulia Fil - National Academy of Science of Ukraine

New Tendencies of Public Consciousness in Ukrainian ISKCON Community During the War

Gaudia Vaishnavism (and ISKCON in particular) as a religion cultivates Brahmanical ideology and lifestyle which implies distance from worldly affairs, which are treated as insignificant for spiritual life. Chaos, wars, and injustice in the contemporary world are perceived in the context of kali yuga, the epoch of unavoidable adharma and degradation. Such attitude resulted in the "inner migration" of Vaishnava communities and their detachment from the political and cultural reality around them. But when the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war has started such detachment seems not to be eligible anymore. At least for Ukrainian Vaishnava.

The main challenge of the war for Vaishnava communities in Ukraine can be described as undermining of universality of Vaishnavism. Hare Krishna movement positioned itself as a religion that transcends geographical and ethnical boundaries. In some sense, the Vaishnavas are the ethnos in itself. This unity and universality were distorted by the position of some (if not the majority) adherents and leaders in Russia, who supported the invasion. The common Vaishnava theology and culture become invalid as a basis for the global Hare Krishna movement. It is only one of many challenges Ukrainian ISKCON faced. The war throws new existential questions Ukrainian Vaishnavas should answer in the future, having an inner crisis at this stage. The main aim of the research is to find out through fieldwork the nature of this crisis.

Keywords: Vaishnavism, ISKCON, Russia-Ukraine war

Anna Mariya Basauri Ziuzina - University of Alabama, Alabama

"Judaism on Fire": The Impact of the War on the Jewish Communities of Ukraine

The full-scale invasion of Russia has made a great impact on the religious life of Ukraine. Besides the material destruction (bombing and shelling of the religious buildings), persecution of specific religious organizations on the occupied territories (Jehovah's Witnesses in Crimea), migration of population (from Eastern parts of Ukraine to Western, and from Ukraine to other European countries), the religious communities undergo internal transformations in order to adapt to the new extreme circumstances.

The Jewish community experiences the impact of the war similarly to other minority religious organizations in Ukraine: in some cities synagogues and memorials were damaged by the active warfare, preventing the Jews to observe religious services, migration caused the demographical changes in the communities, the social activity of the communities switched to humanitarian aid and support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, etc. On the other hand, some new initiatives are taking place (the first rabbi was appointed to serve as a capelan in the army), and some established traditions (annual pilgrimage to Uman) continue to be kept in spite the life-threatening conditions. The presentation is focused on the changes in the religious Jewish community is experiencing in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The presentation is partly based on the data collected by the project Religion on Fire.

Keywords: Judaism, Jewish community, Ukraine, war in Ukraine, impact of the war

Anat Scolnicov - Winchester University, England

Constitutional Resolution of Religious Conflict in Religiously Diverse States

Achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation in the wake of internal violent group conflict, including between religious group, is a laudable social goal, and vital to creating social cohesion. So is the guaranteed protection of human rights. But is there inherent conflict between the attainment of these goals? This talk will question whether both goals can be achieved at the same time, and what should be the constitutional legal way to ensure the achievement of these goals.

While it might seem that the protection of human rights is commensurate with the achievement of resolution of violent conflict, there are often conflicts between the realisation of these two goals. In the long run, the sustainable protection of peace, particularly in intra-national ethnic or religious conflict, is best predicated on the equal protection of rights including non-discrimination and religious freedom. However, in the short and middle-term these are often at odds with each other. This conflict between protection of human rights and peacebuilding, especially such that involves power-sharing, has been largely unexplored by courts and commentators' Constitutional power-sharing arrangements between two factions in a civil war are often the key to the parties' agreement to the peace settlement. The arrangement, whether in a state constitution or an international agreement (or a mixture of both), is

a legal product of political negotiation. The protection of human rights can reflect claims for legitimation of past struggles or a bargaining for the future. Such power-sharing is often based in consociationalism, that is assurance of proportional representation of the main political forces in the elected body or bodies governing the state.

Keywords: Constitution, Religious diversity, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Consociationalism, Religious freedom

Gabriella Pusztai - University of Debrecen, Hungary
Zsófia Vincze - University of Debrecen, Hungary

Association Between Religiosity and Choosing Language of Instruction Among Minorities

Hungarian minorities are often the subject of research, and bilingualism and language use are prominent. However, the connection between religiosity and the choice of language of instruction (school choice) is less discussed. In our research, we seek to answer the question of how religiosity influences the choice of language of instruction among minorities, assuming that deeper religiosity is associated with a stronger sense of national identity. However, it is widely believed that social mobility is linked to the majority language of instruction. In the analysis, survey data of minority people from 4 CEE countries, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine (N=2524), and interviews with ethnic minority Hungarians (N=14) were used. Based on our results, the correlation between religiosity and the chosen language of instruction among minority students is significant. The results are expected to show that religiosity reinforces national identity and becomes the most important explanatory factor in the choice of language of instruction. The Research Program for the Development of Public Education of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences supported this research.

Keywords: Religiosity, Language of Instruction, Minorities

Aleš Črnič

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Critical Review of Different Models of Public Religious Education and Their Implications for Social Cohesion

In the CEE region, the issue of teaching religion in public schools appears almost exclusively in the form of traditional confessional teaching about religion and "for" religion, which is more or less autonomously decided by religious communities (often students can choose an alternative non-confessional subject, mostly ethics) – the only exceptions seem to be Albania and Slovenia. But in Western and especially Northern Europe, there is a growing group of countries, where instead of confessional religious education (RE), non-confessional, i.e. informative, critical and objective education about religion (as a phenomenon) and religious traditions (in concrete manifestations) is conducted.

In this paper, we present the main conceptions of RE in terms of its orientation (confessional/multi-confessional/non-confessional), organization (integrative/ separative/ dimensional) and dominant approach (learning religion/ learning about religion/learning from religion). A brief comparative analysis is made in the light of their contribution to social cohesion, based on the key question: should RE in public schools of democratic pluralistic society primarily offer critical, unbiased comparative enquiry about religion(s), or should it primarily serve as a mean of integrating minority students into a common national value system (whether understood as cultural identity and its religious tradition(s), or a set of democratic–secular values, or a mix of both)?

Keywords: Religious Education, Central Eastern Europe, Social Cohesion

Karna Kjeldsen - University College Absalon, Denmark

Study of Religion Based Religious Education as the Way Ahead in Democratic and Pluralistic Societies

Various scholars of the study of religions and religion education (RE) have argued that a study of religion-based RE is needed in democratic and pluralistic societies, and have formulated an overall framework for this kind of RE. By exploring and using insights, theories and methods from the academic study of religions and critical theories of education, this paper explores more specifically what might constitute the core subject-specific general knowledge, skills, conceptual knowledge and content areas of a study of religion-based RE. It discusses why and how these skills and forms of knowledge can help children and young people to analyse, discuss and inform their opinions on religious and cultural diversity, and their ability to identify and perhaps challege existing discourses, norms and power structures that challenge social cohesion and democratic societies.

Keywords: Religious diversity. Study of Religion knowledge and skills. Religion Education. Social cohesion

Tim Jensen - University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

"Religious Diversity" and "Social Cohesion" in Public School RE Education in Denmark

With an eye to the situations in Central and Eastern Europe, this paper presents and analyses how and to what a degree globalization and increased religious diversity are represented in curricula for a (in principle) non-confessional RE in Denmark. Likewise, the paper presents the ways and degrees to which a discourse on 'social cohesion' - and the potential contribution of RE to promoting 'social cohesion' - is present in the curricula, and to what a degree it is linked to state promotion of a neo-nationalist politics of identity more than to the promotion of an inclusive kind of 'social cohesion' and citizenship.

Keywords: globalization, religious diversity, social cohesion, religion education, RE, neo-nationalist, citizenship, politics of identity.

Giovanni Lapis - Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

The Theme of "Social Cohesion" in Religious Education. A comparative Analysis of England, Italy and Japan

Since 9/11, especially in Euro/American regions (but not limited to them), developments and discourses on Religious Education (RE) increasingly assumed a larger scope, including issues of Intercultural/Citizenship Education and social cohesion. Supranational Institutions actively also took part with white papers, studies, and guidelines.

However, there are various models of RE (confessional, multi-confessional, non-confessional; integrative, separative) with multiple educational aims (learning into religion, from religion, about religion, out of religion). Internal variety is also to be duly considered, as in the case of English RE, which is managed on a local basis.

In such different contexts, how the theme of social cohesion is played out? How do the different RE models and regional/national situations account for similarities and differences concerning discourses and practice about social cohesion? How, from the point of the study of religions, this affects the representations of religions?

This presentation will explore these questions through the analysis of three different case-study: Italy and its confessional-based RE, which nonetheless claims not to have catechetical aims; England and its RE which include both multi-confessionalism and study of religions approaches; lastly, Japan, which has not a dedicated RE subject but teaching about religions occur within other subjects, especially Ethics. In addition, in Japan debates the topic of RE has periodically reappeared in connection with issues of social cohesion such as the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin attack and the 2022 assassination of ex-premier Abe Shinzo.

