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Editorial Note

As I sit down to write this, Europe is slowly starting to open up after the Covid-19 lockdown. Here in Finland all schools were closed on 18 March, and at least at Åbo Akademi University, where I have my office, even the staff was locked out. After some initial confusion (and great hoarding of toilet paper) most people quietly settled down to their new routines – Finns being used to following orders. There was even some excitement in the air: will this be the defining collective experience of our generation?

As a salaried university employee, I was little affected by the general crisis. Yes, some outside courses, seminars, and travel were cancelled, but on the whole I have enjoyed spending more time with my family and in the garden, besides pursuing my own research among my books at home. Some of my entrepreneur friends, on the other hand, have seen all or most of their income disappear, and while the disease itself seems a distant statistic from where I am sitting right now in the Turku archipelago, a colleague and friend in Oxford was ill with it for five weeks. Another, just five years older than I, passed away from it.

In general, my colleagues in the humanities seem to have shared my experiences, perhaps with incremental frustration for each bored child at home. Yes, we miss having coffee with our colleagues and our conferences, but we find ourselves surviving quite well without them. Nevertheless, the long-term effects of the crisis remain unclear. Will there be more waves of the disease? When will borders open up again? How much longer can we put off that fieldwork? What will education look like in the future? And prosaically, but perhaps most importantly: how much will the financial crisis caused by the disease affect university and research funding?

There are currently no answers. Amidst such uncertainty it is perhaps comforting to see an issue of *Temenos* that is completely unrelated to the whole crisis. In this issue we feature three articles by Finnish scholars. First, building on rich ethnographic fieldwork, Teemu Mantsinen examines pilgrimage in the Finnish Karelian Orthodox tradition and its construction as a shared ritual of searching for traces within a sacred landscape.

Second, Tuomas Martikainen discusses the historical growth and development of the Muslim population and its contemporary situation in Finland.

Martikainen's article addresses several complexities in Muslim organizations' ethnic, national, and sectarian varieties, as well as the change in official policies, media debates, and public attitudes to Muslims over the years.

Third, Riikka Myllys investigates the intergenerational transmission of craft-making, based on everyday religion and Bengtson's theory of intergenerational solidarity. Myllys's findings highlight the warm relationships and closeness between generations lying at the heart of transmission, as well as how multiple religious aspects, such as transmitted values and shared craft-making moments, are found in this process.

In our fourth article we move from Finland to Norway, where Ane Faugstad Aarø explores whether hermeneutical phenomenology as methodology may address some of the critiques raised in the study of religions. Using the perspective of Ricœur's hermeneutical phenomenology and taking goddess Freyja from Norse mythology as her example, Faugstad Aarø argues that Ricœur's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology is important to the methodology in the study of religions, and that this method may constitute a theoretical basis for an objective science.

In our fifth article Dietrich Jung and Kirstine Sinclair from the University of Southern Denmark take up the role of religion in the formation of modern subjectivities, using a contemporary transnational Islamist organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir, as an example. While both the historical roots and contemporary practices of this organization are carefully examined, the article concludes with some general reflections on the role of religion in the formation of modern social subjectivities.

Finally, this issue of *Temenos* includes last year's exciting *Temenos* lecture, 'Theory in the Interstices: Queering and Transing Religious Studies, Religioning Trans and Queer Studies', given by Melissa M. Wilcox on 19 September at Åbo Akademi University. Ending with this lecture is no doubt apposite at this interstice, transitioning as we are from the queer situation of the Covid-19 epidemic into the unknown.

Måns Broo



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Pilgrimage as a Reproduction of Sacred Landscape in Finnish Karelia and the Russian Border Zone

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Abstract

This article examines how pilgrimages are constructed as a shared ritual of seeking sacred traces, thus creating and reproducing the sacred landscape. It studies an annual event with three connected Finnish Karelian Orthodox processions as a pilgrimage from an anthropological perspective. The event combines various motives, goals, and participants through a similar construction of the sacred landscape, with rituals of finding and creating the sacred in and for the landscape with personal experiences and stories of the imagined past. These processions, one of which crosses the border with modern Russia, attract participants motivated by both religious and heritage tourism. The article draws inspiration from Laura Stark's notion of a 'cult of traces' and engages with pilgrimage studies and theories to offer an analysis of how various acts such as religious rituals, storytelling, and taking pictures are combined in the reproduction and reinvention of the imagined past and the creation of a marked meaningful present to construct and sustain a sacred landscape, thus forming a pilgrimage.

Keywords: pilgrimage, Orthodox Christianity, sacred, ritual, tourism

Pilgrimage is often seen as a journey to a sacred centre, focusing on location, community, and rituals (Turner and Turner 1978; Coleman 2015; Della Dora, Walton, and Scafi 2015). Another perspective would be to study how and of what the sacred is constructed, and how this motivates and draws people to begin and perform their journey. In my research I followed an annual event with three processions in Eastern Finland, a location shaped by history with scattered and relocated sites of personal and cultural importance. In this article I analyse the construction of the sacred landscape as sites and goals of pilgrimage. I claim that pilgrimage is constructed around

rituals of finding and creating the sacred landscape, and joining participants to an imagined community and history, with both individual and shared interpretations. I approach pilgrimage as an anthropological *etic*, not a theological *emic*, concept.

Although the pilgrimage in focus here technically consists of three separate journeys, they are intertwined, belonging to a continuous event. The three-day event begins with an Orthodox vigil, followed by a chapel festival the next day at Saarivaara village, continues with a procession to Hoilola during the day and a procession to the old Pörtsämö traditional Orthodox cemetery (*kalmisto*) in the evening, and culminates in a procession to the old and deserted Korpiselkä parish centre on the Russian side of the Finnish–Russian border the next day.

The focus here is on how participants construct landscape and pilgrimage rather than on the processions themselves. Orthodox Christian processions vary between short processions (e.g. inside a church) and long processions (e.g. between churches). Unlike many long processions to sites deemed sacred, short processions do not meet the common criteria of pilgrimages. However, I do not claim that it is the procession itself which makes the journey a pilgrimage, or its surroundings or landscape sacred. The entire event and its participants all join in various acts by which they construct the pilgrimage and landscape, building on the landscape's previous meaning-makings and stories. By 'landscape' I refer neither to static physical scenery nor an essentialist view of nature. Rather, I employ the concept from an anthropological perspective as something in and through which people live, bestow meanings upon, and construct physically, symbolically, reciprocally, socially, and by themselves (cf. Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017).

The resurgence of Orthodox Christianity in Finland in the 1970s and the rebirth of Karelian cross processions (Laitila 1998; 2009) were important for the origins of this pilgrimage. It thus presents a different case than many Catholic and other Western European pilgrimages, which draw their inspiration, at least partly, from the Camino de Santiago – a phenomenon also called 'caminoization' (see Bowman and Sepp 2018). After the Second World War and the loss of (most of) Karelia to Russia, Orthodox Christianity was often seen as Russian, and many distanced themselves from their heritage (Kupari 2015). When the cultural landscape had changed sufficiently, Orthodox Christianity became more socially acceptable. Another basis for this pilgrimage lies in the historical importance of Karelia and its loss after the Second World War, and the imagined past and landscape it has created.

