

**LUCSoR International Conference in Religious Studies
Compassion, Social Engagement, and Discontent: Believing and the Politics of Belonging in Europe Today
Thursday 10 and Friday 11 November 2016**

Organizer: Dr. Nathal M. Dessing, Leiden University Centre for the Study of Religion (LUCSoR)

PROGRAMME

Thursday 10 November 2016

VENUE

Leemans Room, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (National Museum of Antiquities), Rapenburg 28, Leiden

9–10.30 hrs

Session I: Setting the Tone

- 9.00 Opening Judith Frishman, LUCSoR, Leiden University
Introduction Nathal Dessing, LUCSoR, Leiden University
9.30 Amira Mittermaier, University of Toronto
Keynote Lecture: *Provincializing Compassion*

10.30–11 hrs

Break

11–12.30 hrs

Session II: Other Places, Other Times

Chair:

- 11.00 Terry Rey, Temple University
Civic Social Capital and Immigrant Religion: Lessons from Miami and Their Potential Relevance for European Religious Fields
11.30 Melissa Caldwell, University of California, Santa Cruz
Activating Faith: Compassionate Care and Social Justice in Russia
12.00 Anita Boele, Utrecht University
Charity, Compassion and Community

12.30–14 hrs

Lunch

14–15.30 hrs

Session III: Religion and Humanitarianism

Chair:

- 14.00 Jonathan Benthall, University College London
Humanitarianism as Ideology and Practice: Insights by Social-Cultural Anthropologists
14.30 Christopher B. Taylor, George Mason University
Islamic Charity in India: Anxiety and the 'Gifts Not Given' in Making Moral Community
15.00 Damla Isik, Regis University
The Intent to Give and Receive: Charitable Islam, Compassion and the Concept of Hak in Contemporary Turkey

15.30–16 hrs

Break

16–17 hrs

Session IV: Christianity on the Move

Chair:

- 16.00 Catherine Trundle, Victoria University of Wellington
The Art of Managing Proximity: Loving Thy Migrant Neighbour within Christian Charity Work in Florence, Italy

17–18.30 hrs

Drinks

Venue: Matthias de Vrieshof 4, Leiden

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VENUE

Room 004, Matthias de Vrieshof 2, Leiden

9–10.30 hrs

Session V: Living Together

Chair:

- 9.00 Lori Beaman, University of Ottawa
Deep Equality: Models of Living Well Together from Small Stories
- 9.30 Annemarike Stremmelaar, Leiden University
"Let's Not Compete in Suffering!" Compassion, Engagement and Belonging
- 10.00 Ernst van den Hemel, Utrecht University
Quantifying Populist Belief: Judeo-Christianity, Judaism in PVV Discourse

10.30–11 hrs

Break

11–12.30 hrs

Session VI: Volunteering and Piety among Muslims in Europe

Chair:

- 11.00 Thijs Sunier, VU University Amsterdam
Virtuous Compassion or Parallel Society?
- 11.30 Merve Reyhan Kayıkcı, KU Leuven
Taking Care of the Other, Cultivating the Self: The Ethics of Social Interaction
- 12.00 Yağiz Cebecioğlu, VU University Amsterdam
Charity as a Way of Civic Engagement for Ordinary Muslims in Europe

12.30–14 hrs

Lunch

14–15.30 hrs

Session VII: Charity and the City

Chair:

- 14.00 Mieke Groeninck, KU Leuven
Hardship as Opportunity
- 14.30 Anna Sofia Salonen, University of Helsinki
Food for the Soul or the Soul for Food? Charitable Food Assistance at the Interface between Food Recipients and Religious Organizations
- 15.00 Miranda Klaver
Neo-Pentecostal Global Networks and Politics of Compassion for the City: The Case of Hillsong Church Amsterdam

15.30–16 hrs

Break

16–17 hrs

Session VIII: When We Get Old

Chair:

- 16.00 Abby Day, Goldsmiths, University of London
Old Ladies and Their Belief in Belonging
- 16.30 The End?