Keywords: Religious Education; Social Cohesion; England; Italy; Japan;

Christian Moe - **Independent researcher**

Inclusion and Exclusion in Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim Confessional RE

Though there is little consensus on how to define and measure 'social cohesion,' some recurrent elements relevant to public education include: trust in the fairness of institutions, a sense of belonging (no-one excluded or marginalized), and a positive approach to diversity. Accordingly, this contribution analyses the different ways in

which multi-confessional Religious Education (RE) in schools, as public institutions, signals the exclusion or inclusion of groups: first, by its very existence and its form of organization, and second, by the treatment of religious selves and others in the contents taught. The empirical evidence is drawn from Catholic, Orthodox, and Muslim confessional RE in the former Yugoslavia, with teaching contents inferred from comparative textbook analysis. The focus will be on Bosnia-Herzegovina, but with relevance at least for Croatia and Serbia as well. Since these confessional subjects were introduced in a plural society torn apart by ethno-religious nationalism, an especially acute question is what 'bridging' social capital confessional RE might provide in addition to the 'bonding' capital it offers to particular communities (parallel societies). Another context, relevant to the wider CEE region as well, is the transition from atheist socialism, where the introduction of confessional RE sent a signal about the public inclusion of religious believers, but also (re)introduced other patterns of exclusion, problematic inclusion, and elision of internal diversity.

Keywords: religious education, public schools, social cohesion, inclusion, diversity, former Yugoslavia

PARALLEL SESSION 10: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY, RECOGNITION, DIALOGUE AND PEACEBUILDING IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE: COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS AND BACKGROUND FINDINGS - A203

Gianfranco Bria - Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Sufi Communities in Post-socialist Albania Between State Recognition, New Authorities and Updating the Islamic Tradition

This paper aims to highlight how the dynamics of state recognition shape the authority and Islamic tradition of Sufi communities in post-socialist Albania. Sufi orders were quite lively in post-Ottoman Albania when they succeeded in developing into religious associations or community (like Bektashis) in the newly emerging secular and multifaith state. After the communist secularization, various Sufi orders had a complex (as often as challenging) material and doctrinal revival, whereas the Bektashi Community managed to re-establish its uniqueness in the Albanian religious landscape as a 'third way between Islam and Christianity'. In this framework, the still living Sufi communities sought state recognition to gain social legitimacy and public relevance. Yet, caught between the rise of global Islam, the presence of new Islamic actors and the growth of Bektashism as the main holder of Albanian spirituality, Sufi communities are reshaping their authority, as well as engaging, at times, in a process of doctrinal and practical updating.

Keywords: Sufism, Albania, Islam, Balkans

Bernadette Fraioli - Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding Education: The Role of Catholic Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts of the 1990s and the subsequent Dayton Accords led Bosnia and Herzegovina to a clear division in public space between Bosnian-Muslims, Serbian-Orthodox and Croatian-Catholics. Today, the country is governed by a tripartite structure and organized in a 'separate school system': students of different ethnic and religious groups have hardly any opportunities for confrontation and discussion about issues related to religious diversity. The paper aims to offer an overview of the projects on education about pluralism and

interreligious dialogue proposed by some Catholic institutions and Third Sector associations, as an tool for peacekeeping and reconciliation between populations, but also as a means of legitimizing and strengthening the mediation role of the Catholic Church in the political dynamics of the territory.

Keywords: Interreligious dialogue, religious diversity, Peacebuilding education, Catholic Church, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ion Kozma - Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, Italy

Maria Chiara Giorda - Roma Tre University, Italy

Locating Religious Freedom in Romania: Different Ways of Dialogue, from Communist Regime to Nowadays

This presentation aims to analyze the transition between the recognition and management of religious diversity during the communist regime and the situation that followed in the decades after the establishment of democracy in Romania. The relative tolerance toward a limited number of religious denominations during communism, among which Orthodox Christianity was privileged, turned to the current status of full legal recognition of religious freedom; nevertheless, this freedom has not always been fully reflected in the social and cultural recognition level. This hiatus will be analyzed spatially (adopting both the Spatial and Material Turn perspectives) by studying and presenting several case studies related to places of worship, from the resettlement of confiscated properties to the relocation of buildings displaced during the regime, to the (symbolic) construction of a multi-religious center, to the widespread and massive building of Orthodox Christian churches on urban and non-urban territory, as well as to the controversies against the construction of buildings of "other" cults.

Keywords: Religious freedom, diversity, Spatial Turn, Material Turn, Romania

Irene Becci - Université de Lausanne, Switzerland

Adjustments and Obstacles on the Pluralist Path

The plural nature of contemporary societies can only be understood if we link up two areas of research and reflection which, more often than not, develop in parallel, ignoring each other. These are, on the one hand, reflections on the question of recognition and its denials and, on the other, the question of pluralism and religious

diversity within contemporary societies. This contribution aims at offering some conceptual detours linking up these two issues to go beyond the usual disciplinary comfort zones. In order to move between different disciplines - sociology, anthropology, law, political and social philosophy - a first step is to revoke two ways in which the issues of pluralism and recognition have usually been linked in social theory and in the sociology of religion in the restricted framework of tolerance. As a result of the changes implied by increased plurality, contemporary societies are being led to develop forms of 'ordinary or banal cosmopolitanism' in order to find fair and non-discriminatory solutions to the issues arising from tensions. While this objective is being pursued through a variety of readjustments to urban frameworks and legal configurations, this "ordinary or banal cosmopolitanism" is struggling to emerge at other levels of social life because of the many obstacles that stand in the way of this pluralist path.

Keywords: recognition, ordinary cosmopolitanism, urban frameworks, legal configurations.

Alessandro Sagiorro - University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Walter Montanari - Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Shamanism, Neo-Shamanism, and Ecology: A Convergence of Traditional and Contemporary Spiritualities

In the Hungarian religious context, shamanism is considered an increasing spiritual practice recognized for its potential to contribute to peaceful coexistence and specifically to ecological consciousness and sustainability. In particular, neo-shamanism, a modern interpretation of shamanic practices, although it may be reputed to be a residual minority, can be considered an active actor in the dynamics of interreligious dialogue, peaceful and sustainable coexistence.

This presentation will explore the role of neo-shamanism in Hungarian country in fostering a more harmonious relationship between humans but also between humans and the natural world, combining the ancient ideas on ecology related to the tradition of shamanism and new global views.

Keywords: Shamanism, Neo-shamanism, Interreligious dialogue, Ecological consciousness, Sustainability.

Kiss Dénes - **Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania**

Characteristics of the Religiosity of Native Ethnic Minorities

The religiosity of ethnic minorities shows specific characteristics compared to the majority population. This issue is discussed in detail in the sociological literature in the case of immigrant minorities, showing that joining minority churches usually plays an important role in the process of integration of these groups into mainstream society. These researches examine minorities that try to integrate and, in the ethnic dimension, to assimilate into majority societies. However, the attitude of the indigenous minorities to the majority societies is often very different from this, in their case it is more characteristic of the long-term maintenance of cultural otherness, which also affects the social role of their churches, and implicitly also their religiosity. In my presentation, I present the preliminary results of an analysis in which I examined the religiosity of six indigenous European minorities in relation to the religiosity of the "kin-state" and "home-state" countries. Examining religiosity based on data from the EVS 2017-2019 survey in the dimensions of affiliation, religious practice and faith, I claim that the degree of religiosity of indigenous minorities is related to the political order of the minority situation. If the minority is organized in an independent church structure different from the majority, the more disorderly the situation, the more the role of the churches will be valued, and the stronger its religiosity will be.

Keywords: ethnic minorities, religiosity

Ahmed Deniz – **Tilburg University**

Our Places Versus Their Places. Turkish-Dutch Adolescents' Perceived Social Identity and Perception of the Converted Amsterdam Faith Mosque

This study delves into the social and religious identity of male Turkish Dutch Adolescents (TDA) through their connection to the Fatih Mosque, employing qualitative methods, in-depth interviews and field work within an ethno-case study framework. Utilizing thematic analysis, the study involves two layers of investigation: a more inductive examination of recurring patterns in data and a more deductive

approach focusing on two existing theories: the first by Jan M.G. Thurlings to examine the relationship between identity and group relations, and the other by Thomas A. Tweed to explore the connections between religion, space, and migration. The theories are interpreted under the light of the themes explored in the first part of the analysis. Findings reveal a strong connection between TDA and the mosque, marked by childhood memories and active volunteering, reflecting a sense of ownership. Navigating a blended Turkish-Dutch identity, TDA emphasize the unique aspects of Turkish presence in the Netherlands, incorporating religious practices within the Dutch context, and preserving their Turkish heritage. The study examines the perception of past, present, and future uses of the mosque building, uncovering TDA's commitment to maintaining it as a place of worship and their rejection of secular repurposing. These dynamics, influenced by threat perception and social identity, contribute to TDA's understanding of their place as Muslim Turkish-Dutch adolescents in the Dutch context. The study offers nuanced insights into the complex interplay of cultural norms, religious values, and identity preservation within the context of the Fatih Mosque, shedding light on the multifaceted social and religious identity of Turkish-Dutch Adolescents.