The pilgrimage is a combination of religious, cultural, and family heritage motives and goals, with each participant having their own particular background. This article is largely based on original field research in 2016. An analysis of this research from the theoretical perspective of ritualization (see Bell 1992) and its results has previously been published in Finnish (Mantsinen and Kyyrö 2017). That article focused on the process by which various motives, goals, and modes of conduct were incorporated and negotiated into a single shared journey, constructing a pilgrimage through ritualization. In this article I look beyond the structural and organizational level to the individual and social construction of the sacred and pilgrimage through individual and collective actions.

The theoretical inspiration for my approach and this article came from Laura Stark, who studied historical pilgrimages to Valamo monastery, which she depicted as a 'cult of traces' (Stark 1995; 2002). Furthermore, in the following I consider and employ a theoretical discussion of the social construction of history, sacred landscape, sacred boundaries, the creation of the sacred, and imagined communities.

Previously, research on Karelian and Orthodox Christian pilgrimage (see Gothoni 1994; Stark 1995; Kilpeläinen 1995; Worobec 2009; Izmirlieva 2014; Bănică 2015; Rahkala 2016) has been conducted from mainly historical but also anthropological perspectives. However, the pilgrimage is not only an unambiguously religious event but extends to the realm of heritage tourism. There is substantial research on pilgrimage and heritage tourism, or heritage pilgrimage (see Adler 2002; Coleman and Crang 2002; Coleman and Eade 2004; Giovine 2011; Norman and Cusack 2014). What is new in this article is its analysis of how various acts are combined in the reproduction and reinvention of the imagined past, and marked as meaningful in the present to construct and sustain a sacred landscape in Finnish Karelian and Orthodox settings, thus forming a pilgrimage.

Material and theories

The basis of this work draws on original fieldwork. In August 2016 I travelled to Eastern Finland to study and document Orthodox Christian rituals over a weekend that included three cross processions and their associated rites. Processions were conducted on foot and in rowing boats on a river and lakes. The research methods were ethnographic participant observation and ethnographic interviews, and later interviews with and material collection from the organizing parties (the Orthodox Church and its priests, and

the Korpiselkä parish association). During the research I found that what was happening was not merely an exclusive Orthodox religious rite but a diverse and inclusive event in a landscape replete with important cultural and personal meanings.

I call this event a pilgrimage, and parts of it pilgrimages, because it consists of travelling together to places valued as important and sacred, both individually and collectively, as I will demonstrate later. Pilgrimage researchers have emphasized *communitas* (Turner and Turner 1978) and contestation (Eade and Sallnow 1991) as key and not necessarily mutually exclusive factors of the process. They are always present in journeys to public cultural sites, because people share respect for or at least opinions about the site, albeit with many interpretations.

The definition of pilgrimage has often included a journey to a sacred or archaic centre (Turner and Turner 1978; Cohen 1979; Cohen 1992, 37; Schramm 2004, 137). However, in some places the site is not a single place but is scattered both physically and mentally. This correlates to what Simon Coleman and Mike Crang (2002, 11) call 'dissemination of place'. A stereotypical pilgrimage might be a journey to a destination to pray. The question that remains is whether the actual destination or merely a symbol, one point in the physical world, which marks and is used in constructing the imagined sacred destination, constitutes an illusion of a centre. These focal points of pilgrimage are separated from the mundane and are therefore produced as sacred symbols, but they can also play a role in serving merely as a cover for the whole experience.

Although this research does not include tourism *per se*, what it examines is close to a heritage journey or pilgrimage. Some researchers suggest that pilgrimage and tourism are inherently distinct, because pilgrimage travels towards the centre, while tourism disperses it (Cohen 1992, 37). However, tourism and pilgrimage often intertwine (Giovine 2011, 249). There is often a tension between tourism and pilgrimage, because people may contest the sacred space, and the boundaries between the sacred and the secular (Eade and Sallnow 1991, 11). This does not necessarily lead to desacralization; indeed, it may lead to the opposite. There are many cases in which lamenting the deprivation or loss of a sacred place actually reinforces its meaningfulness (Lane 2002, 35).

Previously, Laura Stark has analysed historical pilgrimages to old Valamo monastery on Lake Ladoga in contemporary Russia. Old Valamo monastery was a central place and influence in the Karelian religious and cultural life and universe. In her work Stark defined this pilgrimage ritual as a cult of

traces (Stark 2002), in which participants searched for traces of saints, holy sites, and other objects of interest. A pilgrimage to a monastery differs from pilgrimages to places like chapels and cemeteries, but the theoretical invention is transferable. In both instances people seek signs of the extraordinary; only the objects vary. While monasteries offer more restricted or guarded objects of saints and of institutional importance, the pilgrimage studied here offers more accessible – border restrictions notwithstanding – objects of nature and personal importance.

Stark applies Mary Douglas's concept of the sacred as a distinction between the 'pure' and 'impure', considering its role in creating order in a community. She defines the sacred as things thought to be in contact with the supra-normal. In relation to community, she defines 'pure' as the 'value of potential growth, life, and reproduction for both society and the individual', and 'impure' as 'disorder, depletion, danger, anomaly, those things threatening social integrity and continuity' (Stark 2002, 21). In this view the sacred is a product of extending a moral contract, rules, and the conduct of social relations to supernatural beings, a result of human action (*ibid.*, 22). According to Veikko Anttonen (1996, 77–78, 95) the core function of the sacred is to keep things which promote and things which obstruct the community's proper functioning separate.

In this article I will use a broad definition of the sacred as distinctions not necessarily immediately or at all associated with supra-normal beings. I will approach the concept by studying things constructed as sacred by how people value them and set them apart from the mundane. In this perspective the sacred is not a meaning which people give to an object. However, as people give meaning to the object, they categorize it according to their worldview. This process constructs the sacred order in which the object is placed. As I will explain in the following, many Finns often approach Karelia and Orthodox Karelian culture as an authentic and pure Finnish culture and heritage. In other words, the things associated with these themes are sacred for many Finns.

Teuvo Laitila (1995) describes life ideals in old Karelia as exchange and renunciation. Following Laitila, Stark (2002, 175) identifies these as attributed to sacred boundaries of local communities, wilderness, and monastic sacred centres. Although these categories can also be identified in the pilgrimage in question here, I suggest both should be viewed as equally important, not oppositional, aspects of the issue that are ultimately not that different. Together, they constitute a landscape, and pilgrims travel in this space, reproducing them while performing their journey.

Pilgrimages consist of various motives and goals, though some, such as visiting an important church or grave, are shared as labelling features. Although pilgrimage is usually seen as a religious practice, it contains both sacred and secular objects for participants. The elasticity of pilgrimage is important in this mixture. Elasticity is a term used by Lena Gemzöe, for example. Gemzöe claims that 'the elasticity of pilgrimage – in other words, its capacity to absorb or encompass a range of social forms – is clearly one of the features that accounts for the continuing existence and growth of the practice in post-industrial society' (Gemzöe 2016, 41).

Such elasticity is also visible in how pilgrims create the landscape through their differing interpretations of the same accounts and sites. Motives categorized as both religious and secular intertwine in them, mutually contributing to the construction of landscape and its evaluation, marking and setting boundaries and meanings within it. The practice of pilgrimage is elastic, stretching within the needs of participants, their motives, and goals. It is sacred in the making – not theologically defined and categorized, but shaped by action.

