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Letter from the Director

It is difficult to believe that I am writing the director’s letter for the last newsletter of the Religion and Diversity Project. Together we’ve met and surpassed our original goals, yet there is still so much to learn. This is in part because both religion and diversity are changing in all of the contexts in which we work. It is also because although there is a wonderful body of research on religion in Canada, our contributions and those of others have revealed gaps in knowledge that were beyond our mandate and resources.

One of the major shifts over the past decade is the rapidly increasing number of people who self-describe as nonreligious. Thinking about this in relation to a project on religion might seem to be a bit odd, but social context is key. Living well together in a complex future means that how people with diverse interests, commitments and identities interact is of vital importance.

I am grateful to have worked with such a dynamic, engaged and committed group of scholars. Each member of the team (including a dedicated group of students and postdoctoral researchers), partners, stakeholders and friends we’ve made along the way has contributed to the overwhelming success of the Project. I would like to offer my sincere and heartfelt thank you to each of you.

Heather Shipley has worked with the Project from the very beginning—from the word by word editorial work of the initial applications to the massive undertaking of managing the daily operations of a large research project with many moving parts—Heather has done this work with integrity, commitment to the goals of the project and extraordinary patience. In addition, in her ‘spare’ time she has contributed to the intellectual life of the Project through her own research. I am certain all team members join me in expressing gratitude to Heather for her contribution to the success of the Project and in wishing her well in her new position as Advisor, Education & Communications at York University’s Centre for Rights, Equity and Inclusion in Toronto.

As we enter into a new era of global conversations about religion, non-religion, and difference, I am mindful that the challenges and opportunities of diversity that lay ahead are rapidly shifting. Though this project has now come to its final phase, we’ve built a foundation of research and collaboration that will endure beyond the formal life of the Religion and Diversity Project.

Lori Beaman, Project Director
Lettre de la Directrice

Il est difficile de croire que j’écris la lettre du directeur pour le dernier bulletin du *Projet religion et diversité*. Ensemble, nous avons atteint et dépassé nos objectifs initiaux, mais il y a encore beaucoup à apprendre. C’est en partie parce que la religion et la diversité changent dans tous les contextes dans lesquels nous travaillons. C’est aussi parce que, bien qu’il existe un impressionnant corpus de recherches sur la religion au Canada, nos contributions et celles des autres ont révélé des lacunes dans les connaissances qui dépassaient notre mandat et nos ressources.

L’un des changements majeurs au cours de la dernière décennie est le nombre croissant de personnes qui se décrivent comme non-religieuses. Penser à cela par rapport à un projet sur la religion peut sembler un peu étrange, mais le contexte social est essentiel. Bien vivre ensemble dans un avenir complexe signifie que la façon dont les personnes ayant des intérêts, des engagements et des identités divers interagissent, est d’une importance vitale.


**Heather Shipley** a travaillé avec le projet dès le début - du travail éditorial pour la demande initiale du financement jusqu’à la gestion des opérations quotidiennes d’un grand projet de recherche - Heather a fait ce travail avec intégrité, engagement et une patience extraordinaire. De plus, dans son temps libre, elle a contribué à la vie intellectuelle du projet grâce à ses propres recherches. Je suis certaine que tous les membres de l’équipe se joignent à moi pour exprimer ma gratitude à Heather pour sa contribution au succès du projet et pour lui souhaiter bonne chance dans son nouveau poste de Conseillère, éducation et communications, au Centre pour les droits, l’équité et de l’inclusion de l’Université York à Toronto.

Alors que nous entrons dans une nouvelle ère de conversations mondiales sur la religion, la non-religion et la différence, je suis consciente que les défis et les opportunités de la diversité qui nous attendent évoluent rapidement. Bien que ce projet soit maintenant arrivé à sa phase finale, nous avons construit une base de recherche et de collaboration qui durera au-delà de la vie formelle du *Projet religion et diversité*.

**Lori Beaman, Directrice du Projet**
The Religion and Diversity Project Team

Project Director: Lori Beaman
Project Manager: Heather Shipley
Information Officer: Alyshea Cummins
Project Assistant: Marianne Abou-Hamad
Student Caucus Leader: Christine Cusack

Executive Committee
Lori Beaman, James A. Beckford, Peter Beyer, Solange Lefebvre, Avigail Eisenberg, Pamela Klassen, Nancy Nason-Clark, and Pamela Dickey Young.