Keywords: Turkish-Dutch Adolescents, religious identity, Muslim youth, dwelling, Fatih Mosque Amsterdam

Papp Richárd - Eötvös Loránd University of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

The diversity of Jewish Revival in Hungary: The Case of the Chabad Lubavitch Movement

This paper deals with the practices and discourses involved in the legitimization of the Chabad Lubavitch movement in the frame of the Jewish revival in Hungary. Chabad dates back to the emergence of Hasidism in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century. To escape the horrors of the Holocaust, the movement fled to the USA, and, after World War II, it launched a mission among Jews intended to 'reintroduce secularized Jews' to the 'authentic' values of Judaism. Chabad arrived in Hungary in the 1990ies and became an officially recognized religious institution in 2004. Since then, they have synagogues in Budapest, as well as several prayer houses and numerous other institutions in the country. In comparison to the dominant Hungarian Jewish religious

congregation (neológ), Chabad initiated a stronger public presence in urban spaces and the media. In doing so, the movement conveys a specific interpretation of Judaism, which, while dividing Hungarian Jewish public life, attracts a significant number of followers. Through the case of the most recent Budapest synagogue community (Újbudai Zsinagóga), I will examine how Chabad attempts integrating neológ and/or non-religious Jews and how community members relate to this community as they participate in its rituals and public events. In conclusion, I will address the question of how social science approaches to the phenomena of revival and religious diversity can be applied to the interpretation of recent forms of Judaism.

Keywords: Judaism, Hasidism, Chabad Lubavitch movement, Jewish revival, religious change, Hungary

Olena Komisarenko - Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas ("Angelicum"), Rome, Italy

Catholic Social Teaching on Migration and Religious Diversity

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) offers a principled framework for addressing modern challenges according to Gospel. Migration has always been an important topic for Catholic Church, so within time was developed a significant part of Magisterium dedicated to the ways to respond to this global issue, emphasizing the inherent dignity of every human person. Catholic teaching views migration not as a divisive phenomenon, but as an occasion to build the human family. That's why within the context of migration, CST underscores the moral obligation to welcome and protect migrants, recognizing their rights to life, work, and religious freedom.

The Church's teachings on migration are deeply rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image of God, deserving of respect and justice. In addressing the challenges of migration, CST promotes a holistic understanding that extends beyond national borders. It encourages the fostering of inclusive communities that embrace the cultural and religious diversity brought by migrants.

Regarding religious diversity, CST calls for the recognition of religious freedom as a fundamental human right. It encourages societies to value and respect the pluralism that religious diversity brings, fostering dialogue and collaboration among people of different faiths. The principle of subsidiarity guides the approach, promoting local

initiatives and community engagement to build understanding and tolerance. CST provides a detailed moral compass for societies and faith-based organisations like Caritas and Community of Sant 'Egidio to navigate these complex issues with compassion, justice, and a commitment to the common good.

Keywords: CST, framework, guiding principles, Magisterium, compassion, justice, common good

Maja Micevska - UBI Business School, Netherlands

Pope Francis vs. the United Nations: Insights from Text Analytics

This paper performs text analytics of the second encyclical of Pope Francis "Laudato si'," and compares it to the United Nations' "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The comparison of Laudato si' with the United Nations' Agenda for Sustainable Development is particularly relevant as both documents came out in 2015. The two documents intrinsically link environmental concerns to poverty and inequality issues. The Pope writes (pp. 35): "Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." The UN Agenda starts with emphasizing: "We recognize that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development."

The two documents draw on results of scientific research available today and aim to affect international policy. However, the Pope's encyclical stands out by a significant emphasis on the moral dimension of environmental problems. Among other issues, the Pope is concerned about the interlinkages between environmental degradation, poverty and migration.

Word clouds show that the two documents use different terminology to address similar concerns. The Pope mainly uses the words human, world, God, life, and environment. The most frequent words in the UN Agenda are sustainable, development, and countries. While the Pope's encyclical is focused on individuals (using terms as human beings and people), the UN Agenda is oriented towards actions required by countries. Sentiment analysis indicates that the Pope uses more negative tone in his encyclical compared to the UN Agenda.

Keywords: Pope Francis; Laudato si'; environment; migration; text analytics.

PARALLEL SESSION 12: RESEARCHING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION: 'METHODOLOGICAL TWIST' - A301

Miroslav Tížik - Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia

Religious Change in Europe. The Irrelevance of Dividing Societies into Eastern and Western?

The sociology of religion has long been working with the classification of European societies politico-geographically. Such classifications also maintain a single category of post-communist countries, which tend to be described as Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Such classifications also offer a unifying explanatory framework for the analysis of changes in religiosity in CEE countries. Based on an analysis of the results of the European Values Study (EVS) from 1991 to 2017, the paper will show the trends of change in religiosity and point to developments in selected countries of the so-called Western and Eastern Europe. The comparison of the individual countries will show on which different groups of countries according to the profiles of dominant religiosity exist in Europe.

Keywords: European Values Study, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Religious Change

Rita Hegedűs - J. Selye University, Slovakia

Anna Vancsó - Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary

The Debate on Census Denominational Data in Hungary

In Hungary, religious diversity is a duality of the non-religious and the religious, not a diversity of different denominations, given the very low number of non-Christians and even non-Western Christians in the country, and the very low proportion of people belonging to non-historical churches. In contrast, the proportion of non-denominational and non-religious people is very high. It was the relative proportions of these two groups and the changes in these proportions that attracted considerable political and public interest after the last census data on denominations came to light.

In our presentation, we will analyse the content of written manifestations published on online platforms in the month following the release of the data. The location and the range of speakers are used as explanatory variables in the analysis, and in the coding,

we look at content such as the search for reasons, the mention of secularisation and other factors related to the change in religion, the positive or negative connotation, the past or future orientation, the proportion of social and religious explanations, etc.

As a next step, the content analysis is followed by discourse analysis to investigate deeper the relations between the investigated question and the most recent dominant public discourse on religion. The dominant public discourse enhances the importance of Christianity in the country from various aspects, using it as basis for the values and morality in the country, but does not touch upon people's personal belief. Due to the results of the census, this approach to religion can be debated which may shape the contemporary public discourse too. In the analysis we aimed to shed light to these debates.

Keywords: Hungary, census, content and discourse analysis

David Kollár - Budapest Metropolitan University, Hungary
Social Stratification and Religiosity in Hungary

Since Weber, sociology has aimed to explore the relationship between social stratification and religiosity. However, in the 21st century's value-diverse societies, this relationship requires reexamination. This study investigates the elective affinities between social groups and dimensions of contemporary Christian religiosity in Hungary.

A national survey was conducted with 1000 Hungarians to collect data on social status and various dimensions of religiosity. The survey measured church attendance, participation in rites, religious beliefs, identity, values, and perceived social benefits of religion. Model-based cluster analysis and correspondence analysis were then used to statistically relate the social status indicators to this extensive set of religiosity measures.

The analyses showed significant associations between social strata and distinct clusters of religiosity. For example, the upper classes exhibited an affinity for more external, low-commitment forms of religiosity, such as partaking in major holidays and occasional church attendance. In contrast, higher-status skilled workers showed greater devotion to internal Christian values.

In conclusion, this study shows that there are significant relationships between social stratification and different expressions of Christian religiosity and culture in contemporary Hungary. These findings can provide better insight into the complex interplay between societal position and multidimensional religiosity in 21st-century societies.

Keywords: social stratification, religiosity, elective affinity, correspondence analysis

Miklós Gyorgyovich - Századvég Foundation, Hungary

The Social Perception of Manifestations of Christian Culture and Its Impact on Social Cohesion in Hungary

Research into the social perception of the influence of Christian culture is an important but under-researched topic. The term essentially refers to the values, norms and outlooks on life that derive from the Christian religion, which is not limited to religious practises but pervades the everyday life of societies based on the Judeo-Christian tradition. While much previous research points to declining trends in religiosity, little attention has been paid to the millennial influence of Christianity on Western civilisation and the community-building power of religion at macro- and micro-social levels. Thus, while trends in recent decades have pointed to a slow move away from traditional churches, we were assumed that Christian culture would continue to have a significant influence on many aspects of our society. In this study, we therefore sought to analyse various aspects of the presence and perception of Christianity in society. The quantitative results were collected by the Századvég consortium in June 2023 among the adult Hungarian population, with 1000 adults being interviewed using the CATI method. Subsequently, 6 focus group interviews were conducted (3 religious and 3 non-religious groups). The results of the survey show a deep anchoring of Christian culture in Hungarian society and links between Christian culture and social integration. Despite different emotional attitudes, the participants are largely aware of the influence of Christian culture on their daily lives, even if religious practise and church membership have declined. Christian values, norms and celebrations continue to play an important role in cultural identity, regardless of the individual religiosity of many people. At the same time, there is a notable religious apathy among younger

age groups, which raises the question of the transmission and preservation of Christian cultural values.