Viewing and recording sites is an important part of the journey. This is also connected with what Dean MacCannell (1976) calls 'sight sacralization', the action of naming, framing and elevating, enshrining, and reproducing mechanically and socially. How the sight is told is part of sacralization. Belden C. Lane (2002, 15) states that 'Above all else, sacred place is "storied place"'. Particular locales come to be recognized as sacred because of the stories that are told about them.'

The storied place can also be a landscape in which the event and actions occur. Landscape and tourism have also been paired in research. For example, Claudia Bell and John Lyall write of 'landscape as a dynamic arena' that activates and accelerates the sublime in adventure and ecotourism (Bell and Lyall 2002, 21). Lane proposes that a sacred place 'is a construction of the imagination that affirms the independence of the holy' (Lane 2002, 19). Imagination and shared storytelling creates a feeling of place as sacred in itself, although it is made sacred in this process.

As I approach the sacred as structured and ordered, not from the perspective of the essential or concentrated holy or *axis mundi*, the experienced, lived, imagined, and storied are all pivotal in understanding pilgrimage. Landscape is not an empty canvas on which to draw, but bears the previous meanings bestowed on it. Individual experiences add to and challenge existing interpretations. Veronica Della Dora, Heather Walton, and Alessandro Scafi (2015, 1–2)

argue that the rich concept of landscape, rural or urban, has much to offer pilgrimage studies, notably in three key ways: i) as the visual aesthetic of any pilgrimage setting which informs and impinges on experience; ii) as the corporeally experienced ante-chamber to the pilgrimage destination; and iii) as an important facet of heritage which draws devotional and non-devotional visitors to pilgrimage sites.

The landscape informs the traveller, both in their own experiences and the many already existing interpretations. An individual simultaneously joins in and challenges existing narratives, thus reproducing and reshaping the landscape. In broader terms these issues relate to the construction of history and identity. In old Karelia, Stark (1995) notes, objects and centres of pilgrimage (monasteries, chapels, icons) were collectively interpreted and shared in stories, recreating myths and their meanings. However, in the contemporary scene the interpretation and sharing go beyond apparent religious symbols.

The imagined past as the basis for reproduction

Stark's work on pilgrimage belonged to a larger study of peasant religious life in pre-war Karelia. Peasants performed various rituals to structure and make sense of the life around them in rural and often poor conditions. In contemporary Finland life is in many ways different. For example, the world is not explained by folk runes in village communities. That said, the contemporary pilgrimage shares many traits of these old traditions and their rituals. While the old Karelian village communities and culture are history, they serve as a paragon of the lost but idealized imagined past.

To understand what pilgrimage participants reproduce as sacred landscape, a short introduction to Karelia and the Finnish identity is required. Karelia plays a special role in Finnish national history, the construction of the Finnish nation, and nationalism. In the nineteenth century, when Finland was part of the Russian Empire, Elias Lönnrot, a Finnish cultural figure and ethnographer, travelled around Karelia, documenting its folklore, traditional songs, and customs. He used this material to create *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. Later, Zacharias Topelius, an author and professor, structured Finnish nationalism in his books, combining *Kalevala* and Lutheran Christianity to create a continuum of Finland's coming to be through divine providence. *Kalevala* and the stories and landscapes of Karelia belong to what is called Karelianism, the ism and the impact of Karelian influences on Finnish culture and society, and the idealization of Karelia in this setting (Sihvo 2017). Karelianism played a key role in the construction of the national identity through

art and literature (Syväoja 1998). Karelia, with its runes and nature, was seen as an authentic Finnish past, representing an original good and virtuous Finnishness. Furthermore, the loss of (most of) Karelia in the Second World War strengthened its place in Finnish mythology and identity. Although Karelian evacuees were shunned for a while after the Second World War, the Karelian landscape remained a revered image of Finnishness.

The lost part of Karelia was long a place of personal contact and history. As time has passed, even personal memories have begun to fade and have been replaced by stories which interpret the past from new contexts. The imagined Karelia in contemporary Finland is only narrowly linked to empirical realism. Although it refers to actual places and recorded history, its importance lies beyond them, in identity and an emotional regime. The sites and spaces of memory in Karelia are a combination of physical and interpreted aspects of human behaviour, a utopia with a real past (Raivo 2007; Fingerroos 2006; 2008; 2010).

Access to Karelia became easier after the Soviet Union collapsed, resulting in an explosion of heritage tourism in the 1990s, when people had the opportunity to visit their birthplaces and old hometowns. However, most of the buildings have gone, which has contributed to the role of imagination in creating memories and constructing personal and family histories (Fingerroos and Häyrynen 2012). The constructed imagined Karelia is compared to personal experiences in these journeys and the pilgrimage, and reproduced with personal and embodied meanings.

Although many old sites were now accessible, some remained restricted. Visiting sites in Russian border zones requires a special permit. The Korpiselkä old parish centre is in the highly restricted zone, and religious procession rituals and visiting cemeteries are among the very few accepted reasons to receive a permit. A secular heritage tourism journey is impossible. This is also acknowledged by the clergy, who knowingly play a role in legitimizing heritage pilgrimage with religious symbols.

According to Judith Adler (2002, 26) journeys depicted as tourism and religious all fall under mobility, and they all have expressive and communicative purposes. A critical question can be asked about the historical validity of this claim (Coleman and Eade 2004, 10). As a shared journey, they are both invitations to join in inclusion, and belong to the idea and its history – not necessarily as part of a community of actual people but an imagined community.

Heritage tourism comes in many forms. The link between the past and present is often thin, going back generations. An example of this is ancestral tourism in Scotland. Unlike distant traces, personal connections through

family and shared memories create an intimate relationship between a traveler and the destination when there are no multiple generations between them (Bryce, Murdy, and Alexander 2017). Another example is African-American heritage tourism to Africa. Although there are differences, there are some similarities with my research. For example, pilgrimage to Ghana provides us with a parallel case at the level of 'archaic pilgrimage': the journey is made to sites and images of past times and the premodern landscape (Schramm 2004, 137). The personal connection of heritage makes the journey sacred, even when it is not explicitly described as religious.

Our expectations and interpretations of a landscape are often driven or at least influenced by our present ideals and values, creating an imagined past (Lowenthal 1999). Our current values and worldviews guide our senses to search for expected traces. The pilgrimage simultaneously contains imagined history and traces of concrete links to the past. Participants' actions and contemporary religious rituals also keep them alive and in motion, ensuring that they are not merely static objects but a reflected and ritualized part of life. Some ancestral tombs and the churches of parents remain, and a few people born in old Karelia are still alive. However, this is changing rapidly, and personal contact is soon lost. Memories, stories, ruins and a few buildings to which they refer remain. These serve as traces of a past filled with meanings on the pilgrim's path.

The pilgrimage

The pilgrimage is organized annually by the local Orthodox church in Joensuu and the Korpiselkä parish association (*Korpiselän pitäjäseura*). During the three-day event a group of between forty and sixty people participate in its rituals. More people are interested in visiting the historical centre of Korpiselkä, but permit restrictions limit the numbers. Only a handful of people born in pre-war Korpiselkä are still alive, only one of whom walked there during our research visit.

The modern history of these processions and the event began in the 1970s with the resurgence of Orthodox Christianity in Finland (Laitila 1998; 2009). After the war Orthodoxy was often associated with Russia, and many evacuees concealed their tradition to fit into their new communities. As time passed, Finns became more accustomed to Orthodoxy, and the identity of Orthodox Finns strengthened. Part of this process was the reconstruction of the pre-war rituals and history of the lost territory. A new culture was also created. Procession routes (on the Finnish side) were established in the

1970s and early 1980s. At first an anomaly, the sight of processions became part of local culture (Mantsinen and Kyyrö 2017).

