NEGOTIATING RELIGION:
Inquiries into the History and Present of Religious Accommodation

Workshop 3
Negotiating Religion in Urban Space

Research Initiative
Religion and Society @ UCL’s Grand Challenge of Intercultural Interaction
RATIONALE OF THE WORKSHOP SERIES - NEGOTIATING RELIGION

Throughout history, religious belief and religious affiliation have been extremely powerful factors in shaping human societies. They have defined individual identities and communities, governed the relationship between commonwealths, and inspired human creativity. Religious hopes and fears have also contributed to the unleashing of conflict and violence. For an overwhelming and growing majority of people living on our planet today, religious belief answers questions central to the human existence and allows it to cope with difficult or decisive moments as well as with the rhythm of everyday life. Over the past generations, however, stark regional and social differences have emerged regarding the place and impact of religious belief. In a world marked more than ever before by migration and global connectivity, societies which tend towards religious neutrality or indifference need to define anew their relationship to communities with strong religious commitments. In the past as well as today, the relationship between individual and community, between different confessions and religious communities, between these communities and the state, are negotiated in complex processes of moderation, sometimes involving conflict or even violence.

This series of four workshops presents and debates the complex processes through which religious communities create or defend their place in a given commonwealth, both in history and in our world today. The focus is thus on the communities’ ability to formulate and present their claims, to identify potential spokespeople and their addressees, to secure their institutions and assert their physical and political presence, as well as on the epistemological, political and social conditions facilitating or complicating processes of negotiation. The workshops thus intend to focus on the agency of both sides in processes of negotiation, broadly understood as all societal and political interactions that not only concern a religious community but directly involve it. The workshops hope to engage UCL’s community in a discussion about what London’s global university could or should contribute to a reflection of these issues as a leading institution in research and in higher education, and as an academic community.
Workshop 3
NEGOTIATING RELIGION: in Urban Space

This third workshop will investigate the spatial incorporation of religious communities in the city both in the form of the material urban environment, for example in the presence of religious buildings and other faith spaces, and in everyday urban cultures, practices and politics.

Questions which will be explored in this workshop include: How are new religious buildings incorporated into contemporary urban spaces? What continuities are there with the emergence of religious architecture in earlier times? What significance do religious buildings and other markers in the urban landscape have for different religious communities? How are existing and new forms of religious spatial practice (processions, festivals, pilgrimage) incorporated into the urban environment? What kinds of transformations of urban space are produced by religious spatial practices? What role do faith groups play in the making and remaking of urban spaces? In what ways are faith communities engaged in contemporary urban politics and praxis? What possibilities are there for the formation of new civic partnerships or reconfiguring public engagement between religious and secular groups?
PROGRAMME

Workshop 3
NEGOTIATING RELIGION: in Urban Space

7th March 2012, 10.30am - 6pm, Chadwick LT GO8, UCL

10.30am Coffee/Registration

Session One: Negotiating Religion in Urban Space:
New Faith Spaces 11-1

Speakers:

Professor John Eade
(Roehampton University/UCL Migration Research Unit)
Religious Place-Making and Migration across a Globalising City:
Responding to Mobility in London

Ali Mangera (Mangera Yvars Architects)
Designing faith spaces in the city: The Salaam Centre, North Harrow

Dr Richard Gale
(School of City and Regional Planning, University of Cardiff)
‘...make your dwellings into places of worship’: mosque development and
the politics of place and residence in the UK’

Dr Andrew Crompton (School of Architecture, University of Liverpool )
Multi-faith spaces: a universal interface to God

Chair:
Dr Claire Dwyer (UCL Migration Research Unit)

1 - 2pm Lunch

2pm - 3.45pm Session Two: Negotiating Faith in Urban Space:
Continuity and Practice

Speakers:

Dr Nazneen Ahmed (Compass, University of Oxford)
Making Muslim Space on the London Docks: Lascar Seafarers’ Faith
Practices, 1880-1945

Liz Hingley
(Leverhulme Artist in Residence, UCL Migration Research Unit)
Under gods: stories from Soho Road, Birmingham

Dr Claire Dwyer (UCL Migration Research Unit)
Faith and Suburbia: secularisation, modernity and the changing
geographies of religion in London’s suburbs
Speakers: Dr David Garbin (CRONEM, University of Surrey)
*Diaspora, suburban Christianity and the American ‘New South’: African migrant churches in Atlanta*

Chair: Professor John Eade

3.45pm - 4pm  **Tea Break**

Panel: **Negotiating Faith in Urban Space: Politics and Praxis**

Speakers: David Garbin (CRONEM, University of Surrey),
Enrico Masi (University of Bologna, Italy)
*Soldiers of God in the Global City (Video Documentary)*