Keywords: Christian culture, Christian society

Márton Csanády - Károli Gáspár University, Hungary

The Interpretation of the Religious Results and Problems of the 2022 Hungarian Census, with Particular Regard to the Protestant Denominations

The final data of the Hungarian census were published on September 23, 2023This was the third census in Hungary since the end of the socialist regime and Soviet occupation, where it was possible to answer the question about religious affiliation. The results were a big surprise to many. (Rosta 10/05/2023) In the lecture, I will describe the main trends in the change of traditional religiosity in Hungary. I have already published the first analyzes related to this (Csanády 2023. Confessio 4). I will try to explain the significantly different decreasing trends of self-professed Roman Catholics and self-professed Protestants (Calvinists and Lutherans). In the course of the presentation, I specifically address the interesting fact that in certain cities, the number of people who identify themselves as belonging to a Protestant denomination is not decreasing, but has even increased over the past 11 years. During the presentation, I will cover the methodological problems of the 2022 Hungarian census. Finally, with the help of the 2022 Hungarian census and religious sociological research conducted by KRE's sociology of religion research group during the covid19 epidemic, I will try to draw the outlines of religiosity in Hungary today.

Keywords: 2022 Hungarian census, Protestant denominations, methodological problems

Evelina Juchnevičiūtė - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Women's and LGBTQ+ Rights in Lithuania: The Impact of Religion on Policy Making

The dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s returned religion to Lithuania's public sphere. Even though Lithuania is constitutionally secular and has no state religion, the implementation of women's and LGBTQ+ rights emerged as one of the areas with increased religious influence. Lithuania has not ratified the so-called Istanbul Convention and remains one of the last EU jurisdictions without any legal recognition for same-sex relationships. These initiatives are perceived as incompatible with Lithuania's Christian (Catholic) culture, caused ideological clashes and mobilized thousands in support of traditional values. Resistance to the implementation of women's and LGBTQ+ rights, anti-gender discourse, traditionalism and effort to maintain social status quo resulted in a new political movement characterized by ultraconservative understanding of Christianity. This paper aims to explain the relationship between gender and religion in Lithuania as well as theoretically explore how religion is able to enter the political sphere and influence policy making process in a secular society. This presentation is timely considering the broader context of rising political visibility of the Christian Right movement across Europe with anti-gender stance as the driving issue. The findings will contribute to further research into the Christian Right's discourse on women's and LGBTQ+ rights in Lithuania's political sphere.

Keywords: Women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, anti-gender, politics, religious influence, Lithuania

Salome Esebua - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The Role of Religion in LGBTQ Rights Issues in Contemporary Georgia

Religion plays an important role in Georgia, both as part of identity and in the process of human rights development. Religious organizations hinder the increasing acceptance of the rights of sexual and gender minorities. This applies in particular to

the Georgian Orthodox Church, which fuels phobias and organizes its followers against sexual and gender minorities and allies. The "International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia" has been declared by the Georgian Orthodox Church as the "Day of the Sanctity of the Family", and every year as May 17th approaches, the expectations and passion in society grow. It is important to mention that there are also religious minority organizations that support, accept or condemn violence against LGBT people. Thus, religious organizations play a major role in the challenges related to LGBTQ rights. Religious authority has a significant impact on society's attitudes towards the LGBTQ community, which is why it is important to explore this issue and try to create spaces for dialogue.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Religion, Georgia.

Antonio Montanes Jimenez - University of Oxford, England

Evangelical Gitanos are a Good Catch': Masculinity, Authority, and Flirting in Spain

The study of gender has played a significant role in developing anthropological work concerning Pentecostal churches and global Christianity. Based on an ethnographic study conducted in Madrid, I explore how religion, masculinity and ethnicity intertwine in Spanish Gitano Pentecostal churches. Adding to a growing scholarship interested in the interface between masculinity and Pentecostalism, I show that born-again Christian Gitano ideals build upon and reshape dominant Gitano secular gendered worldviews. I illustrate how Pentecostal churches remake men's authority within families and gender roles, ultimately transforming the notion of Gitano masculinity. By shedding light on how Gitano believers engage with novel forms of masculinity, I also contribute to advancing anthropological work on kinship, flirting practices, and the politics of marriage among Gitano communities in urban settings in Spain.

Keywords: Gender, Masculinity, Pentecostalism, Gitanos.

Gintarė Pocė - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Ilva Skulte - University of Latvia, Latvia

Religious Voices Against "Gender Ideology" in the Discourse on the Ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Latvian and Lithuanian Media

Religion plays a public role in gender politics in a variety of ways. In public discussions, religious actors often oppose gender as a concept based on social construction and imposed by what they call "gender ideology." Concerns that this "ideology" could hijack the legal discourse is a common basis of their argumentation in the discussions on the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This paper presents the main results of the analysis of Lithuanian and Latvian secular and religious media coverage of the Istanbul Convention between 2011 and 2021. Both countries have signed but not ratified the Convention. The analysis shows that actors linked to religious organisations entered the mass media discourse by presenting arguments against the ratification of the Convention, which overlap with and support the opinions expressed by conservative political actors. These arguments are based on the idea that the Istanbul Convention is a threat to the future legal support of the natural rights of men and women, their natural roles and traditional and Christian values. The media discourse and the arguments used are similar in both countries, but the discursive strategies of religious and political actors differ. In Lithuania, where the Catholic Church is supported by tradition, religious actors are more often and more directly involved in the public debate than in Latvia. Nevertheless, in both countries, the religious voices analysed contributed to the rise of anti-genderist discourse in the post-secular public sphere and to the politicisation of religion.

Keywords: Istanbul Convention, anti-gender discourse, politicization of religion, media discourse.

PARALLEL SESSION 13: NON-RELIGION AND SOCIAL COHESION - A201

Olaf Müller - **University of Münster, Germany**

Towards a Society of Stable Nones: Lifelong Non-Denominationalism as the Prevailing Pattern in East Germany

The increase in the number of people who do not belong to any religion ("nones") has long been observed in many societies in the Northern hemisphere. This process is already well advanced in East Germany, where the proportion of "stable nones", i.e., those who grew up without any ties to religion from childhood onwards, has become particularly large and will most likely form the majority in the near future. Given the sociocultural relevance of this group, it is worth taking a closer look at them. In this presentation, we examine how far they differ in terms of their familial religious conditions of origin and their present-day religiosity from the nones who still grew up in a religious-denominational tradition ("leavers"), and also from those who still have ties to a denomination ("affiliates"). Finally, we discuss the consequences for the future development of the religious field that arise from the fact that the group of "stable nones" will constitute the majority.

Keywords: nones; East Germany; secularization

David Václavík - Technical University Liberec, Czech Republic

Are Churches Failing in Czech Society? Czech Apatheism and Czech Skepticism as a Consequence of "Religious Anomie"

Czech society is considered one of the most atheised societies in the world. However, most current research shows that supposed "Czech atheism" is often an attitude based on ignoring and misunderstanding religion rather than actively rejecting and denying religion. Based on the analysis of historical narratives and available sociological research on the role of religiosity in modern Czech society, I would like to show in my paper how closely related the current Czech attitude towards religion, especially towards its institutionalised forms, is to the gradual weakening of the role of religious groups in the public space, and especially their contribution to the maintenance of social cohesion.

Keywords: Churches, Trust, Social Cohesion, Apatheism, Scepticism

Katarzyna Zielińska - Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland

Secularist Mobilizations in Catholic Poland - Forming a New Social Order?

Poland has long been regarded as a predominantly Catholic and highly religious country, often cited as a counterexample to secularization theories. Indeed, data on religiosity from the past few decades indicates that a significant number of Poles still identify as believers, especially when compared to Western European countries. The influential social and political position of the Catholic Church has manifested in its ability to shape policies in traditionally secular domains within mature democracies, such as health, education, and mass media.

However, over the last decade, we have witnessed a transformation in the religious landscape of Poland. This is evident in the decreasing religiosity among the Polish population, accompanied by shifts in the societal perception of the Roman Catholic Church's role. Noteworthy events include mass protests outside bishops' residences and churches in major Polish cities during women's protests against the imposition of abortion law restrictions (2016–2020). These protests, along with emerging social mobilizations, challenge the Church's social and political influence. Moreover, recent elections in Poland have underscored the heightened politicization of the role of religion in society.

In this context, the inquiry into the development of new perspectives on the social position of Catholicism and the Catholic Church becomes particularly intriguing. This paper, through an analysis of political parties' discourse on church and state relations, aims to provide insights into how the normativity of Catholicism, along with its institutional and cultural dominance, is being questioned. Furthermore, the analysis seeks to capture alternative visions of social order that emerge from these political narratives.

Keywords: secular, Poland, politics, Catholicism

Agata Rejowska - Jagiellonian University, Institute of Sociology, Poland

Challenging Catholic Hegemony and Striving for (Non)Religious Diversity: Humanist Marriage Ceremonies in Contemporary Poland

In Poland, 11 religious denominations are legally privileged and marriage ceremonies performed by their representatives have legal recognition. In the case of other religious creeds (for example, the Muslim Religious Union of Poland or the Eastern Church of Old-Believers), if couples wish to have a legally valid wedding, an additional civil ceremony is required. Also, a civil ceremony is the only legally binding option for couples who do not want to be married by any religious authority. However, more and more non-believers perceive civil ceremonies, as "bland", "formulaic", and not conveying couples' worldviews. These constraints can explain the fact that, since 2007, humanist marriage ceremonies have been gradually developing in Poland. As propagators of humanist weddings often argue, even though a civil ceremony is an option for partners who do not want a religious wedding, it is doubtful that couples regard it as a genuine "alternative" that could fill the space left by the religious ritual. In line with this narrative, it is the symbolic poverty and irrelevance of the civil marriage ceremony that "forces" nonbelievers to decide on a religious rite. Because Polish law does not recognize same-sex marriages, and there is no institution of "registered partnerships" for heterosexual or homosexual couples, same-sex partners are another group who are, through humanist marriages, trying to overcome inequalities in Poland (the first documented same-sex humanist marriage ceremony in Poland was conducted in 2008).