PAPERS

1. Amira Mittermaier

Provincializing Compassion

When German volunteers were clapping for the newly arrived refugees at Munich's train station in September 2015, they might have also been clapping for themselves. The German *Willkommenskultur* has become a source of much pride (and of anxiety). Despite Pegida and the AfD, it seems that Germany has come to embrace what Didier Fassin (2011) calls the "age of humanitarian reason." Compassion – feeling with the suffering Other – has become a moral high ground and a key mobilizing force. But compassion comes with a range of problems and exclusions. As Lauren Berlant (2004) puts it, "compassion and coldness are not opposite at all but are two sides of a bargain that the subjects of modernity have struck with structural inequality."

In my talk I offer a view from outside of Europe in order to provincialize the virtue of compassion. Drawing on recent fieldwork in Egypt, I describe a religious ethics of giving and social engagement that is not contingent on feeling-with the suffering Other but is rather ordained by, and directed at, God. I offer insight into religious modes of care and relationally that are explicitly non-humanitarian. By contributing a non-European and non-Christian perspective, I hope to raise critical questions about the status, scope, and limits of compassion in Europe today.

Amira Mittermaier is an Associate Professor in the Department for the Study of Religion and the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto. Her award-winning book, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (University of California Press, 2011) examines Muslim practices of dream interpretation in contemporary Egypt and makes theoretical and methodological contributions to an anthropology of the imagination. Her current book project, based on fieldwork in Cairo since 2010, examines modes of almsgiving and food distribution to consider how everyday acts of giving relate to, disrupt, and unsettle political calls for social justice in post-Mubarak Egypt.

2. Terry Rey

Civic Social Capital and Immigrant Religion: Lessons from Miami and Their Potential Relevance for European Religious Fields

At the beginning of the twenty-first century a team of social scientists at Florida International University embarked on a major study of the relationship between religious institutions and the civic engagement or disengagement of immigrants in Miami, one of North America's most ethnically diverse cities, whose population is more than half foreign-born. Toward sharpening their theoretical orientation, the team extended and refined the sociological notion of social capital, developing a specified version of this popular "thinking tool," civic social capital, toward deepening our understanding of how religion facilitates or impedes the civic education/engagement of newly arriving immigrants in an American urban milieu. This paper provides an intellectual history of the ideas of social, religious, and civic social capital and surveys the findings from the Miami study. It also reviews recent research that employs the notion of civic social capital in European religious fields, namely in Finland and Switzerland, offering suggestions for the advancement of future research agenda on these and related questions. The paper ultimately is intended to contribute to an emergent broader conversation about immigration and religion between scholars in Europe and in North America, who have much to learn from one another.

Terry Rey, Temple University, Department of Religion

Editor with Alex Stepick and Sarah J. Mahler of *Churches and Charity in the Immigrant City: Religion, Immigration, and Civic Engagement in Miami* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

3. Melissa L. Caldwell

Activating Faith: Compassionate Care and Social Justice in Russia

What is the generative capacity of compassion in a place like Russia, which has become a country of stark income inequalities, political restrictions, and, most notably, limitations on religious activity? More intriguingly, how do the efforts of religiously affiliated social services programs to provide care for those who are disenfranchised from official categories and structures of need and deservingness — the poor, the homeless, asylum seekers, and other victims of human rights violations—produce new modes of social justice and civic engagement? Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted among a Moscow-based network of religious charitable organizations and their secular partners, this paper examines how assistance providers, government officials, recipients, and supporters promote a form of practical compassion in which goodness and kindness are not merely moral ideals but are forms of social action. Despite the hardships, injustices, and despair these faith-based assistance providers encounter on a regular basis, there is a pervasive sense of optimism that kindness will ultimately prevail over poverty, injury, and injustice. In Russia, faith-based compassionate care enervates an economy of affect that produces not only economic value that encourages further acts of kindness, but also political capital that is invested in civic life. As such, assistance providers are transformed into social justice activists.