Dr John Zavos (South Asian Studies, University of Manchester)
*Small Acts, Big Society: Sewa and Hindu (nationalist) identity in the UK*

Dr Luke Bretherton (Faith and Public Policy Forum, Kings College London)
*Community Organising, Democratic Citizenship and Inter-faith Relations as a Civic Practice*

Chair: Dr Claire Dwyer (UCL Migration Research Unit)

Followed by a drinks reception, all participants welcome

6pm  **Reception**

*Shikharbandhi Jain Deraser, Potters Bar.*
Nazneen Ahmed


Abstract: Whilst the lives of lascar seafarers in London have become of increasing focus recently through the work of Rozina Visram, Shompa Lahiri, and Georgie Wemyss, their religious lives and practices have largely been overlooked. In this paper I will draw upon the archival research I have been conducting for the project “Religious Faith, Space and Diasporic Communities in East London, 1880-present” to demonstrate how since the 1880s Muslim lascar seafarers made efforts to claim religious space upon ships and in sailors’ homes and to have their faith recognised by their employers, their on-land missionary hosts, and the wider British public. I will suggest that whilst the ship and the dock were sites of profound disempowerment and exploitation for lascar seafarers, they also provided liminal sites of negotiation and contestation for lascar seafarers where it is possible to identify attempts to articulate a transnational Muslim identity beyond ship and nation.

Luke Bretherton

Community Organising, Democratic Citizenship and Inter-faith Relations as a Civic Practice.

Abstract: Drawing on ethnographic research from a three year study of London Citizens the paper will examine how the practices of community organising enable the mediation of a common life between diverse religious traditions in an urban context. It proposes a constructive account of inter-faith relations as a civic practice and a re-conceptualisation of citizenship as a form of municipal pietas.

Andrew Crompton

Multifaith spaces: a universal interface to God.

Abstract: Open to people of all faiths or of no faith, multifaith prayer rooms can be found in non-places like airports, shopping centres and hospitals. Behind their doors incompatible worldviews, enemies even, time-share a simple room that takes on one or other of a set of sacred possibilities on the sign over the entrance. They need supervision because if left unattended they will become de-facto mosques, chapels, or new age spaces, depending on who uses them most. Only if scrupulously maintained in unstable equilibrium between these modes of failure can they provide universal access to the divine. How is this achieved from a design and manangement point of view?

Claire Dwyer

Faith and Suburbia: secularisation, modernity and the changing geographies of religion in London’s suburbs.

Abstract: Spectacular new religious buildings on London’s outskirts are often cited as evidence of London’s multicultural diversity however the suburban location of these new buildings is usually dismissed as incongruous drawing on familiar tropes of the suburbs
as sites of modernisation, materialism and secularism. This paper uses this assumed incongruity to address the complexity of relationships between religion and suburban space by tracing the significance of religion in changing suburban geographies through a focus on London’s suburbs.

John Eade

Religious Place-Making and Migration across a Globalising City: Responding to Mobility in London.

Abstract: During the last 60 years two forms of mobility have played a crucial role in the process of place-making – global migration and gentrification. While these mobilities have been extensively analysed in terms of secular processes, the role of religion is becoming more evident, especially with the questioning of the necessary association between secularisation and suburbanisation. This paper seeks to contribute to this growing understanding of the part played by different religious groups in place-making across the metropolis.

Richard Gale

‘...make your dwellings into places of worship’: mosque development and the politics of place and residence in the UK.’

Abstract: In recent decades, there has been growing attention paid to the emergence of an Islamic landscape in the British urban context, revealing the politics of place that coalesce around purpose-built mosque development. Whilst furnishing important social and semiotic insights, this growing research base has generally confined itself to mosques conceived on a spectacular, ‘cathedral’ scale (Peach and Gale 2003). Linking to recent geographical work on the ‘unofficially sacred’ (Kong 2010), this paper shifts this focus to consider the more muted yet more numerous conflicts surrounding domestic-scale mosque conversions in the UK, exploring the tensions between religious and socio-legal constructions of place that come into play.

David Garbin

Diaspora, suburban Christianity and the American ‘New South’: African migrant churches in Atlanta.

Abstract: This paper draws on research conducted among recent migrants from Francophone Africa in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). This case study is part of an international project called Global Prayers (http://globalprayers.info), which interrogates the new poetics and politics of urban religions in large metropolises of both the Global North and the Global South. In this paper I explore the ‘regrounding’ of African churches - Pentecostal and Prophetic - in the particular context of the American ‘New South’, which has over the recent years witnessed important urban, economic and demographic changes. I locate this experience of religious and sacred reterritorialisation within the shifting landscapes of suburbia and exurbia. This sprawling landscape is shaped by the tension between desegregation-resegregation, ‘white flight’ - and its associated quest for ‘whitopias’ - but it is also characterised by a new migrant and diasporic pluralisation. I wish to show the ways in which newly established African churches negotiate this landscape of pluralised suburban Christianity - punctuated by well established ‘mega-churches’ - but also how
they make sense, spiritually and culturally, of the symbolic and moral cartography of the US in general and of the ‘new South’ in particular.