This paper is based on empirical research conducted in Poland in the years 2016-2021. It sheds light on the structural limitations of the market of wedding ceremonies in Poland, and shows that despite the fact that humanist marriages in Poland do not have legal recognition, they are still practiced and their popularity are on the rise, as an expression of the need for justice, diversity, authenticity and the secular-sacred.

Keywords: Poland, humanist wedding ceremonies, non-religion, secularity, secularization

PARALLEL SESSION 14: MINORITY RELIGIONS AND SOCIAL COHESION - A203

Eileen Barker - London School of Economics, England

When post-World War II Religions Became Post-Berlin Wall Religions - What changed?

Following the conclusion of World War II, a wave of new religious movements mushroomed throughout most of Western Europe. Some of these were indigenous, but more were imports from the USA, then India and elsewhere around the world. Popular reactions to these new religions, dubbed as 'cults' ranged from unenthusiastic to aggressively hostile, and by the mid-1970s a number of organisations were being established to warn of the religions' allegedly dangerous beliefs (the counter-cultists) and behaviours (the anti-cultists).

Following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, many of these new religions rapidly spread across Eastern Europe, giving rise to different conflicts, often with attacks originating from traditional churches. The chapter charts the emergence of a variety of such 'cult-watching groups', and the changing influences they have wielded over the past half century. It also suggests ways in which the new(ish) religions differed in their early stages in Central and Eastern Europe from the same movements in their earlier stages in Western Europe and North America.

Keywords: New religions; anti-cultists; post-Berlin Wall

Dorota Hall - Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Structural Ignorance from the Perspective of Christian Minority Churches in Poland

Making part of a broader project aimed at sketching the epistemic geography (cf. Alcoff 2007) of religion in Poland, the paper focuses on structural ignorance and zooms in on the relationship between the state and the Roman Catholic majority on the one hand, and Christian minority churches, on the other. Structural ignorance is an epistemic practice typical of those who enjoy a stronger position in the social field. It is strictly related to privilege: while the dominated know not only their own perspective, but also the perspective of those in power, because they have to play according to

their rules, the privileged can afford not knowing about those whom they dominate, because for them such ignorance does not involve any risk. Moreover, they have an interest in not knowing, because it secures their dominant position and relieves them from responsibility for inequalities that they have created themselves. The paper highlights the issue from the perspective of the Seventh-Day Adventist and the Orthodox churches. It draws on material published in their journals and shows how the churches point to ignorance exercised by the Polish-Catholic majority and the state, how they resist the problem, and how they exercise ignorance themselves when referring to those of lower position within the hierarchy of religious organizations and movements.

Keywords: structural ignorance, minority churches, Christianity

Michal Puchovský - Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia

Paganism in the Land of Saint Cyril and Methodius: Critical Reflection of Pagan Studies in Slovakia

Similar to many countries from former Eastern block, the nineties were the years of implosion of new religious movements and alternative spirituality in Slovakia. It certainly applies for contemporary Paganism, which origins can be traced back to mid nineties. Numbers of contemporary Pagans are slowly, but steadily, growing and 4007 inhabitants of Slovakia claimed to be Pagan in the last census in 2021. My conference paper will discuss the past, current and future of academic research of Paganism in Slovakia. First, I will present a brief summary of history of contemporary Paganism in Slovakia to provide much needed context. Second, I will discuss past academic research on the topic with focus on lack of interconnection with international Pagan studies and discussion on influence of anti-sectarian discourse on the research goals. In the last segment of my presentation, I will summarize my past research on the topic of contemporary Slovak Paganism and I will outline possible research topics that could greatly expand scientific knowledge about Paganism in Slovakia and in general about the position of alternative, non-Christian religiosity in contemporary Slovak society and its identity discourse.

Keywords: Paganism, Slovakia, Pagan studies, academic research.

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská - Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

Juraj Majo - Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia

New Wine in Old Wineskins? Current Aspects of Religious Identities and Diversities of Roma Minority Slovakia

The religious identities of the Roma population in Slovakia reflect the relationship between the majority and minority in the entire society. Religious belonging is often similar to the belonging of the non-Roma population, but behaving and beliefs can contain many aspects that are different from the perspective of the majority. It has a characteristic of incredible spiritual diversity, combinations of traditional and non-traditional, new and old, or official and unofficial. Many aspects can be described from the extensive field research records and census 2021 data. The contrasts between census data and field research are a basis for unveiling this internal diversity of beliefs and spiritualities. Special attention should also be paid to nonreligious Romas who significantly contribute to the religious diversity of this minority.

Keywords: Roma minority, religiosity, census, diversity, Slovakia.

Sára Eszter Heidl - Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt, Germany

Religion as a Spectrum: Introducing Religionesque Experiences

Religious diversity can be studied in terms of institutional, denominational belonging, and in terms of non-institutional, alternative, spiritual, non-religious approaches. The latter category is the focus of my paper. In my dissertation project, I explored how festival experiences (on three Hungarian festivals) can be understood from a religious studies perspective. I aimed to show that there are different interpretations of religion by individuals and that church, faith and religion are interconnected but three different things. That religion can be understood as an experience, and that there is something between religion and non-religion. The diversity of religion can be captured in individual experience; empirical work has shown that experiences similarly described by festival participants can be interpreted differently: as religious, non-religious or something in between. In order to explore the many different interpretations, I introduced the term 'religionesque experience' as an umbrella term for the various concepts and categories used by participants to show that 1) religion can be understood as an experience, and 2) religion is a spectrum rather than a dichotomous category. In my view, a broader interpretation allows more aspects to be included in religion, focusing on similarities rather than differences, which can lead to a more understanding society.

Keywords: religious experience, festivals, religionesque

Rita Figus-Illinyi - University of Szeged, Hungary

The Intersections of Individual Resilience, Community Resilience, and Religion.
Individual resilience centers on internal attributes and capabilities, requiring the utilization of personal resources, adaptability, and skills for navigating challenges. Rooted in strengths such as self-esteem, emotional intelligence, problem-solving abilities, and optimism, individual resilience is intricately tied to personal growth, contributing to improved mental and emotional well-being. Evaluating an individual's response to personal stressors is a pivotal aspect of individual resilience.

In contrast, community resilience adopts a community-oriented approach, emphasizing the strength of the community and the individual's integration within it. Prioritizing relationships, community networks, and social support, community resilience assesses how effectively a community shares common goals, resources, and support systems for crisis management. Communal identity, nurtured by individuals, fosters a sense of belonging and facilitates community-level recovery. Positive social interactions, mutual support, and collective coping abilities underscore the importance of community resilience.

Considering the dimension of religiosity, both individual and community resilience intersect with religious beliefs and practices. Personal faith serves as a potent internal resource, offering individuals a sense of purpose, hope, and guidance during adversity. Similarly, communities often derive strength from shared religious values, rituals, and support networks. Integrating the dimension of religiosity into the discourse emphasizes its potential role in enhancing resilience at both individual and community levels, providing an additional layer of support and meaning amidst life's challenges. Recognizing the pivotal roles of individual and community resilience, alongside the influence of religiosity, is essential for a comprehensive understanding and promotion of well-being. Religious conviction emerges as a variable capable of influencing an individual's resilience, warranting attention at both individual and community levels.

Keywords: individual resilience, community resilience, religion, psychology

Zuzana Bártová - University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czech Republic

Challenging the Religious/Spiritual Divide Through the Case of Buddhist and Personal Development Practices

The secularisation paradigm, which is still an influential stance in the social scientific study of religion, posits a religious decline in modern Western societies. In order to tackle the concomitant vitality of new religious forms evolving outside the traditional institutional frames, some authors prefer to avoid the concept of religion and propose those of spirituality and alternative spirituality (Heelas 2006, Huss 2014). However, this does not necessarily allow going beyond the secularisation paradigm as the debate about nonreligious or secular spiritualities indicates (Fuller 2001). This paper

will discuss how such divisions are challenged by the qualitative study of specific practices in which the use of these categories seems reductive. It will be based on research done among Buddhist practitioners in France and in the Czech Republic between 2010 and 2013 and on research about personal development in the workplace conducted with Slovakia employees in 2021. By comparing personal development relying on mindfulness in managerial settings and Buddhist practices I argue that the study of these practices challenges the religious/spiritual divide and requires a new conceptual frame that does not preclude the use of the notion of religion.