When the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, the idea of a procession to the former centre of Korpiselkä was born. This was combined with existing events on the Finnish side. The current route travels from the Chapel (*tsasouna*) of the Transfiguration of Christ in Saarivaara to the Orthodox church of Saint Nicholas in Hoilola on foot (10 km), from the church shore to Pörsämö graveyard (*kalmisto*) by boat (5 + 5 km), and the next day from the Finnish border zone to Korpiselkä graveyard and Orthodox church (still partly standing) on foot (3.5 + 3.5 km).

The Orthodox procession and its rituals are followed during the journey. Liturgical songs and bible verses set the pace for walking and rowing. The journey is repeatedly interrupted as the group listens to bible verses, prayers, or takes refreshments. As they move, but even more when they take a break, the participants observe their surroundings and take pictures. Before each journey and during breaks they share memories and discuss their journey and other matters. At the back of the procession group some even talk during the journey.

The routes travel through rural scenery, hills, and forests (Image 1), along less travelled roads and distant waterways (Image 2). For urban participants they offer a quiet escape from mundane life. The religious songs in the church boat travel across the water, creating an emotional landscape that somewhat resembles the old Karelian rune singers, transformed into or replaced by Orthodox rituals. A volunteer for the procession choir was especially drawn by this atmosphere that mixed nature and sound. It was something to which they looked forward every year.

The event and processions are also attended by non-Orthodox Christians. Those participating in the processions on the Finnish side do not necessarily have personal and family ties to the area, but may be interested in the pilgrimage for personal religious and other reasons. As I spoke with some of them, they told how they were inspired by the Karelian landscape and atmosphere, and the scents of the wooden chapels and old graveyards (Image 3). Their possible religious devotion was thus mingled with broader cultural and sensory interests – or vice versa.

The people who participate in the journey to the Russian side usually have family ties with old Korpiselkä. The journey heavily combines the religious and heritage aspects of pilgrimage. Some stood out, because they were unfamiliar with Orthodox rituals and did not know how to behave during liturgy. However, this was a familiar scene, and the organizers were

sufficiently flexible to include everyone, demonstrating the pilgrimage's elasticity. Mutual respect strongly characterized the day. For the construction of pilgrimage and the landscape the diversity of the group was not an obstacle: it only enriched their production.

Before the journey to old Korpiselkä people shared their family stories and discussed possible mutual acquaintances and personal ties. This was the time to construct the narrative of lost Karelia and its importance for the participants. Although the sharing of memories was an important part of the previous days' events, the Korpiselkä journey added to this, because the sites there were usually inaccessible. While the focus of storytelling on the previous days was the experience of the landscape, the focus on the last day was the shared and imagined ancestral past. Contemporary expectations of the approaching journey and personal feelings were combined with shared stories of families and the landscape, evoking the imagined past for reconstruction and reproduction.

Borders evoke emotions and meanings. Crossing the Finnish–Russian border in Karelia was an important ritual for the participants. Given the history between the countries, it offered many levels of meanings and symbols for the imagination. For the participants the other side was not mundane, though it was desecrated by the wildly growing vegetation. Many took pictures; everyone stared at the sight of border poles stretching to the horizon, while moving forward guardedly and in an ordered manner.

When crossing the border, one participant commented, 'These are our lands.' When asked if their family had lived nearby, they said that they meant that this was Finnish land. The land, simultaneously concrete and imagined, was sacred. Not everyone was as enthusiastic, though all shared a sentiment of the lost past. Conversation was sparked by every sign of old structures, and pictures were taken. People tried to locate the sites of former buildings and speculated about what they saw, giving meaning to and categorizing their surroundings.

The main pilgrimage destination was the old Orthodox church, but the pilgrimage travelled first to the graveyard. Memorial panikhida services (*panihida*) were conducted at both the Orthodox (Image 4) and Lutheran sides of the graveyard, after which there was free time to search the land and visit old graves if their location was known (Image 5). Most of the stones and crosses were taken by the Soviet army after the war, leaving the site in a natural state, empty and waiting for interpretations and asserted meanings.

Those with explicitly religious motives travelled close to the priests, while those more interested in heritage tourism remained at the back. This

highlighted the pilgrimage's elasticity, giving space for various motives and actions. With the first sight of the church, participants, especially at the back, suspended the procession to take pictures (Image 6). When we arrived at the church (Image 7), everybody inspected the church and its recently collapsed second tower. Storytelling and speculation arose in the group as they tried to salvage every moment for their memories. They compared old pictures and memories, and personal or family experiences, with the scene before them. Lamenting the devastation of a now glorified and imagined past reinforces its meaningfulness (Lane 2002, 35). Physical contact made a partly ruined church more important than before the journey.

After lunch free time was planned for people to visit nearby old sites. One group searched for the stones of a farmhouse, another for the foundations of a parsonage. A group I followed searched for the ruins of an old Lutheran church. As we walked along the road, one of the participants had a sudden realization and rushed into the forest to the site of the ruins. Only stone foundations remained, covered with trees and vegetation (Image 8). The search for old ruins, signs of the imagined past, was successful. These other ruins offered competing sacred sites for the pilgrimage, but they were instead merely incorporated into the larger fabric of the imagined past. The competing sites provided individual variety, but the ritual process was the same. This process combined stories and mental images with material traces on which meanings were bestowed and from which interpretations arose.

The pilgrimage concluded with a memorial service for the fallen soldiers of the war, an exchange of gifts with Finnish and Russian border guards, and a procession back to Finland. Many participants had been on the pilgrimage several times, and they revisited and reconstructed their own memories and shared them with newcomers. Pictures and stories were passed on and reflected on at home and on social media, expanding the impact of the pilgrimage to others.

Analysis

The *communitas* of the pilgrimage participants included various specific motives for joining (religious, cultural, devotional, heritage), and people came from various backgrounds – most, however, from an urban landscape. An important player here was the Orthodox priest, Father Vesa, who led the group with charismatic authority. He acknowledged the various motives and backgrounds, legitimizing different actors in a single setting. In

a sense, he was the symbol of this momentary community. Through him and other Orthodox figures the religious label of processions not only gave the pilgrimage access to the Russian side; it also created an atmosphere of reverence and authority.

The elasticity of pilgrimage (see Gemzöe 2016) was demonstrated in action, because the priests and organizers were well aware of the participants' many motives and backgrounds. Even when some sacred boundaries were contested by others' understanding (e.g. prayer rituals), they were included in the pilgrimage's broader setting. According to Eade and Sallnow (1991, 15) the object and goal of the pilgrimage compiles and merges its participants' many interpretations, motives, and hopes. All the various traits of the pilgrimage studied here begin and return to the shared goal of searching for the sacred. Participants have their own interpretations of and ideals for what is important in their journey, and they search for their traces accordingly. The environments of the journey give only a few fixed points or physical sites, but a scattered field of possible traces. Participants work in their pilgrimage with both shared and individual rituals. As there are various rituals and interpretations, a need for structure arises. Fortunately, the Orthodox procession rituals and the leading priest offered frames within which people could navigate.