Team Members

Strand 1: Identity
Peter Beyer
Solange Lefebvre
Paul Bramadat
Paul Bowlby
Christopher Helland
Michael Wilkinson
Patrice Brodeur
Susan Palmer
Samuel Reimer

Strand 2: Defining / Delimiting
Lori Beaman
James A. Beckford
Valérie Amiraux
Benjamin Berger
Anver Emon
Winnifred Sullivan
Jean-François Gaudreault-DesBiens
Richard Moon
James T. Richardson
William Closson James

Strand 3: Gender/ Sexuality
Nancy Nason-Clark
Pamela Dickey Young
Donald Boisvert
Pascale Fournier
Rubina Ramji
Natasha Bakht
Rebecca Johnson
Linda Woodhead
Nacira Guénif-Souilamas

Strand 4: Alternative Strategies
Avigail Eisenberg
Pamela Klassen
Rukhsana Ahmed
Bruce Ryder
Barbara Thériault
Gary Bouma
Kim Knott
Prema Kurien
André Laliberté
Project Updates and Final Team Meeting

Religion and Diversity Project 2016-2017 Innovation Grant

Michael Wilkinson’s project, “Views of Diversity in a Korean Congregation: A Follow-up Study,” builds on a longer study of a migrant congregation that began in Toronto in the 1990s. In 1997 the focus of the interviews were on the transnational relations maintained by the congregation. In 2007, interviews were conducted with second-generation members. In 2017, the interviews focused on issues about religious diversity and the interactions of the congregation with non-Koreans and non-Christians. The survey asked questions to measure religious practices and beliefs, public life and social issues, ethnic identity, and congregational culture. The goal was to collect survey data over three data collection points for comparison purposes, observations, and interviews on three different issues.

Religion and Diversity Project Final Team Meeting

The final meeting for the Religion and Diversity Project is being held October 26-28, 2017 at the University of Ottawa. Bringing together team members, international guests, policy partners, students and postdoctoral fellows, this meeting will serve as a space to integrate reflections on our research over the past seven years which will build a foundation for the development of new and innovative inquiries in the dynamic and changing field of religion and diversity.

We are pleased to host numerous international guests, who are sure to stimulate wide ranging dialogue across the Project’s themes that will continue after the Religion and Diversity Project itself has ended. Our final meeting will host roundtable sessions on topics of critical relevance such as: migration, education, state and local regulation, nonreligion and religion, indigeneity, and complex futures. Panelists include team members, policy stakeholders, partners and others who have been friends of the Project. We will celebrate the accomplishments of the young scholars who have worked with us at a Next Generation reception, featuring information stations at which each scholar will present her/his research. We are delighted that the meeting finale will feature a keynote address by Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Lecturer in Human Rights, School of Law and Human Rights Centre, University of Essex.
Learning and Networking – Conferences

International Society for the Sociology of Religion – ISSR

We were delighted to see so many team members, student team members, and team associates at the International Society for the Sociology of Religion conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, July 4-8, 2017. Participants included: Alyshea Cummins, Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, Anna Halafoff, Barbara Thériault, Christine Cusack, Cory Steele, Elisabeth Arweck, Gary Bouma, Grace Davie, Inger Furseth, James A. Beckford, James T. Richardson, Julia Martínez-Ariño, Keelin Pringnitz, Lene Kühle, Lori Beaman, Maria Alekseevskaya, Mary Jo Neitz, Monica Grigore Dovlete, Per Pettersson, Peter Beyer, Sam Reimer, Sarah-Jane Page, Solange Lefebvre, Susan Palmer, and Zaheeda Alibhai.