Keywords: religious change, "spiritual but not religious", alternative spirituality, Buddhism, mindfulness

Joëlle Fennebeumer - Research Master in Theology and Religious Studies, Netherlands

New Religious Outsiders in the Outside World: The Implications of New Religious Movement (Dis)Affiliation on the Development of Self-Identity

Limited qualitative studies have been conducted to analyze the incentives for new religious movement (NRM) (dis)affiliation in the sociocultural and religious context of the Netherlands. This study aims to narrow the research gap and minimize derogatory prejudices about NRM membership by analyzing eight interviews conducted with disaffiliates from four diverse unconventional religious groups in the Netherlands. Through the analysis, individual reasons for NRM affiliation and the importance attributed to self-development and meaning-making in Dutch NRMs will be elaborated upon. Additionally, by analyzing the interviews, it will be discovered how the perception of "Self" transforms before, during, and after NRM affiliation. The findings of this study suggest that incentives for NRM membership in the Netherlands are comparable in the sense that all participants mention (1) the urge to escape the uncertainties and inflexibilities of mainstream Dutch society, (2) the desire to build meaningful relationships and find social cohesion in a community with like-minded individuals, (3) the wish to eliminate feelings of othering, social isolation, disconnection, and chronic life dissatisfaction by adopting a new conviction. Additionally, all participants adopt a rhetoric of continuance or "spiritual awakening" through which they explain that NRM membership is fundamentally about the (re)discovery of an identity that was already established but remained hidden under the restrictive sociopolitical and religious nature of Dutch mainstream society. This process of redevelopment of the Self and life purpose is mostly reversed after NRM deconversion: the deconversion process is described as a fundamental confrontation with one's imperfect and unwanted character traits that dominated before NRM affiliation. This fundamental confrontation with the Self, specifically in the instances where a strong social support system in the Dutch social mainstream remains absent, stimulates low resilience, social isolation, perfectionism, compensatory urge, disorientation, duality, and severe trauma in all cases, may it be in different quantities.

Hysni Skura - University College Beder, Albania

The Role of Islam in Citizenship Education and Social Inclusion

This abstract delves into the pivotal role of the religion of Islam in shaping citizenship education and fostering social inclusion within diverse societies, especially in the European case. Islam, as a comprehensive faith, not only provides a spiritual framework but also outlines ethical principles guiding individual conduct and communal relations. This paper explores how Islamic teachings emphasize values such as justice, equality, inclusion and compassion, which form the bedrock of responsible citizenship. Islamic religious educational systems often incorporate teachings that promote civic virtues, community engagement, and a sense of shared responsibility, contributing to the development of informed and socially conscious citizens. Moreover, the inclusive nature of Islamic ethics encourages acceptance and respect for diversity, facilitating social cohesion in pluralistic settings.

However, challenges arise in balancing traditional Islamic values with contemporary notions of citizenship and inclusivity. Striking this balance requires navigating the intersections between religious teachings and modern civic ideals. Through an examination of historical contexts and contemporary practices, these abstract aims to elucidate the ways in which Islam can both inspire and sometimes pose challenges to citizenship education and social inclusion, providing insights into fostering harmonious societies where religious principles contribute positively to civic life.

Keywords: education, social inclusion, justice, equality, religious education

Gilberta Hadaj - Albanian University, Albania

Presenting RESILIENCE

RESILIENCE is a European cross-disciplinary research infrastructure for research on religion in all academic fields. It connects research centers, data holders and services distributed all over Europe and creates new instruments and services for the scientific community.

This study is devoted to the specificity and typology of services for researchers in different fields of research with general scope on religious studies and the appropriate ways to communicate these services to them. It is based on a needs survey conducted

through meetings with researchers in different countries and gives an overview of potential approaches to the research communities, research institutions and other relevant organizations interested in the religious studies.

The mission of RESILIENCE is to serve research by improving access to digital as well as physical data on religion and to advanced tools, training, existing research infrastructures and expertise for new, digitized and data-oriented research in the field of research on religion on a global level. RESILIENCE brings together scholars, professionals and facilities to catalyze new competencies, knowledge, approaches, and impact. RESILIENCE facilitates high-quality research to improve knowledge and understanding of religion as a key answer to the challenges of religious diversity and its relevance for societies.

Keywords: RESILIENCE, project, religions studies, Albania research

CORENET SESSION 6: MIGRATION AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY - SENATE ROOM

João Pedro Silveira-Martins - Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Migration in Times of Religion Intolerance: The Case of Brazilians in Europe

This paper focuses on the experiences of Brazilian LGBT+ individuals who have migrated to the European Union in response to increasing violence and discrimination fueled by the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro. Bolsonaro's political rhetoric, influenced by extreme Neo-Pentecostal ideologies, has led to a surge in violence against minority groups, particularly the LGBTQ+ community and the Black population.

The result has been a significant increase in emigration since 2019, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Young queer Brazilians, who came of age in the progressive environment of the 2010s, have chosen to leave their home country due to heightened LGBTQ+ discrimination, racial bias, and a lack of well-paying job opportunities. However, many of these migrant's face rejection and alienation from their families, driven by Bolsonaro's fundamentalist Neo-Pentecostal discourse. Although they cannot easily claim asylum, these individuals experience severe mental health consequences, especially among black Brazilians and those practicing Umbanda and Candomblé, historically accepting religions for queer and trans individuals.

Religion plays a crucial role in their migration stories. Participants have faced direct or indirect persecution from family members and acquaintances who embraced Bolsonaro's homophobic discourse, often influenced by Neo-Pentecostal churches. This migration trend highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by Brazilian LGBT+ migrants in their pursuit of safety and acceptance in the United States and Spain. Through this research, we aim to provide insights into the complex and evolving experiences of these migrants in the face of political and social upheaval in Brazil.

Keywords: migration; Brazil; European Union; NeoPentecostal

Paulina Polko - WSB University, Poland

Migration-Religion-Security Nexus

Research on migration in the context of security and religious background has been carried out in the European Union (EU) since the 1970s in a multifaceted framework. Challenges posed by migration have been analyzed from political, legal, ethical, economic, societal, environmental or military contexts. Research institutions produced a considerable amount of work on migration in the second decade of the 21st century, focusing on the 2015 migration crisis and its implications. The migration-religion-security nexus has increasingly become one of the main paradigms and is widely discussed in scientific literature and policy circles. Thus, although the research conducted in this area undoubtedly has many dimensions, most of it focuses on migrants as a threat and migration processes, as a security challenge for countries-migration destinations, especially in case of particular religious groups. Little research is devoted to the security of migrants and their needs in this regard, and migration is rarely seen as a way to improve the personal security of migrants. Moreover, while such an approach can be observed in disciplines such as sociology or pedagogy, it is not in security sciences. The article aims to present a proposal for a flexible approach to widening the migration-religion-security nexus research on the migrant's security perspective not only in the personal context but also in the country, nation or social group of emigration. Considering the growing number of migrants all over the world forced to move because of such reasons as climate change, the population boom in Africa, the situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the war in Ukraine and pandemics security studies should implement a new, more balanced approach to migration covering all aspects of the problem.

Keywords: migration, security, securitisation, flexicurity, religious identity

Jasna Milošević Đorđević - Singidunum University, Serbia

The Impact of Religious and Related Values on the Social Cohesion and Conspiracy Theory Beliefs About Migration in Serbia

Last decades have been characterized by stormy and turbulent migrations worldwide, that represent social and political challenge for almost every country especially the countries on the Balkan route including Serbia. However, number of studies on the

topic are limited, predominantly on intensity, transition direction, characteristics of the migrant population, regularity of transition, pull or push factors, despite the relevance of this issue.

Study one explains political radicalization indicators (endorsement of conspiracy belief, social distance toward migrants, support for EU integration and social conservatism) measured in the period from 2016-2022 in thirteen representative studies of the adult population from Serbia. Results revealed high endorsement of social conservatism and conspiracy belief that correlates with neglecting EU integrations and increasement of social distance toward marginal groups.

Study two deals more deeply with factors predicting conspiratorial beliefs about migrants (based on one representative study of adult population in Serbia conducted in 2022, N=1199). Results shaped several characteristics of the people who were likelier to believe in conspiracy accounts that presented migrants and immigration as a conspiratorial threat: 1) more religious; 2) holding conservative values; 3) anti-EU sentiments; 4) higher levels of attachment to and held defensive values about the Serbian nation.

Keywords: conspiracy belief, religious values, social exclusion

Eglė Aleknaitė - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

Muslims as the Icon of Religious Diversity: Lithuanian Migrants' Encounters with Religious Diversity in the UK.

Due to the small size of the Muslim community in Lithuania, few Lithuanians have encountered Muslims in Lithuania which, as some other Central and Eastern European countries, can be characterized by a "phobia of absent Muslims." Encounters with Muslims, however, are part of the migration experiences of a significant number of Lithuanian migrants. The paper aims to analyze the circumstances and nature of Lithuanian migrants' encounters and relationships with Muslims, the image of Muslims constructed by Lithuanian migrants, and the functions the image performs in migrants' narratives. As the fieldwork and semi-structured interviews with Lithuanian migrants in the UK conducted in 2023 show, Muslims appear as the most salient religious group Lithuanian migrants encounter in the UK. Lithuanian migrants in the UK are a diverse group and, among other aspects, differ in

their encounters and relationships with UK Muslims, as well as their attitudes towards this religious minority. Some use their experiences to question the image of Muslims broadcasted by the mass media in the UK and Lithuania and to back their support for tolerance of religious and cultural diversity. Others, however, share anti-Muslim sentiments that may be backed by the media images and various British discourses and sometimes contradict to experiences of informants. Representing the UK's religious diversity and a committed publicly visible religious practice that is opposed to privatized or cultural Christianity, the image of Muslims serves as a means to think about religious diversities and various threats in host and home countries.