Melissa L. Caldwell

Professor of Anthropology

Editor, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies*

Department of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz

Author of *Not by Bread Alone: Social Support in the New Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and *Dacha Idylls: Living Organically in Russia's Countryside* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011)

4. Anita Boele

Charity, Compassion and Community

This paper discusses the charitable acts of men and women belonging to religious and lay communities and the role of charity in the creation and maintenance of social relations in late medieval towns in the Netherlands. As a religious duty, charity had to be performed with an inner feeling of compassion and empathy with the sufferings of the poor, implying a (at least temporarily) social relationship between benefactor and beneficiary. Simultaneously, the poor formed an indispensable link in the vertical relationship between the individual believer and God. These issues were extensively discussed in contemporary didactic and religious texts often elaborated with examples of compassionate behavior. These texts provide a rich insight in how concepts of poverty and poor relief shaped the personal lives of men and women living within those communities, their sometimes complicated relationships with the 'involuntary' poor and their personal relationship with God. At the same time, they show how these concepts were adapted and assimilated to practical needs and interests related to broader social and economic developments that took place within the context of late medieval towns, resulting into a close intertwining of religious and civic values.

Anita Boele, Postdoctoral Researcher Utrecht University, Department of Social and Economic History

5. Jonathan Benthall

Humanitarianism as Ideology and Practice: Insights by Social-Cultural Anthropologists

Humanitarianism has an ideological aspect, representing the industrialized world's aspirations to relieve suffering in societies faced by acute crisis, but may also be conceived as a self-evidently practical response to needs. Social-cultural anthropologists helped since the 1980s to lay the foundations for "humanitarian studies", especially in questioning many professional assumptions, but also in breaking down the distinction between "man-made" and "natural" disasters, analysing the relationships of relief aid to the world of marketing and media, and describing the common factors in refugee movements. I will go on to consider the links between humanitarianism and religion, including Christianity and Islam, and to compare the Christian ideal of charity with other similar traditions – which is helpful if an ethnocentric stance is to be avoided. Recent theoretical concepts such as "humanitarian governance" will be introduced, with a final affirmation of the unique contribution made by ethnographic fieldwork.

Jonathan Benthall is an honorary fellow in the Department of Anthropology, University College London, and was formerly Director of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Founder Editor of *Anthropology Today*, and Chair of the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), Oxford. His publications include *Disasters, Relief and the Media* (1993, new edition 2010), *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (with Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan, 2003, new paperback edition 2009), *Returning to Religion: Why a Secular Age is Haunted by Faith* (2008) and *Islamic Charities and Islamic Humanism in Troubled Times* (2016). He reviews regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

6. Christopher B. Taylor

Islamic Charity in India: Anxiety and the 'Gifts Not Given' in Making Moral Community

New Islamic charities are re-inventing Islamic almsgiving (*zakat*) in India, as reformers interpret *zakat* as a moral investment in both Muslim communities and in India's economy. The ritual of *zakat* has long represented a reinforcement of local solidarities and kinship networks. Today, however, the priorities of many Muslim almsgivers are shifting. This paper analyzes a new Islamic charity organization in the north Indian city of Lucknow that offers a more specialized and professionalized channel for distributing alms donations. This developmentalist, seemingly modernist approach to Islamic charity that is attractive to university-educated Indian Muslims is paradoxically linked to increasing religiosity and religious community. Looking beyond compassion as an emotion, this paper's conclusions emphasize the role of religious obligation and anxiety in the re-construction of social relations among India's Muslims. Anxiety over about "correct" and "incorrect" almsgiving, for example, is fueled by ordinary Muslims' increasing scriptural literacy in Islamic law and ethics (*shari'a*). Moreover, in this case study of a new Islamic charity, money changes hands in ways that trace both economic shifts and moral shifts in society, but it is the gifts *not* given that most clearly illustrate the changed boundaries of moral community among Indian Muslims today.