American Sociological Association – ASA

The Religion and Diversity Project was represented at the American Sociological Association annual meeting in Montreal (August 12-15, 2017) in a session entitled, Religion and Complex Futures: Diversity, Pluralism and Equalities. Panelists included: Lori Beaman, Peter Beyer, Valérie Amiraux, Benjamin Berger, James T. Richardson, and Mary Jo Neitz.
Learning and Networking – Conferences

Association for the Sociology of Religion – ASR

Religion and Diversity Project team members were out in full force at the Association for the Sociology of Religion annual meeting in Montreal, August 12-14, 2017. Project attendees included: Solange Lefebvre, Lori Beaman, Peter Beyer, James A. Beckford, Michael Wilkinson, Susan Palmer, Valérie Amiraux, Barbara Thériault, Pamela Dickey Young, Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier, Douglas Ezzy, Inger Furseth, Paula Montero, Ruby Ramji, Dia Dabby, Monica Grigore Dovlete, Catherine Holtmann, Timothy Stacey, Christine Cusack, Keelin Pringnitz, Cory Steele, and Ana Paula Bertho.

Upcoming...

XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology - ISA

The Religion and Diversity Project will host a session at next year’s XIX ISA World Congress of Sociology: Power, Violence and Justice: Reflections, Responses and Responsibilities, in Toronto, Canada, July 15-21, 2018. The session is entitled, “Religion and Diversity: An International Study” and has been organized by Anna Halafoff. Presenters include Lori Beaman, Peter Beyer, Pamela Dickey Young, and Anna Halafoff.

Where are our Societies in Terms of Management of Cultural and Religious Diversity? Ten Years After the Bouchard-Taylor Commission

Organized by Solange Lefebvre, this conference aims to investigate public debates on diversity and pluralism, theories of diversity and pluralism, and diversity and pluralism in various contexts. It will be held at the University of Montreal, October 19-21, 2017. Team Member participants include: Lori Beaman, Peter Beyer, Gary Bouma, Inger Furseth, Anna Halafoff, and Solange Lefebvre. For more information, please visit: http://bouchard-taylor.openum.ca
Learning and Networking – Workshops

Producing Islam(s) in Canada

This workshop sought to provide the first systematic and critical assessment of the study of Islam and Muslims in Canada to consider and critique the field. It was organized by Melanie Adrian, Amélie Barras, and Jennifer Selby. Team participants included Lori Beaman, Amélie Barras, Natasha Bakht, Anver Emon, Zaheeda Alibhai, and Alyshea Cummins. The workshop took place at the Centre for the Study of Islam at Carleton University on September 14 and 15, 2017. For a full list of participants or more information on this workshop, please visit: http://www.mun.ca/relstudies/more/producingislams/

Radicalizations, Extremisms and Religious Studies: Theories, Critics and Empirical Research

This workshop was organized by Solange Lefebvre, Peter Beyer, and Valérie Amiraux as part of the Association for the Sociology of Religion Thematic Sessions and One Day Workshops. Participants included Susan Palmer, Amarnath Amarasingam, Lorne Dawson, Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier, Solange Lefebvre, Imane Khlifaté, David Hofmann, Aziz Djaout, Aïcha Bounaga, and Connor Steele. For more information, please visit our website: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/must-attend-events/2017/#August2017
Learning and Networking – Workshops

“Regarder en sociologies”: documentaires sure la religion vécue

Organized by Barbara Thériault, and held at the University of Montreal, the focus of the workshop was to discuss the way visual media paves the way for new sociological perspectives in the study of religion. Team participants included Barbara Thériault, Monica Grigore, Sophie Coulombe, and Alexandre Legault. The workshop report can be found here: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/seven-years-research/rdp-events-brief/

Graduate Student Workshop Series 3, Session 3

The Graduate Student Workshop Series was held over 7 years and cycled through 24 graduate students and 8 different facilitators. Student team members Keelin Pringnitz, Mariia Alekseevskiaia, Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier, Samane Hemat, Sara Ludin, Zaheeda Alibhai, and Zijad Delic participated in the final series (Series 3) with the last session facilitated by Dr. Sarah-Jane Page, at the University of Ottawa from November 2-3, 2016. For more information on other “Graduate Student Workshop Series,” please visit our website (http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/project-team/student-team-members/graduate-student/).