Orthodox rituals were the most obvious in these pilgrimages. However, other rituals were at least as visible, if not as obvious. These included the ritual of sharing and co-authoring stories of the past and the landscape, rituals of marking and recording sites, viewing and ascribing meanings to them, and evaluating and separating locations by their importance. Although one could argue that taking pictures is a mundane activity, it is still inspired by our fascination with breaking the status quo and marking an object of special interest. During the pilgrimage pictures were one way of creating meaningful memories and retrieving history. The ever-changing character of nature meant sites and objects of interest were scattered around. Apart from some ruined churches, chapels, and newly erected crosses in graveyards, they were also difficult to find. This highlighted the ritual of searching for traces. Furthermore, since the objects of interest were scattered – including the physical ones – there was no prepared pilgrimage structure. It had to be constructed and reconstructed by everyone, even by those who had previously participated.

The pilgrims repeatedly crossed paths and boundaries in and for the landscape with their bodies, enforcing its classification and socially comprehended structure and story in the experienced environment, recreating

the sacred with their actions. This can also be seen both as a fight against or incorporation and utilization of nature, which constantly sought to obscure the traces and make the potentially sacred mundane. Especially during the first day's journey the participants constructed the sacred landscape through adoration of nature, mixed with and through the imagined other and stories of the past. The crossing of the national boundary the next day actually reinforced the landscape's sanctity. While outside forces (states) try to scatter the landscape, the imagined past and the stories about it bind cross-national lands. In walking, touching, and reclaiming the land, the participants reinstate lost Karelia in the landscape. In leaving the land, they reproduce its otherness and sanctity, combining it with strong emotions and meanings.

The scattered landscape and people's construction of pilgrimages in them approaches what Della Dora, Scafì, and Walton (2015) write about the ruins of Manx Keeills, and the prayer walks organized to experience them. The embodied practice of walking through the landscape is utilized by the narrative mind (see Johnson 1987, 171–172; Abbott 2003; Gallagher 2006), a human tendency to construct stories of what they see and experience, to make sense of them. In pilgrimage the narrative mind leads to storytelling, which can be understood as a ritual action.

Storytelling was an important ritual throughout the event. It had several functions: entering into a community and legitimizing one's place in it, sharing stories and helping others to join in them, and co-authoring a larger story while locating oneself and the perceived landscape within it. In comparing personal and national stories before and during the journey, people traced their steps in the landscape and joined the community. This notion resembles what Victor and Edith Turner (1978) call an interaction of *communitas* and structure in which each changes the other.

The storytelling was also a key act of marking sites, boundaries, and the landscape. These acts of marking were conducted in various ways: taking pictures; touching; observing; and contemplating. From these the stories emerged. This can be described as what MacCannell (1976) calls 'sight sacralization'. People search the scattered scene, and by evaluating and marking certain sites they create structure, boundaries, and identify centres around which their personal and group's shared pilgrimage intertwines. Together, they create and recreate storied places, affirming their sanctity in their minds (cf. Lane 2002). Connecting their experiences with stories of past, they reproduce the sacred landscape through stories of extraordinary sacred sights.

According to Bell and Lyall (2002, 28–35) action-motivated tourists accelerate the sublime with bodily actions of travel and self-fulfilment in documenting the journey, taking pictures, and connecting with the landscape at emotional and narrated levels. Pilgrimage as a bodily effort and performance shares many of these aspects. While participants seek traces of the past in the landscape and assert meanings in sites, they accelerate sensations of the sublime in this ritual. Connecting imagination, imaginaries and family memories with the experience and landscape enforces the emotional level of the pilgrim's life, evoking a sense of something important and worth conserving – the sacred.

On the Korpiselkä journey pride in family and the national heritage played a distinctive role, culminating in metaphors of owning, belonging, and authenticity. The loss of Karelia remained a sore point for some, though the memory was fading into mythical stories. As the participant who spoke of 'our land' demonstrated, possession can be directed at a national and heritage origin story, imagined Finnishness, and personal family identity. While acknowledging that there is no return to the past, visiting old Karelia evokes not only family memories, but an imagined identity and sacred national story. By stating ownership the participant could reproduce the landscape as Finnish, if only in the imagined realm.

These metaphors are one tool used in constructing the sacred landscape. Through language rituals (cf. Rappaport 1999) people make value judgments, classify and categorize objects and ideas, thus making distinctions between the sacred and secular. With language they link the pilgrim identity with national and local history. Through their actions they participate in and join the landscape of history and heritage, including the Orthodox past, which can be used as a prototype and symbol of the 'authentic Karelia' and its culture. The experience of pilgrimage evokes charismatic encounter, in which the Eliadean timeless and Durkheimian social temporal sacred meet (Eade and Sallnow 1991, 14–15). Both the temporal group experience and connecting to the imagined other, here, past history, and its narratives are important.

The term 'imagined community' is best known from the work of Benedict Anderson (1983), who used it to describe nationalism. It also correlates to other uses of 'social imaginaries' (cf. Taylor 2003; Calhoun 2016). Here, pilgrimage participants can be seen as joining in both temporal ritual and larger national communities. Both these belongings are illusory in the sense that interpretations and experiences of their identity, 'raison d'être', and meanings are neither given nor the same, although people claim membership of them.

The past has been obscured by faded memories, stories, and imaginaries, leaving the symbols of connection from which people can construct their stories. Anderson saw nationalism as a way to create or imagine a community. I would argue that pilgrimage offers similar tools for creating or joining stories about communities. The Karelian pilgrimage offers symbols, goals, and sites of reference, and it is also connected with the national imaginary. Family heritage and nationalistic tendencies are frequently inseparable.

Turner and Turner describe pilgrimage as a ritual journey from the mundane or profane to the sacred centre (Turner and Turner 1978, 9, 23). However, the pilgrimages I observed do not have a single physical sacred site or centre. There are many sites, even if some are more popular than others. Apart from cemeteries, personal connections are weak. Instead, the sacred centre is located in both the shared and personal mental worlds of imagined Karelia and the imagined past. In this setting boundaries of wilderness and centres of physical constructions become parts of a constructed sacred landscape organized by people through their actions.

This also correlates with what Stark (2002) and Laitila (1995) previously claimed about the old Karelian worldview. According to Stark a pilgrimage towards a centre and community's sacred boundaries entailed 'two strategies [...of...] managing purity, social order, and social continuity', separate but serving similar purposes (Stark 2002, 197–198). However, they are combined in one event, at least in contemporary pilgrimages. Concrete centres and scattered nature, which participants try to arrange to make sense of them, together occupy the landscape and are subjects of ritual acts.

The imagined Karelia is larger than the pilgrimage experience and its sites. What is important here are the bodily ritual experiences and actions by which individuals participate in reinventing and recreating the landscape, which they associate and link with the larger Karelian story and symbolic universe. Through rituals of travel, searching, and marking their surroundings they simultaneously organize their pilgrimage's landscape, both individually and collectively. Through categorization and valuation the participants set objects apart as sacred and organize them, thereby constituting a sacred order. This sacred order keeps the pilgrimage and its universe whole and intact, reproducing the sacred in action.

Conclusion

In this article, I have explored how the sacred landscape is created and reproduced by various actors from different backgrounds with own motives,

brought together by a shared Karelian utopia, an imagined past, and the goal of its preservation, even though interpretations and meanings may vary.