Christopher B. Taylor, Ph.D.
Post-Doctoral Fellow
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

7. Damla Isik

The Intent to Give and Receive: Charitable Islam, Compassion and the Concept of *Hak* in Contemporary Turkey

As the recent financial crisis rippled through world economies, debates were reinvigorated about the immorality of global capitalism and the free market economy. While greedy financiers and inept economists were crucified in the media, the ideal of entrepreneurship arose as the moral panacea to rising extremism and poverty. Newsweek declared in “Economics versus Extremism” that overregulated economies that “stifled entrepreneurship” were to blame for Islamist extremism. In turn, charitable entrepreneurs were hailed as the panacea to the ills of poverty and underdevelopment with the decline of the welfare state; the April 2010 Obama summit with Middle Eastern entrepreneurs is a good example of this trend.

Since the 1980s, Turkey has continuously witnessed the formation and rise of the Anatolia-based yet nationally and internationally well-connected entrepreneur. Several research studies have traced this historical process that is closely intertwined with the developing power of a pious electoral base who expresses diverse and at times contradictory responses to the possibility of EU accession, economic transformations, JDP policies, and the changing tapestry of Turkish daily life as AVMs (shopping malls) and Turkish television serials become national pastimes. Understudied and underexamined in current research is the concomitant rise of charitable associations that are largely founded by conservative entrepreneurs and supported by this conservative electoral base.

Charitable associations provide spaces where Turkish citizens increasingly rethink and reformulate the meanings and practices of charitable giving, Turkish state, daily life, piety, and Muslim practice, while at the same time providing a venue to fulfill their religious obligations and form charitable communities. Based on ongoing ethnographic research in Turkey, this paper will examine the contours of charitable giving and nostalgia for an idealized Ottoman rule as both a response to, and a result of corrupt governance and the decline of the welfare state. Under the current Justice and Development Party (JDP) government, welfare provision and associations that spearheaded such provision became effective strategies to consolidate the neoliberal state. Additionally, the poor is deemed to have a *hak* (right) to part of the riches of the elite. Hence the delegation of poor relief to conservative entrepreneurs and civil society organizations increasingly support and enable both the representational and real existence of a new neo-moral order supported by the neoliberal state. Ironically, though, charitable giving also provides a space where the neoliberal state and governance are questioned, analyzed, and challenged.

Damla Isik, Sociology Department, Regis University, Denver

8. Catherine Trundle

The Art of Managing Proximity: Loving thy Migrant Neighbour within Christian Charity Work in Florence, Italy

This paper explores the charity performed by volunteers at an American church in Florence, Italy, towards socially marginalized migrant groups. Volunteers regularly deployed Christian ideas about ‘loving thy neighbour’ to justify their actions, and in this context such a principle foregrounded the complexities of enacting urban spatial relations: how does one practice proper Christian values towards ‘others’ with whom one lives in close proximity? When performing charity action volunteers thus discussed how to best manage their intimacy with and distance from the diverse mix of peoples inhabiting the city of Florence, their Church and their neighbourhoods. They debated how much time they should spend with homeless men, or how much they should find out about the lives and struggles of food bank recipients. They discussed how they should best manage and limit the movement and ‘unruly behaviour’ of charity

recipients on church grounds, and how they should best interact with the Roma beggars or North African street sellers with whom they crossed paths everyday. Being a compassionate Christian in such ethnographic scenarios was a fraught process that required vigilance and openness, trust and suspicion, and love and detachment, and was primarily a pragmatic concern with managing social and physical proximity that both challenged and entrenched class and ethnic differences.

Dr. Catherine Trundle
School of Social and Cultural Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
Author of *Americans in Tuscany: Charity, Compassion, and Belonging* (New York: Berghahn, 2014)

9. Lori Beaman

Deep Equality: Models of Living Well Together from Small Stories

This paper will explore the elements of deep equality that emerge from everyday stories. In particular, I will focus not only on religious difference and the achievement of deep equality, but also collaboration and cooperation between religious and non-religious actors. As an increasing number of people self-identify as nonreligious, and yet religion is becoming more visible in the public sphere, the future promises to become ever more socially complex. However, complexity does not have to mean conflict. One vital aspect of living well together is the identification of models of cooperation that already exist but which are often overlooked in the tendency to focus on negative stories and conflict which dominate the media and other social institutions such as law.