The Politics of Yoga: Sex, Religion, and Power in a Global Industry

This workshop was organized by Paul Bramadat and aimed to discuss the religious, social, and political forces animating contemporary debates about yoga. The workshop report can be found on our website here: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/must-attend-events/2017/
Learning and Networking – Workshops

Re-Storying Canada: Reconsidering Religion and Public Memory in 2017

Pamela Klassen, Emma Anderson, and Hillary Kaell organized this conference and public art event at the University of Ottawa. A goal of the conference was to ask how religion—and the ways it is remembered—has shaped the formation of Canada as a colonial and multicultural nation. Restorying Canada sought to inspire bold challenges to historiographic conventions of how we remember, invite critique as well as celebration, and explore multiple media and genres for evoking and interrogating the past. Many members of the team participated in this event; they include Pamela Klassen, Donald L. Boisvert, Valérie Amiraux, Solange Lefebvre, Zaheeda Alibhai, Christine Cusack, Zabeen Khamisa, Judith Brunton, Kaleigh McLelland, Scott Craig, and Steven Tomlins. More information on the workshop can be found here: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/seven-years-research/rdp-events-brief/
Lectures

Past and upcoming lectures organized by the Project’s three research nodes, the University of Ottawa, the University of Montreal, and the University of Victoria, include:

- **Critical Thinkers in Religion, Law and Social Theory**
  - **Shekhar Hattangadi**, Director and Filmmaker — October 13, 2016, University of Ottawa, “India’s “Religious Suicides” and the Legal-Secular Question”

- **Critical Thinkers in Religion, Law and Social Theory**

- **The CSRS Weekly Lecture Series**
  - **David Seljak**, Visiting Research Fellow, St. Jerome's University — March 2, 2017, University of Victoria, “The Crisis of the Spirit and the Globalization of Addiction”
  - **Keith Kahn-Harris**, Leo Baeck College, London — June 9, 2017, University of Victoria, “Antisemitism and Divisions over Israel in Diaspora Jewish Communities: The Exploitation of Jewish Difference”

For a complete list of the lectures organized by the Project’s nodes, please see:

University of Victoria: [https://www.uvic.ca/events/index.php](https://www.uvic.ca/events/index.php)

The *Religion and Diversity Project’s* online graduate student E-Journal entitled *Regulating Religion* aims to collect and make accessible innovative, well-written and well-researched graduate student papers on topics broadly related to the regulation of religion; such as the interplay of religion, politics, law, and secularism.

The final issue of *Regulating Religion* features three articles that stemmed from a conference entitled, “New Religious Movements, Minorities and Media” hosted by Solange Lefebvre and Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier at the University of Montreal (March 17–18, 2016).

**Articles in the Winter 2017 Issue**

- *Ishaq v. Canada: Faith, Identity, Citizenship* by Francesca Raimondo
- *Comparative Analysis of Dutch Reformed Communities’ Coverage in Canadian Mainstream and Reformed Mass Media* by Mariia Alekseevskaa
- *The Idolatrous Enjoyment of Prison: the Multivalent Meanings of Cult in Orange Is the New Black’s Third Season* by Connor Steele

Postdoctoral Fellows

The Religion and Diversity Project is pleased to have recently welcomed Dia Dabby, Timothy Stacey, and Monica Grigore as postdoctoral fellows. For a full list of postdoctoral fellows, please visit our website here: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/project-team/postdoctoral-fellows/

Dia Dabby

Dia Dabby, Postdoctoral Fellow with the Religion and Diversity Project, is working on local zoning and Muslim cemeteries in Quebec with Lori Beaman. Forthcoming publications include yoga in schools; constitutionalism and religion in North America; social context education in Canada; and a book project on religious diversity and public education in Canada.

Timothy Stacey

In his Postdoctoral Fellowship, Timothy Stacey examines the role of religion and belief in renewing a sense of solidarity in culturally and economically fragmented spaces. In particular, he explores what he calls ‘myths’, that is, the stories of great events and characters that point towards an ideal way of living. He uses the term myth to highlight the parity between religious and secular ways of inhabiting the world.

Monica Grigore

Monica Grigore’s Postdoctoral Fellowship with the Religion and Diversity Project is supervised by Lori Beaman on a project entitled “the Local Regulation of Religion.” This ethnographic study explores how the transformation of the space—caught in a circular movement between the religious and the secular—takes shape in everyday life in the metropolitan area of Montreal.
Student Team Members

Our students have been up to a lot this past year. Here are some examples of their activity in their own words (or Tweets!).