Keywords: Religious diversity, Muslims, migrants, Lithuanians

Halina Grzymala-Moszczynska - University Ignatianum, Poland
Gilda Seddighi - Norce Research, Bergen, Norway
Morta Vidunaite - Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

Invisible, Overlooked, and Denied Aspects of Qualitative Research

The presentation aims to analyze the issue of vulnerability of researchers which is one of the many differences between qualitative and quantitative research. These differences pertain to the impact of the research process on the researcher, and the existence of"; blind spots"; in the protocols of Scientific Research Ethics Committees granting permission for such research.

We focus on two aspects of the researcher's situation that impact their sense of threat and/or mental distress while conducting research on challenging problems or among groups in challenging situations: research conducted among political refugees, and research conducted by digital research methods.

The first aspect of research conducted among refugees relates to the context in which field research is carried out among opponents of the ruling political power in a given country. The researcher may find themselves in vulnerable situations similar to those faced by the research subjects, including various forms of repression and threats from the prevailing regime. Consequently, this necessitates navigating potentially dangerous situations and taking a series of actions to protect access to collected data from authorities who may use it against the subjects of the study. Even data obtained in non-threatening situations for both the subjects and the researcher can become

burdensome because the content within, if in the hands of unauthorized individuals, may endanger those who remain in the country from which the studied individuals had to flee. A separate set of threats to the researcher is associated with conducting internet research. This exposes the researcher to various persecutions, ultimately leading to a sense of loss of privacy, a feeling of threat, emotional exhaustion, and traumatic experiences.

The final part of the presentation focuses on the functioning of Scientific Research Ethics Committees. Their activity is centered on the protection of research subjects, but the protocols lack safeguards for the well-being of the researcher. This includes the absence of requirements for providing the researcher with mentoring support, supervision, or ensuring a sufficiently long planning period for conducting the research at a pace that allows for adequate periods of rest.

Keywords: mental distress, fear, exhaustion, researcher, Scientific Ethic Research Committees

PARALLEL SESSION 16: RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND OTHERING - A201

Alessandro Indelicato - University of Eastern Finland, Finland

Juan Carlos Martín - University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain

Exploring Religious Diversity on Attitudes Toward Out-Religious Groups

Religious diversity is a highly debated topic in the scientific literature. This study aims to analyse attitudes toward out-religious groups, considering both religious diversity and the socioeconomic characteristics of individuals. Utilising data from the 2018 Module of Religion from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) database, our approach employs an innovative method, the Fuzzy-Hybrid TOPSIS. This methodology aims to measure the attitudes towards seven different religious groups using as Latent Variables some of the items used in the survey that measure the attitudes towards different religious faiths using a formatted answer based on a five-point anchored scale from (1) very negative to (5) very positive. The seven synthetic indicators measure the attitudes towards: (a) all the five major religions Jews-Christians-Muslims-Hinduists-Buddhists and Atheists that will be the proxy for religious diversity; (b) No Jews, (c) No Christians, (d) No Muslims, (e) No Hinduists, (f) No Buddhists, and (g) No Atheists. The sample is representative across the different religious faiths and thirty-three countries, providing a comprehensive and balanced representation of diverse geographical and cultural contexts. We employ probit models to analyse the role of specific religious affiliations and other socioeconomic factors in shaping these attitudes. The findings show differences in attitudes toward out-religious groups among the analysed faiths and at the country level. Additionally, individual socioeconomic factors, such as age, education, income levels, and experiences of discrimination based on religion, emerge as influential determinants of attitudes toward other religious groups.

Keywords: Attitudes; Out-Religion Groups; Religious Diversity; Fuzzy-Hybrid TOPSIS; ISSP

Maria Pinal Villanueva - University of Belgrade, Serbia

Stranger Danger: Moral Panics and the Construction of the Religious Other in Serbian Newspapers (2019-2023)

This study examines the understudied phenomenon of moral panics in Serbia, specifically focusing on the mediatic portrayal of socio-religious heterodoxies, often pejoratively labeled as "cults" or "sects." Through a critical discourse analysis of articles published between 2019 and 2023, it investigates the negative construction of these images and the potential consequences these moral panics hold for the targeted groups.

Findings indicate that moral panics are instigated by "claim-makers" associated with anti-cult groups. These self-proclaimed experts, typically members of the Orthodox Church, strategically aim to garner public support to advocate for increased state control over the activities of the targeted groups. The media plays a pivotal role in amplifying the messages of these claim-makers, often neglecting the perspectives of the affected groups and perpetuating negative stereotypes. We propose that this may be a strategy to create a "dangerous other," portraying the Christian Orthodox faith and/or the State as their positive counterpart—an attempt to create or amplify the sense of social cohesion in the audience.

This amplification leads to the emergence of discourses of religious intolerance and symbolic violence, collectively constituting cultural violence. The media's reinforcement of negative stereotypes further complicates the landscape, creating challenges not only for the members of these groups but also for academics attempting to engage with and study these marginalized communities.

Highlighting a gap in the literature, this work emphasizes the need for nuanced media portrayals and increased scholarly attention to socio-religious heterodoxies in Serbia. It contributes insights into moral panic generation, media image constructions and narratives, and their social and religious implications.

Keywords: Moral Panics; New Religious Movements; Media Discourse Analysis; Cultural Violence

Kirill Lapitskii - Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

The Role of the World Russian People's Council in the Creation of the "Collective West"

The critique of the "Collective West" is an essential part of contemporary Russian state official rhetoric. Being emerged in the Soviet epoch, this ideological construction was cultivated after the fall of communism. Nowadays Russian propaganda, with active participation of the Russian Orthodox Church, created a negative image of the "Collective West" (the notion is understood as USA and the European Union states). The task of the Russian Orthodox Church is to promote the idea of traditional values which should rescue the Russian state and society from the negative impact of the "Collective West". Thus, the Kremlin uses the Russian Orthodox Church as an ideological hegemon for protection of the idea of the traditional values. The World Russian People's Council – an annual public forum organized and headed by the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, is the primary arena for the discussion of contemporary social and political issues of the Russian state. Themes discussed during the Council's sessions address the problem of nation-building and the spiritual crisis after the fall of the Soviet Union; the creation of new traditional values; the protection of the Russian language and the Russian people abroad. The talk aims to analyse the strategy of the discursive construction of the "Collective West" as the enemy by the Russian Orthodox Church in the Council's sessions. The main purpose of the presentation is to demonstrate how the ROC cultivates the idea of the "Western Enemy" and enhances the gradual establishment of the authoritarian regime in Russia. During the presentation it will be also noted that the Council constantly underscores the role of the Orthodox Christianity and the Russian Church in Russian history and state-building, while taking into account the multi-national/multi-confessional compound of contemporary Russia.

Keywords: World Russian People's Council, Russian Orthodox Church, Collective West, traditional values, Russian state

Roberta Ricucci - **University of Turin, Italy**

Coming to the Stage. The Visibility of the Muslim Diaspora in Europe

Despite there being a rich body of literature on migrations, studies investigating religion within immigrant communities, including its role and impact on the second generation, have been less extensive. Even though several studies have been focussed on Muslims with a migratory background in Europe, this paper intends to address an emerging field of study concerning the management of the Muslim diaspora at the local level. Requests for places of worship, recognition of rights and appeals to participate in the policy-making process are managed at the level of local rather than national administrations. Across Europe, various approaches appear to dismantle the social construction of the Muslim exception; and the concepts of 'spatial regime', 'street level bureaucracy' and 'secular place-making' can be used to compare and contrast what each social reality gives to religion, thereby generating a specific spatial order negotiated between the state, the city's governance, secular space and the various religious affiliations, including Islam with its sub-groups.

The paper will describe and discuss several European cities' approaches (mainly in the Mediterranean area, but not only) in managing Muslims' requests of visibility through interviews (with stakeholders, policy-makers, religious associations' representatives), and field visits carried out in the last five years outlining their strengths and weaknesses in the perspective of policy transferability.

The paper will discuss several European cities' approaches in managing Muslims' requests for religious rights through interviews, and field visits carried out in the last five years outlining their strengths and weaknesses in the perspective of policy transferability.

Keywords: Muslims, Europe, politics, rights

Seimurs Guseinovs - **University of Latvia, Latvia**

Muslims in Latvia: coping with diversity and Islamophobia

Aim of the paper is to study the perception of Islamic communities of Latvia in local media. Author is planning to use content analysis and critical discourse analysis method. To study an impact of various socio-cultural factors (like Palestinian- Israel conflict) on level of Islamophobia at the territory of Latvia. Author will analyze policies

and strategies of state institutions and local media towards Muslims in Latvia and also attitudes of other religious groups, mainly Christian denominations that have various range of attitudes, from neutrality to negative perspectives (like charismatic churches). The paper also will provide historical context of developing Islamic communities at the territory of Latvia and different trends within Islam in comparison with neighboring countries (Lithuania and Estonia). For the purpose of this study author will use mainly electronic media. The paper as such could show the main aspects of how and why Islamic community is being represented as it is today in Latvian local media.