David Garbin and Enrico Masi
Soldiers of God in the Global City.
Abstract: This short documentary film follows the urban path of two London-based African churches engaged in ‘spiritual warfare’- a Ghanaian Pentecostal church in Hackney and a Prophetic Congolese church located in a large industrial park of Edmonton. Both places of worship are in fact converted warehouses and are almost organically diluted within the urban fabric of the post-industrial metropolis. However, through their religious practice, territorial and sonic presence these churches have carved out ‘third spaces’ of re-enchantment within the urban moral landscape. Focusing on the discourses, embodiment, spatiality and aurality of the spiritual warfare, the film explores how contemporary African diasporic churches are, in their own terms, reconfiguring dialectics of margin/centrality, invisibility/visibility in a ‘global city’ like London.

Liz Hingley
‘Under Gods’ : stories from Soho Road.
Abstract: Under Gods photographically explores the contemporary circumstances of diasporic urban faith communities along Soho Road in Birmingham, the site of some 30 religious centres and home to over 90 different nationalities. Between 2007 and 2009 Liz Hingley lived with and intimately documented over fifteen different religious communities, including Thai, Sri Lankan and Vietnamese Buddhists, Rastafarians, the Jesus Army evangelical Christians, Sikhs, Catholic nuns and Hare Krishna’s. The images trace the quotidian spiritual and material practices, as well as the communities, religious organisations, networks and transnational flows that shape this one street. They capture how belief transforms spaces from the ordinary to non-ordinary, as spaces, individuals and objects come together.

Ali Mangera
Designing faith spaces in the city: The Salaam Centre, North Harrow.
Abstract: This presentation will discuss the design for the Salaam Centre in North Harrow a multi-faith Centre which uses light to open up an inviting space mediating the suburban setting. Mangera will also talk about other projects which are innovative in their combination of Islamic architecture and modern form including the Abbey Mills mosque.

John Zavos
Small Acts, Big Society: Sewa and Hindu (nationalist) identity in the UK.
Abstract: The presentation focuses on a recent initiative in the UK promoting the idea of Sewa as localised social action. It examines the role played by Hindu nationalist organisations involved in the initiative, and the projection of (especially young) Hindus as model ‘ethnic citizens’, framed by a State focus on ‘Big Society’ empowerment. The presentation explores the implications of this project, both in terms of its potential to increase the sense of citizenship identity amongst young Hindus, and in terms of its ability to re-situate the politics of Hindu nationalism in social networks which chime strongly with currently dominant registers of civic virtue in the UK.
BIOGRAPHIES

Nazneen Ahmed is a Research Assistant on the Oxford Diasporas Programme research project “Religious Faith, Space and Diasporic Communities in East London: 1880-present” at the University of Oxford.

Luke Bretherton is a Reader in Theology & Politics and Convener of the Faith & Public Policy Forum at King’s College London. As of the next academic year he is taking up a post at Duke University, North Carolina. Recent academic work has focused on faith-based organizations, the churches involvement in social welfare provision, the treatment of refugees and fair trade and is drawn together in Christianity & Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). His current areas of research focus on the intersections between Christianity, grassroots democracy, responses to poverty and patterns of inter-faith relations. His forthcoming book entitled Community Organizing, Religious Plurality and Democracy (Cambridge University Press) draws on a three-year AHRC funded project for which he was Principal Investigator.

Andrew Crompton is a Senior Lecturer in Architecture at Liverpool University. He is currently working on a project Multi-Faith Spaces as symptoms and agents of religious and social change funded by the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society programme (http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/architecture/research/mfs/).

Claire Dwyer is a Senior Lecturer in Social and Cultural Geography at University College London where she is Co-Director of the UCL Migration Research Unit (MRU). She is the Co-Editor of Transnational Spaces (2004) and New Geographies of Race and Racism (2008).

John Eade is Visiting Professor at the UCL Migration Research Unit (MRU) and Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Roehampton. He is also editor of the Routledge Series Religion, Travel and Tourism. Between 2003 and 2011 he was Executive Director of CRONEM (Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism), which linked Roehampton and the University of Surrey. After research in Kolkata (Calcutta) on the social identity of the educated Bengali Muslim middle class, he completed his PhD in 1986 on Bangladeshi community politics in Tower Hamlets. Since then he has researched the Islamisation of urban space, globalisation and the global city, travel and pilgrimage and Bangladeshi identity politics.