The reproduction of Karelia and family heritage through seeking and constructing sacred traces includes and possibly necessitates the utilization of the Orthodox symbolic and ritual universe. The pilgrimage thus works in three mutually beneficial areas: the construction of the imagined Finnish Karelia; (re)introducing Orthodox Christianity to the landscape; and building a temporary community which shares the motive of the quest for the sacred. The elasticity of pilgrimage allows differing goals, motives, and actions to take place to benefit the shared goal of building a pilgrimage and its landscape. The same elasticity enables the construction of the sacred.

Since locations and sights, especially the surrounding nature, are scattered, the landscape of pilgrimage must be constructed from fragments. Through their bodily actions of marking, classifying, and categorizing people organize the landscape, joining fragile and partial memories and stories of the lost past with it. People construct the landscape of pilgrimage through seeking traces of interest and valuing them as important when they suppose they find them. These traces thus become the enacted sacred, emphasizing their place in creating order in the scattered environment.

Rituals in these Karelian surroundings illustrate how pilgrims and pilgrimages travel in and out of places deemed important, constructing them as sacred through boundaries and meaning-making. Some places serve as centres; others paint the outskirts of the landscape, constituting a structured sacred world of pilgrimage. Stories of the imagined past encounter personal embodied experiences, reconstructing and reproducing the landscape and the pilgrimage.

Since the old world is unattainable, with only its traces in stories and the partly preserved landscape and ruins, the goal and centre(s) of the pilgrimage must be repeatedly created for every participant. They participate and join in the community, and continue the lifecycle of this imagined landscape and its imagined community through rituals of seeking and finding these traces, and creating and recreating stories. By travelling certain paths, recording meaningful sites in pictures, and telling stories participants paint the landscape and organize it into a specific order, constructing the sacred and separating it from or pairing it with the secular.

* * *

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Appendix. Photographs by Teemu T. Mantsinen and Jere Kyyrö.
Image 1. Procession by foot.



Image 2. Procession by boat.



Image 3. Pörtsämö kalmisto, old graveyard.



Image 4. Korpiselkä kalmisto, old graveyard.



Image 5. Finding graves in Korpiselkä.



Image 6. Pilgrims approaching Korpiselkä church.



Image 7. Pilgrims arriving at Korpiselkä church.



Image 8. Finding Lutheran church ruins in Korpiselkä.





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Finnish Muslims' Journey from an Invisible Minority to Public Partnerships

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Abstract

The article discusses the historical growth and development of the Muslim population and its contemporary situation in Finland. Finland was annexed as a grand duchy by the Russian Empire in 1809, which led to the presence of Muslim military personnel on Finnish territory and later enabled the settlement of Tatar Muslims from central parts of Russia. These Tatars were for a long time the only organized Muslim community in Finland. They maintained their cultural and linguistic traditions, while being very much at home in their Finnish civic identity. During the 1980s and especially since the 1990s Finland has received many Muslim immigrants, including international students, spouses, refugees, and asylum seekers. The article addresses several complexities in Muslim organizations' ethnic, national, and sectarian varieties, and takes on board the change in official policies towards Muslims over the years. It also examines the media debates and public attitudes to Islam. The historical Tatar minority's role has in many respects been important for more recent Muslim immigrants, and though little remarked in public debate, remains very important in seeking a relationship between Islam and north-western Europe.

Keywords: Islam, Muslims, Finland, organizations, governance, media, public opinion

High levels of ethnic and religious diversity have never characterized Finland. Indeed, the opposite has been the case. This country of 5.5 million inhabitants has been considered in others' and no less its own self-imagination an ethnically homogenous society, with two particular features with which minority studies scholars tend to be familiar: a small population of indigenous Sámi people; and a well-treated Swedish-speaking minority. However, this is only

part of the story, as is usually the case with similar national and international imaginaries. Although the perception of ethnic homogeneity is no mere reflection of nationalist thinking – both the Sámi and Swedish speakers are smaller minorities, not exceeding 290,000 individuals – Finland still has its own share of other ethnic and religious minorities. This plurality in Finland's population in the post-Cold War era has often led to pronounced discourses. A major part of this rediscovered interest concerns Islam and the historic presence of Muslims in the country over more than two centuries (Martikainen 2013).

The history of Islam in Finland is a story of two quite different origins. The first relates to the break in Finland's long shared history with Sweden in 1809, when the region was annexed as a grand duchy within the Tsarist Empire. Finland was until then an eastern province of Sweden, but its proximity to the newly built Russian capital, St Petersburg, made it an attractive target for control from the east. When the political transition was over, Russian multi-ethnic, and indeed multireligious, troops settled in several Finnish localities. Among them were individuals of a Muslim background. There is a Muslim cemetery dating from the early nineteenth century close to the Bomarsund Fortress. Although it is now in ruins, the cemetery is on the Åland Islands, between modern Finland and Sweden. The soldiers may have been sojourners of a kind, but a more stable presence of civilian settlers collectively came to be known as the Tatar Muslims, to whom we shall return in the next section (Leitzinger 2006). The arrival of the first Muslims in Finland was therefore a result of population movements across the nineteenth-century Russian Empire (Cwiklinski 2016, 2–4).

The second phase in the evolution of Islam in Finland is more recent. Although there were already smaller numbers of non-Tatar Muslims in post-Second World War Finland, including international students and the occasional spouse or professional, a more sizeable presence first emerged in the 1990s, when Finland began to accept UNHCR refugees from Muslim-dominated areas of the Middle East at the same time as independent asylum seekers were arriving. This coincided with and was related to the end of the Cold War and the more general opening of Finland to international migration. The last quarter of a century has seen a generally rapid rise in the numbers of people of foreign origin in Finland. They have arrived for several reasons, including ethnic return migration from the territories of the former Soviet Union in the form of family reunions, and to work or study. A sizeable proportion of the new immigrants has been Muslim, and this new Islamic presence resembles several other western European societies. However, Finland's case is unusual, because it did not import foreign labour during the 1960s and

1970s: the country itself was a major exporter of human resources, especially to Sweden. The second story of Islam in Finland therefore belongs to the global population movements of the post-Cold War era (Martikainen 2013).

This article presents an overview of the presence of Muslims in Finland from historical times to the present day. Special emphasis is paid to a discussion of how Muslim communities have established themselves, and how the Finnish state and public have related to them.

The settlement of Tatar Muslims in Finland

As already observed, Finland was annexed as a grand duchy of the Russian Empire in 1809, resulting in the arrival of Russian troops. Among them were Muslims, who were primarily Tatars and Bashkirs from the Volga-Ural region. Although their exact number is unknown, it was in the tens or hundreds – and certainly not many. Muslim servicemen were stationed in different garrisons around the country. As early as 1836 there was a military imam at the Sveaborg Fortress next to Helsinki, from which he also served Muslim civilians. The religious centre for Finnish Muslims at the time was the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly, as it was for all Muslims in European Russia (Halén and Martikainen 2016).

While some of the Tatars were among the military, the formation of a Tatar civilian community is related to the arrival and later settlement of Tatar merchants in the 1870s, who were mainly Mishar Tatars from the province of Nizhny Novgorod. Most came from a few villages, and they were often related. These Tatars were mainly farmers, who operated as pedlars during the winter. Some had also peddled in St Petersburg before coming to Finland. They were more positively perceived in Finland than in Russia itself. Word spread, and a small-scale chain migration or migration network began to emerge. Initially, only men came, but families gradually accompanied them (Halén and Martikainen 2016, 89–91).