Keywords: Islam, local media, Baltic

PARALLEL SESSION 17: EDUCATING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION - A203

Frantisek Trapl - Masaryk University, Czechia

Lenka Gulova - Masaryk University, Czechia

Spiritual Literacy in School, or the Intertextuality in Faith, Religion and Values within the Educational Process

The paper deals with the topic of spiritual literacy and opens up questions related to it. What is like the spiritual literacy in a multi-religious space or in non-religious and faith-missing areas? This topic strongly relates to social discourse as well as the school environment. How is the topic of religion, faith, or human spirituality discussed in this environment? This topic is somewhat taboo in the Czech environment. The topic of faith and, often indeed, somewhat sensitive topics such as migration or values are neglected and, as our research and experience prove, educators usually do not have an opinion on these topics, or they deliberately avoid them or, on the contrary, denigrate them. This situation certainly does not only affect Czech schools, but also schools in many countries. The paper aims to introduce the topic of spiritual literacy, to relate it not only to the social discourse, but also to the education of one, whether in the school environment or in the context of the development of society.

Keywords: spiritual literacy, education, religion, school

Edit Szilagyi - University of Debrecen, Hungary

Kolping Schools in Hungarian Education

Disadvantage compensation, upgrading and opportunity building – these are the most important objectives of the Kolping pedagogy that affects primary and secondary education in Hungary. The Kolping Institution for Education and Social Care has eight high schools where mainly students of low status are taught and prepared for adult life, work and family. In our research after introducing the Hungarian Kolping history we are examining how the Kolping educational philosophy exists in the schools according to the institutional documents and students' questionnaires.

Keywords: Kolping school, Kolping pedagogy, disadvantage compensation, upgrading, opportunity building, disadvantaged students

Viktoriia Chorna – Södertörn University, Sweden

Development of Students' Sustainable Thinking During Religious Education: Swedish Experience

Sustainability, Sustainable Development, and Education for Sustainable Development are current trends in society. Sweden is a «sustainability-oriented» nation. As such the Swedish experience is important for the development of global education. Religious education in Sweden is part of social-oriented learning (along with history, geography, and the social sciences), and it is a base for implementing the ideas of a sustainable future and for teachers' and students' sustainable thinking development. I want to show (using the experience of Stockholm education administration) the organizational way to form teachers' and students' sustainable development during social-oriented lessons. Analysis and synthesis of thematical publications, the curriculum, and websites for teachers were used as methods of material collection. It is beneficial to find out what help teachers are given to make social-oriented lessons more «sustainable.

Keywords: sustainable thinking, social-oriented learning, religious education, primary school students, potential for teachers' development in Stockholm.

PARALLEL SESSION 18: NEGOTIATING RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE PAST AND PRESENT - A301

Irena Saleniece – Daugavpils University, Latvia

Contrast Between Public Image and Private Life: Religious Life of Teachers in the Latvian SSR, 1944-1985

The Soviet power tried to turn occupied Baltic countries into the Soviet republics as quickly as possible. Wanted changes could be made not only by repressions against local population but also by educating young generation as "builders of Communism" – devoted to Communist ideology atheists. This paper focuses on local young people who have been trained as Soviet teachers and were seen by totalitarian regimes as the key figures to conduct this process. Born in the 1920s and 30s, they grew up in a prewar society, and their transformation into a "Soviet man" included not only adaptation to new values, but also the rejection of values that had long been familiar, for example, religion. The life stories collected at the Oral History Centre of the Daugavpils University demonstrate various models of individual religious behavior of teachers. Many of them combined public atheistic activities with a secret practicing of religion. Interpretation of oral history sources clarifies the motivation of the teacher to choose this behavior model and the consequences of making this choice. Decades after the collapse of the communist regime in people's memories you hear a bitterness about morally questionable behavior committed many years ago.

Keywords: oral history, Latvian SSR, education, teachers, atheistic activities, double moral

Barbora Spalová - Charles University Prague, Czechia

Memory of the Persecution of Religious Orders in a Non-religious Czech Society

Czech society is famous for its religious indifference rooted far before the communist era. When, on the night of 13-14 April 1950, men's monasteries in former Czechoslovakia were raided by armed state security forces, the Czech public did not protest. Religious brothers and sisters were to disappear from memory. Even the post-revolutionary era, when some communities of consecrated life have been restored, has not changed the dominant image that places monastic life deep in the Middle

Ages. Yet in 2022, a 700-page novel describing the life of nuns under communism was published in the Czech Republic. And it became a bestseller. How is this possible? In my work I trace the different post-1989 memories of the persecution of religious orders. The religious congregations and bishoprics use the tools of processes of beatification / sanctification to remember the outstanding faithful members of the church. The historians place the persecution of the orders in the context of the struggle against the churches in the Eastern Bloc. The national memory institution - Institute for the study of totalitarian regimes - understands the persecution in the terms of restorative justice. Some local journalists and novelists discover the topic and reread it as peculiar for secular and spiritual rather than religious sensitivities.

My analysis of the interplay of these memories and their respective audiences is guided by several questions: What does this case say about the dynamics of the relationship of church and society, religion and spirituality, memory and history? Will the reinsertion of the contemporary consecrated life into the Czech cultural memory be successful? Will it lead to deeper reflection of communist era and consequently to more resilient social cohesion?

Keywords: Persecution of religion, memory, Czech Republic, non-religious society.

Maria Roginska - University of the National Education Commission, Poland
Religious Plurality in Ukraine. Post-secular Theory and the Soviet Past
Post-Soviet societies, as Jose Casanova believes, should be classified as truly post-secular. Firstly, because they have experienced a truly secular period, which cannot be said of many Western countries. Secondly, because the growing pluralization of secular and religious worldviews is accompanied in these societies by their reflective learning and mutual recognition. While this last point is difficult to reconcile in a case of authoritarian Russia, it is certainly true of Ukraine. Ukrainian tolerance for religious diversity have various roots. In this talk I will focus on the advantages of using a postsecular perspective to explain it. I will pay special attention to Ukrainian holistic approach to religious ideas and images in general and try to trace it back to the Soviet past. I will show, using contemporary texts, the hybrid nature of Soviet official ideology and look at forms of Soviet esotericism and "enchanted science", which gave rise to an unusual but lasting imagination in Soviet Ukraine. The starting point will be my

empirical sociological research on (post)Soviet science and religion (in-depth interviews with scientists from Ukraine). I will also focus on several early Soviet scientific discussions that negotiated the theoretical assumptions of natural sciences with official Marxism, and on their contemporary religious evocations. These discussions were symptomatic, and perhaps crucial, for the formation in Ukraine, (post-)Soviet religious sensibility open to both religious pluralism and science.

Keywords: religious pluralism, science, post-secular theory, (post)Soviet Ukraine

Tamas Szűcs - Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Hungary

Sharing Heritage - the Representation of Jews in the World Heritage Sites of Central Europe

UNESCO's World Heritage Programme is the best-known and most successful programme in the entire UN ecosystem. Not only does it raise the profile of individual heritage sites to the public, but it also contributes to the identity and global recognition of communities. For non-state actors, however, access to the scheme is limited due to its intergovernmental nature. Only state parties can add sites to their tentative lists and submit their nominations. Jewry in Central Europe is not a state actor, but it has made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the region over the centuries. How are Jewish sites included in the World Heritage lists of the region? What are the heritage policy considerations behind these nominations? What is the role of the remaining Jewish communities and what other factors are at play? What role does Jewish heritage tourism play in the nominations and in the development of existing sites? How do ethnic conflicts in the region play into the emphasis on the role of Jews in certain World Heritage nominations? These questions will be addressed in the presentation through case studies. Several countries in the region (Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and World Heritage sites nominated in different periods (pre-1990, 1990-2000, recent) and different types (urban centre, cultural landscape) will be presented, revealing the changing trends in heritage policy of the region.

Keywords: Jews heritage, World Heritage, UNESCO, Hungary, Ukraine, Budapest, Odesa, Tokaj

Johan Hafner – University of Potsdam, Germany

Where Does a Rainbow End? - Some Aspects on Religious Diversity

In a first step I will address methodological questions during mapping the religious diversity of a city or a region. Which groups do we count as parts of the religious spectrum (yoga-studios, free-masons, free-thinkers)? What might seem divers from afar is very homogenous on a neighbourhood-level. And how do we assess the so-called esoteric sector that consists of courses and seminars but do not form congregations?

Secondly, I will discuss the relation of religious among other groups within a diverse environment. In contemporary societies religions take part and suffer from functional differentiation. Many agents (art, sports, entertainment) compete for the scarce resource 'time'. This superdiversity has been special for urban areas, but with the ubiquitous presence of social media it overgrew any Lebenswelt. This fact forces religious congregations either to sharpen their profile as religious or to limit connections with the surrounding world. Diversity doesn't lead to dialogue automatically.

In a third step I will contextualize religious groups within to the ongoing decrease of religious activity and life-long affiliation. These tendencies Secularization is observed in many countries in middle and Eastern Europe, even after the forced secularization ended in 1990. My hypothesis is that the dialogue between diverse religious groups gets easier the more majority-religions loose their top-dog-position and the more secularization is perceived as the challenge to all groups.

Chair: **Annette Leis-Peter**