Richard Gale a Lecturer in Human Geography at Cardiff University, whose research interests lies at the intersection of geography with sociology. His main areas of research include ethnic and religious segregation, place and the politics of identity, religion and urban governance, and ethnicity and political participation. To date, his primary contributions have been to debates in the geographical study of planning, religion and Islam in the UK and the political engagement of young people of minority ethnic heritage.
**Upcoming Workshops**

**Workshop IV**  
12 June 2012: Moot Court Room, Bentham House, UCL

**Legal Frameworks: Schools and Religious Freedom**

Because litigation is a privileged arena in attempting to limit or assert the status of religious communities, the fourth and final workshop will explore the impact of legal arguments in shaping the relationship between religious communities and society.

**Academic lead:** Dr Myriam Hunter-Henin (Laws, UCL).

**Confirmed speakers:** Peter Cumper (Leicester University), Norman Doe (Cardiff Law School), Myriam Hunter-Henin, (UCL), Maleiha Malik (King’s College London), Ronan McCrea (UCL), Julia Ipgrave (Warwick University), Julian Rivers (Bristol University), Russell Sandberg (Cardiff Law School), Professor Lucy Vickers (Oxford Brookes University).

**Dr David Garbin** is Sociologist and Research Fellow at CRONEM (Centre for Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism, University of Surrey). He is currently managing an international comparative research project on minorities, civic engagement and citizenship in Europe and also involved in the study of black Christians, Muslims and Hindus in London as part of a wider comparative research project in the UK, South Africa and Malaysia (funded by the Ford Foundation and SSRC, New York).

**Liz Hingley** is Artist in Residence at the UCL Migration Research Unit (MRU), University College London and Associate Research Fellow of Birmingham University Theology Department. She holds an MSc in Social Anthropology from University College London and a First Class Honors BA in Editorial Photography from the University of Brighton.

**Ali Mangera** is a founding partner of Mangera Yvars Architects.

**Enrico Masi** is an Italian Film director and musician, currently based in London. He founded Caucaso Factory ensemble in 2002, an international production company of cinema, documentary and performing arts. He has worked as a visual anthropologist researcher at the University of Bologna since 2008, in affiliation with other international institutions such as SOAS, Surrey University, Paris - Nanterre, Royal College of Art.

**John Zavos** is Senior Lecturer in South Asian Studies at the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures, University of Manchester. His recent publications include *Religious Traditions in Modern South Asia*, with Jacqueline Suthren Hirst (London: Routledge, 2011).
Dr Claire Dwyer is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography at UCL where she is also Co-Director of the Department’s Migration Research Unit (MRU). Her research interests are in geographies of ethnicity, gender and religion; transnationalism and diasporas; feminist and multicultural theory. She has undertaken research on Muslim identities in Britain, British South Asian diaspora commodity cultures and new suburban religious landscapes in Britain and Canada.

Dr François Guesnet is Sidney and Elizabeth Corob Reader in Modern Jewish History at the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at UCL. He specializes in the history of East European Jewish communities.

Dr Myriam Hunter-Henin is Senior Lecturer at UCL Laws Faculty and the co-director of the Institute of Global Law. Her main interests are Comparative Law, Family Law and Law and Religion. Her work addresses the implications of human rights in the private sphere and the interaction between law and religion in the sphere of education and family law.

Prof Cécile Laborde is Professor of Political Theory at UCL. Her last book is Critical Republicanism. The Hijab Controversy and Political Philosophy (OUP 2008).

Dr Robert Morris has been an Honorary Senior Research Associate, Constitution Unit, UCL since 1998, and was formerly a career Home Office civil servant. His research addresses constitutional questions about the relationship of Church and State in general, and to the Anglican Church in particular.

Dr Uta Staiger is Deputy Director of the UCL European Institute and a Teaching Fellow in UCL History. She joined UCL from Cambridge following a PhD and a post-doctoral position at its Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. Her main research interests are in the relevance of culture to citizenship, political community and democracy, in particular with a view to the European Union.
FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on the individual sessions or the series as a whole, please contact: Dr François Guesnet or Dr Uta Staiger.

The series is coordinated by the European Institute and UCL’s Research Initiative Religion and Society (supported by the Grand Challenge of Intercultural Interaction).

Throughout, the organisers hope to engage UCL’s community in a discussion about what London’s global university could or should contribute to a reflection of these issues as a leading institution in research and in higher education, and as an academic community.

To find out more and book your place: www.ucl.ac.uk/european-institute/events/religion

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