Prof. Lori Beaman
University of Ottawa
Canada Research Chair in the Contextualization of Religion in a Diverse Canada, Professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, and the Principal Investigator of the *Religion and Diversity Project*, a thirty-seven-member international research team whose focus is religion and diversity.

10. Annemarike Stremmelaar

“Let’s not compete in suffering!” Compassion, Engagement and Belonging

“Let’s not compete in suffering!” With this admonition the chairman of Turkish-Islamic association in the Netherlands expressed what so far had remained implicit: both Jews and Muslims deserved compassion, but did compassion for one exclude compassion for the other? This question and possible answers will be the topic of my paper. It starts from my observations of Turkish associations (some Islamic, some not) in the Netherlands during a project meant to counter antisemitism organized by the umbrella organization IOT. In meetings audiences were invited to show solidarity and empathy with Jews in the Netherlands. For many this appeal somehow clashed with their solidarity and engagement with Palestinians in the Middle East. Support for the Palestinian cause manifests itself in organizations and individuals involved in demonstrations, donations, communications or boycotts. Some in the audience saw themselves confronted with a choice between a Jewish and a Palestinian side. Some argued they could or would not show sympathy for the Jewish plight, in past or present, if there was no support for Palestinians from the other side. Based on my fieldwork, and informed by the discussion of compassion by Martha Nussbaum, my paper will analyze concepts of compassion: who deserves compassion, who is excluded or undeserving, and what does the response toward suffering entail?

Dr. Annemarike Stremmelaar, Netherlands Institute Morocco (NIMAR), Leiden University

11. Ernst van den Hemel, Utrecht University

Quantifying Populist Belief Judeo-Christianity, Judaism in PVV discourse

If one takes current debates on Islam, the 'judeo-christian' west and migration as a starting point, contemporary populism is all about religion. But is it? When Geert Wilders writes to the pope claiming that atheism arises out of Christianity, or when Judeo-Christianity is invoked to outlaw ritual slaughter, what are we talking about? Is this religion? Or, as many critics have stated, is this 'mere populism'?

This paper takes as its starting point the assumption that in populist discourse we are witness a re-imagination of the role of religion and secularity in post-secular societies. This paper will map, analyse and compare the roles of religion and secularity in right-wing populist discourse. It is well known that contemporary right-wing populism places 'Islam' in opposition to the secular West. It is considerably less well-known that they also present secular values, such as atheism, separation of Church and State as Christian or Judeo-Christian in essence. This generates a number of important conceptual questions: how to approach these seemingly paradoxical references to religion and secularity?

In order to grasp the pluriform and seemingly contradictory elements of populist religious discourse, we will first outline the way in which populism challenges the conceptual apparatus frequently used to make sense of populist discourse on religion. Subsequently, we map a small number of dominant tropes in populist discourse. Through analysis of all official PVV twitter accounts (using Twitter Capture and Analysis Toolset) and PEGIDA's Facebook pages (using Netvizz), we will use a 'bottom up' approach in order to craft a preliminary definition of religion and secularity in populist discourse. Concluding, we argue that far from being mere populism, this discursive practice can productively be characterized as a profoundly influential post-secular imagination.

Dr. Ernst van den Hemel

Postdoctoral Researcher Utrecht University

Secretary Foresight Committee Theology & Religious Studies, Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences

12. Thijl Sunier

Virtuous Compassion or Parallel Society?