The basic railway network in Finland was built in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the Tatars were among those who exploited the opportunity it afforded to settle around the grand duchy. Tatar commercial activities included the selling of textiles, carpets, and furs. The Tatars were able to accumulate wealth, and successive generations improved their overall societal standing (Halén and Martikainen 2016, 89–91). This migration of Tatars to Finland continued until the 1920s, but it eventually ceased because of stricter Soviet internal and international mobility rules. Between the 1930s and the 1970s there was very little contact between the old homeland and settlers

in Finland. Relationships with the homeland were re-established in the 1970s, when Soviet policy allowed increased international mobility (Leitzinger 2006).

There were about 120 Tatar families in Finland in the 1930s, with an average of 5.5 members per household. They began to receive Finnish citizenship from 1920: by the Second World War about half the Tatars were Finnish citizens. Most of the remaining non-citizens were later granted citizenship (Leitzinger 2006, 213–215). Nearly 180 Tatars participated in one way or another in Finland's war efforts, and ten died in the war. Like many Finns today, the Tatars take great pride in their participation in these efforts, even publishing a register of Tatar war veterans (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 2006). After the Second World War some Finnish and Estonian Tatars migrated to Sweden, where they established the first Swedish Islamic society in Stockholm, thus becoming a pioneer Muslim community further west (Leitzinger 2006, 142; Ståhlberg and Svanberg 2016).

The Tatars have always been a very small minority, numbering under a thousand individuals. According to Antero Leitzinger (2016, 144–165) most lived in the main urban areas of Southern Finland and some in a few smaller municipalities. Individual Tatars, however, were found throughout the country. One of the smaller areas with a Tatar settlement was the municipality of Järvenpää, near Helsinki. During the war, the first – and thus far only – purpose-built mosque in Finland was erected there. It is a wooden structure and includes a minaret (see Image 1). Apparently, some Tatar prisoners of war helped in its construction, and the mosque was definitely in use in 1942 and later. There are also Tatar mosques in the cities of Helsinki, Kotka, Tampere, and Turku (Leitzinger 2008). The Helsinki mosque, or 'Islam House', is a five-storey building. The congregation uses two floors; the rest of the complex is rented for commercial and culinary purposes. It was built in 1960 with domestic and international funding (Suomen Islam-seurakunta 1975, 28–32).

The Tatars have two religious organizations, the *Finlandiya İslam Cemaati – Suomen Islam-seurakunta* ('The Islamic Congregation of Finland'), founded in 1925, and the *Tampere İslam Mahallesi – Tampereen islamilainen seurakunta* ('The Islamic Congregation of Tampere'), founded in 1943 (Leitzinger 1996, 166–167; Baibulat 2004; Leitzinger 2006, 155, 172). Tatars residing in other localities are members of one of these congregations. The Tatar religious organizations have a total of some 600 members, but their membership is ageing and has gradually shrunk, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. The Tatars also have several cultural and other associations for different purposes. Tatars have been active in publishing religious and cultural

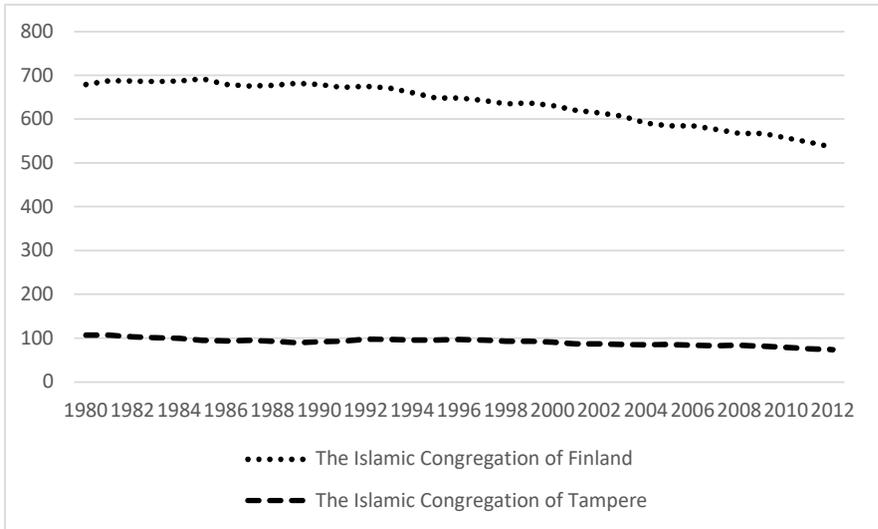


Figure 1: Membership of the Islamic Congregation of Finland and the Islamic Congregation of Tampere 1980–2012. Source: Statistics Finland.

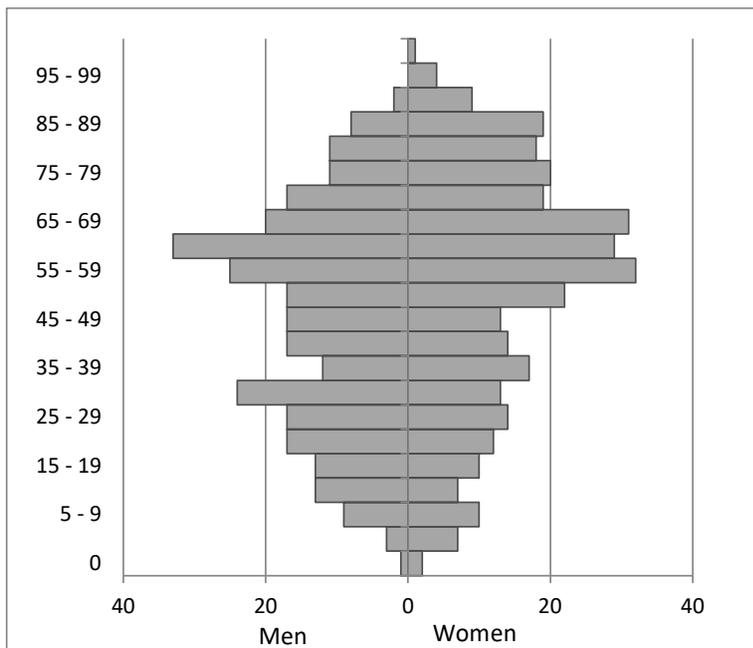


Figure 2: Source: Statistics Finland.

literature, and most still speak their own language at ethnic meetings. Such multilingualism is certainly unique given the historic nature of the Tatar diaspora, which has become more or less linguistically assimilated into the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic countries (Cwiklinski 2016, 12). Their community newspaper *Mähalla Habärläre* ('News from the Community') is published in Tatar. However, for official and commercial purposes the community largely uses Finnish, turning to Tatar only for religious and cultural celebrations. Between 1948 and 1969 the Tatars had their own publicly recognized primary school (Leitzinger 2006, 235). They have preferred a low public profile, only seldomly taking an active role in presenting Islam in Finland. However, they have experienced it as a solidifying factor in their own communal cohesion. For example, the Tatars have only recently opened a basic website, to be found at *tatar.fi*. They are, however, respected and sought-after partners in Finnish public administration in activities dealing with Islam and interreligious relations, for example (e.g. Martikainen 2015, 128).