Presented findings w/ Peter Beyer from our Canadian Religious Identity Survey @RDiversity #ISSR17

Overwhelmingly positive comments on Christel Manning’s book “Losing Our Religion” #ASR2016WA #religiousunaffiliates

This question of particular importance for public education in an era of #Reconciliation #restoringCanada

@keelinpringnitz presenting her work on Islamophobic discourse in American politics via ‘secular toolbox’

Dr. Elisabeth Arweck (University of Warwick) at the #ISSR17 @uni @warwickuni

@CathyHoltemann speaking about the growing field of #digitalhumanities at #congresssh2017
Seven Years of Research: A User’s Guide

Over the past seven years, the Religion and Diversity Project has funded numerous events and research projects. In the last year of the Project, we are thrilled to share on our website the tremendous initiatives that have been undertaken by our Team Members, Research Associates, Student Team Members, and Post-doctoral Fellows, which sought to engage across multiple dimensions of the Religion and Diversity Project.

http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/seven-years-research/
Patterns of Governing Religion Website

Created by the Religion and Diversity Project, Patterns of Governing Religion was funded by the University of Ottawa’s International Research Acceleration Program (IRAP) and led by Lori Beaman and Marie-Claire Foblets (Co-Investigators). Project Information Officer Tess Campeau, Project Assistant Marianne Abou-Hamad and Project Manager Heather Shipley designed and built the website that brings together the results of multiple major research projects from around the world. The various research findings are organized by thematic categories that allow for the centralized access of reports and publications that have been generated on similar topics. As the Religion and Diversity Project comes to an end, the Impact of Religion centre at Uppsala University in Sweden has agreed to take over the website to build on the existing content and to ensure that content is kept updated.

Projects currently featured on the website:
- Religion and Diversity Project, 2010-2017, Lori Beaman, Director
- Religion and Society Research Programme, 2007-2013, Linda Woodhead, Director
- Impact of Religion, 2008-2018, Per Pettersson, Director
- Religions, the State, and Society, National Research Programme NRP 58, 2007, Christoph Bochinger, President of the Steering Committee
- NOREL, 2009-2013, Inger Furseth, Project Director
- RELIGARE, 2010-2013, Marie-Claire Foblets, Project Coordinator
- WRERU, Est. 1994, Leslie Francis, Director
- REDCo, 2006-2009, Wolfram Weisse, Project Coordinator

The Patterns of Governing Religion website is available at the following link:
http://patternsofgoverningreligion.weebly.com/about.html
A special congratulations to Lori Beaman who was recently awarded the SSHRC Impact Award in the Insight category.

Congratulations to James A. Beckford, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Association for the Sociology of Religion for contributions to the Sociology of Religion.

Congratulations to Solange Lefebvre for being appointed by the Ministry of Public Security to lead a research project on provincial prisons (2017-2021) entitled, “Spiritual needs and radicalisation of persons incarcerated in provincial prison facilities in Quebec.”

Congratulations to Pascale Fournier, Research Chair in Legal Pluralism and Comparative Law, who received a SSHRC Insight Grant for her project, “At the Crossroads of Multiculturalism and Gender Equality: the Migration of Lebanese Religious family law Through Public Order in Quebec.”
Special Mentions


Congratulations to team member Susan Palmer who was awarded an Insight Grant for her project, “Children in Sectarian Religions and State Control.”

Congratulations to Religion and Diversity Project Student Team Member Zaheeda Alibhai, a 2017 recipient of the Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities Award.

Congratulations to our team member Rukhsana Ahmed, co-recipient of the SSHRC Partnership Development Grant, “@Risk: Strengthening Canada’s Ability to Manage Risk.” Rukhsana is co-applicant with Monica Gattinger (PI and Director of the Institute for Science, Society and Policy at uOttawa) who received the grant to investigate risk management in public health, genomics, and energy.
Reading Corner


Woodhead, Linda, and Brown, Andrew. 2016. That was the Church, That was: how the Church of England lost the People of England. London: Bloomsbury.

For more publications by our Team Members, check out our website here: http://religionanddiversity.ca/en/reading-corner/