As among all citizens in Europe, Muslims are variously engaged in charitable work, or active as volunteers. However, there seems to be a strange contradiction in the ways charitable and voluntary activism among Muslims is currently perceived. Voluntary work and charity in Europe was historically connected to the church and based on principles from the Scripture about compassion and love for others. In addition charitable work was a necessity to meet the needs of the poor at the time when the state did not provide for that. Along with the secularization that took place after WO2 and the growth of centralized welfare states, voluntary work took on a new function and a new meaning. It became an activity that is said to originate in an authentic inner self rather than from a divine command. Voluntary work inspired by religious motivation may at best be accepted as sincere, but in the case of Muslims there is suspicion of a double agenda. Religiously inspired voluntary work among Muslims is often depicted as an inward activity for the benefit of the own community rather than outward compassion. I will elaborate this argument by drawing on cases of voluntary work among Muslims in the Netherlands.

Prof. J. T. (Thijl) Sunier, Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Chair: Islam in European Societies, VU University Amsterdam. Executive editor *Journal of Muslims in Europe (JOME)*: www.brill.nl/jome. Chair board Netherlands Institute for the Study of Islam (NISIS): <http://www.hum.leiden.edu/nisis>

13. Merve Reyhan Kayıkcı

'Taking Care of' the Other, Cultivating the Self: The Ethics of Social Interaction

This paper explores how Muslim Belgian women fashion their ethical self in relation to their community. Lara Deeb analyzes piety as a relational trajectory, whereby the pious subject depends on a commitment to community betterment (Deeb: 2006). While the subject of relational piety has been the focus of previous studies (Fernando 2014, Deeb 2006, Mittermaier 2014) the multiple and complex forms of how it emerges as an ethical commitment is yet to be explored. This paper looks at the nuances in relational piety in the context of Belgian Muslim women's volunteering practices. It examines how volunteering provides a space for these women to be moral role models to others. This is a complicated process whereby the 'other' can refer to Muslims as well as non-Muslims. This paper examines how the volunteers interact with non-Muslims in the context of relational care ethics. It suggests that being a 'role model' is a dual process during which the women cultivate their own ethical self through the relational process with non-Muslims. This point comes back to Jouili's description of representational *da'wa*, which entails 'self discipline' and the cultivation of the self in terms of good qualities to provide a blue print for others in terms of living morally (Jouili 2014: 140). The paper is part of a larger research project, for which interviews and participant observation were conducted with Muslim Belgian women between the years 2013 and 2016. The fieldwork was carried out in the Belgian cities of Brussels and Antwerp.

Merve Reyhan Kayıkcı, KU Leuven.

I hold a BA in Sociology and English Literature from the Istanbul Fatih University, Turkey. I obtained my MA Degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the Belgian KU Leuven. I am currently a PhD candidate (2013–2017) at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Specifically, my ethnography-based research focuses on Belgian Muslim women of Turkish descent and their volunteering practices. I examine how volunteering is part of their ethical self-cultivation and in turn how an ethical consciousness informs their volunteering practices, leading to a dual process. My broader research interests include transnational social movements and their local formations, the spiritual economy, ethical selfhood, ethnicity and migration, gender and subjectivity.

14. Yağız Cebecioğlu

Charity as a Way of Civic Engagement for Ordinary Muslims in Europe

All major religions praise serving community but not all religious communities nor their members are equally capable of engaging with society (Ammerman, 2005). In this paper I will argue that charity, in the sense that is inclusive of giving time and effort on volunteering, is considered a way of engaging with other humans for Dutch Turkish Muslims in the Netherlands as well as a complementary element of their piety. In my analysis, I will try to show that ordinary Muslims who are part of religious movements are in a reciprocal interaction with both their religious communities and the Dutch society that they want to be active participants. According to Azak, Turkish religious movements went through a shift from a mosque oriented Islam to an Islam that spreads itself in the broader public sphere (Azak, 2009). These movements organize formal or informal charity and volunteering platforms to meet the need of their constituencies for fulfilling their piety as well as to play role of intermediation for their constituencies to reach out the society (Yukleyen, 2012). Such relations make agency of ordinary men much more visible by accommodating negotiation with established religiosities with regards to tactics and strategies in order to provide best service (Chaves, 1993). Building on previous scholarship on the religious movements and European Muslims, I will attempt to analyze the relationship between forms of pieties prescribed by these movements and how their constituencies interpret, practice and reflect on charity and volunteering in the European context.

15. Mieke Groeninck

Hardship as Opportunity

Through my ethnographic research on Islamic religious knowledge transmission for lay adults in three mosques and three Islamic institutes in the region of Brussels, I have been regularly confronted with themes such as suffering, compassion, as well as social and personal responsibility. These courses in Islamic sciences can be situated within the field of Islamic revivalism, which focuses on a pious personal reform through the incorporation of specific ethics and virtues. A pious behavior in reaction to one's own and other's misfortune belongs to human's 'domain of well-being' and ethical self-formation. However, whereas previous research has approached this ethical phronesis as a process of reasoning that takes into account not only one's self, but also the larger society's well-being (Jouili 2015: 18), I tend to expand this approach by elaborating on the ontological status of suffering in the subject/Divine axis as well. This allows me to focus on what Amira Mittermaier has called an ethics of passion, wherein suffering is perceived as a situation of being acted upon (Mittermaier 2010). By focusing on how personal and diverse others' suffering is enacted, understood and reacted upon, new possibilities for agency, or for the development of a specific form of agent, emerge (Asad 2003: 79–91).

Mieke Groeninck

GCIS – Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre (IMMRC)
Catholic University of Leuven, Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology

16. Anna Sofia Salonen

Food for the Soul or the Soul for Food? Charitable Food Assistance at the Interface between Food Recipients and Religious Organizations

Food charity, often carried out by faith-based organizations, is a proliferating activity all over Europe. It raises important questions concerning the role of religious organizations in informal care and volunteer aid. This paper focuses on charitable food assistance particularly at the interface between religious organizations and food recipients. The data consists of over seven months of participant observation in four religiously affiliated food charity venues in a Finnish city and interviews with 25 food charity recipients. The findings demonstrate that in the context under study, food assistance is a charitable sphere where the assistance was provided only within the available resources, which are disengaged from the needs of the food recipients, and within the terms laid down by the charitable giver, which included to varying degrees religious participation. The recipients of food charity have limited opportunities to influence the activity or to do things in a different way, but at the same time they have limited abilities to withdraw from participating in the activity. Negotiations over participation in religious services in the food charity contexts illustrate these constraints, but also point out tacit strategies used by the food recipients to voice their views.

Dr. Anna Sofia Salonen

Church and Social Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

17. Miranda Klaver

Neo-Pentecostal Global Networks and Politics of Compassion for the City: The Case of Hillsong Church Amsterdam

In spite of modern views on urbanization and secularization, global cities are breeding grounds for fast growing hip and media savvy Pentecostal (mega)churches. Key features of these churches are their large size, growth-oriented vision, the integration of digital media technologies in their practices, and global networked organizational structures. Media saturated megachurches in the Western world are the center of global religious networks and they successfully 'franchise' new churches in global cities. Different from migrant churches, these Pentecostal churches foster a cosmopolitan consumerist lifestyle.

In this paper I will discuss the case of Hillsong Amsterdam, initiated by and part of the Hillsong megachurch-network from Sydney Australia. Key question for this paper is: how do churches like Hillsong Amsterdam relate to the city and in what ways are they socially engaged in the local urban context through their practices?

Dr. Miranda Klaver
VU University Amsterdam

18. Abby Day

Old Ladies and Their Belief in Belonging

Older Christian laywomen have broadly been ignored as the focus in the literature has been mostly on their children and grandchildren, the so-called baby-boomers, and, increasingly, their grandchildren, the Generations X, Y and Millennials. What is often neglected by academics and policy-makers is the labour of their mothers and grandmothers, the Christian 'Generation A', a diminishing generation who will not be replaced in churches worldwide or in the communities that depend on their voluntary and mostly invisible labour. This paper reflects on ethnographic fieldwork that discusses how the women's informal social work is disappearing, and what the effect may be on the dispossessed.

Dr. Abby Day
Reader in Race, Faith and Culture
Department of Sociology
Goldsmiths, University of London