One of the main internal debates among Tatars concerns their identity (Sakaranaho 2002). Although most Tatars' origins lie in a few villages, and they are related to each other, finding a self-identification that suits everyone remains an ongoing effort. Antero Leitzinger (2006, 224–258) has described this in detail, and apart from the espousal of Sunni Islam, language has been the main factor and even a driver in this identity formation. As the Tatar language is related to Turkish, literary, cultural, and religious influences have been sought from Turkey. During the 1930s some Tatars were inspired by Kemal Atatürk's modernization and founded Turkish associations in Finland. This interest endured until the 1970s, when it became possible to visit the ancestral homeland and the Republic of Tatarstan. Although most Finnish Tatars do not originate from Tatarstan, it remains a source of inspiration through which contemporary Tatar ethno-nationalism has found its way into Finland. Even their relationship with newly arrived Muslims influences Tatar identification: they now emphasize their own *ethnic* (Tatar), *linguistic* (Mishar Tatar), and *religious* (Islam) *identity* as a unique (hence exclusive) blend, while simultaneously defining themselves within a *historical cultural minority position* in Finland and as *Finns* (Sakaranaho 2002). Finnish Tatars distance themselves from radical and Jihadist interpretations of Islam. They do not consider it part of their heritage, which is largely influenced by Sufi views and practices. Shifting ethno-religious identifications can also be found among other religious minorities in Finland. The historical Orthodox Christian minority is a case in point, as they have also sought different

external points of identification based on the prevailing political situation (see Martikainen and Laitila 2014).

During the 150-year history of civilian Tatars in Finland the community has integrated well into Finnish society. Internally, its great challenge is its ageing membership, but the Tatars have been able to cope with this thus far. They are simultaneously affected by developments elsewhere in society and throughout the world. The rise of Islam in public consciousness over the last two decades has created closer contacts with the Finnish political administration, which has often asked the Tatars to function as middlemen between new Muslim immigrants and public administration (e.g., Martikainen 2019). They have therefore moved from the margins of society to a recognized and respected place at the centre in the eyes of the Finnish State.

New Muslims of the post-Cold War era

The Tatars were the only organized Muslim community in Finland for a long time, although Muslim individuals from many countries found their way to Finland (Sakaranaho 2006, 255–256; Leitzinger 2008). Other Muslims could participate in religious gatherings at the Tatar mosques, but they were not allowed to become members of the community itself. Linguistic difficulties hindered such participation, because Tatar was the main language used for religious and cultural activities, including the Friday sermon. During the 1980s, and especially since the 1990s, Finland has received many immigrants with a Muslim background as international students, spouses, refugees, and asylum seekers. This has led to a rapid growth in the Muslims population, which was an estimated 70,000 in 2015. This estimate is a matter of debate, but is an indication of the number. Higher numbers can be suggested, especially if the descendants of Muslim immigrants are considered. The difficulty with such estimates stems from the fact that a person is registered as an adherent of a particular religion in Finland if they join an existing religious association as a registered member. Such membership is much lower among immigrants, and Muslims are no exception (Martikainen 2011; Pauha 2017, 248–249). Moreover, because of other national registration practices, many Muslims resident in Finland have yet to be included in national statistics. For example, the 2015 influx of 32,500 people of mainly Muslim background including asylum seekers from the Middle East reaching Finland are not included in these figures, but it is anticipated that at least 10,000 individuals will be granted the right to stay in the country. Most are from Iraqi and Syrian backgrounds (Jauhiainen 2017).

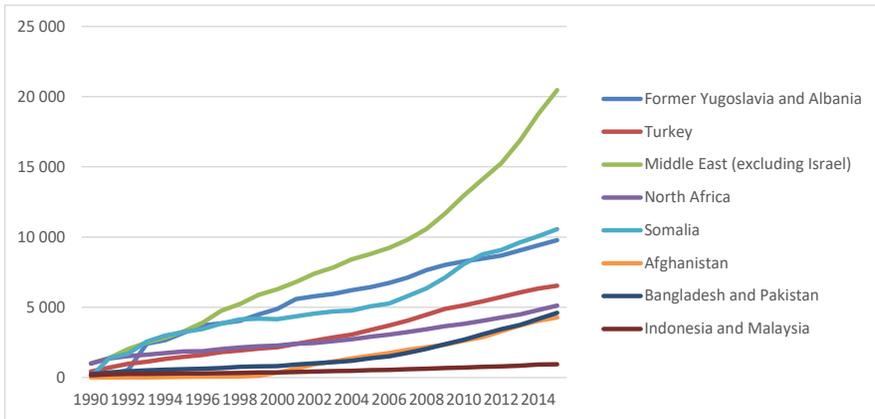


Figure 3: Immigrants from selected Muslim-majority countries and regions in Finland, 1990–2015. Source: Statistics Finland, Population structure, Country of birth according to age and sex by region 1990–2015.

The new immigrants are of diverse national and ethnic backgrounds from around the Muslim world. Figure 3 illustrates the diversity of the regional origin of immigrants from Muslim majority countries in Finland. The largest group consists of immigrants from the Middle East, especially from Iraq and Iran. The next are Somalis and people from the Balkans. They are followed by people born in Turkey, North Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. Among them are also non-Muslims, but the religious background of the majority is Muslim. Muslims from the former Soviet space are not included in the figure, because they are a minority among these immigrants (see Martikainen 2011). In any case, it is obvious that Muslims in Finland are a very heterogeneous group.

Labour immigration, which is a typical factor in Muslim immigration in many western European countries, has rarely been involved in Finland. The only characteristic common to a majority of Finnish Muslims is their refugee background, especially among Middle Eastern, Somali, Afghan, and former Yugoslav groups. Among the other main groups, including Turks and Southeast Asians, we find mainly marital partners and student migrants, and only some refugees. The dominance of international protection as a reason for immigration among Muslims has significant consequences for the population with a Muslim background. They are overrepresented among the lower income classes, so their financial situation in Finland is generally unstable. The Muslim population is highly concentrated in major

urban areas, although somewhat different settlement patterns exist between different national and ethnic groups. For example, Turks are more dispersed than Somalis, who are strongly concentrated in Helsinki's metropolitan area (Martikainen 2013; Pauha 2017).

The second generation of the post-1990 Muslim immigrants is still mainly comprised of children and adolescents, but is becoming increasingly visible. The higher than average birth rate of many Muslim groups – for example, Somalis and Iraqis – in larger Muslim settlements means they are well represented in their age groups, and their particular needs have already been taken into consideration (Tirri, Rissanen, and Kuusisto 2016). For example, in the Finnish school system it is possible to receive teaching in one's own religion, and Islam is taught in many schools around the country (Sakaranaho and Martikainen 2015). Signs of young Muslims' identity politics are becoming visible as particular individuals are raising concerns that differ from those of the first generation (Pauha 2015).

The new Muslim population of Finland is highly diverse, mainly urban, and young in its age structure. It is less socioeconomically advantaged compared with the majority population, and it remains to be seen how the second generation can bridge the gap with the rest of the population. It is also estimated that the Muslim share of the population will continue to grow from the current 1.3 per cent to 3.4 per cent in 2050 (Pew Research Center 2015, 50). Over the last thirty years, new Muslims have been able to create an extensive religious infrastructure of mosques, associations, and other operations that support their religious identities and cultural activities.

The Finnish state and Muslim organizations

During the Russian era Islam was not an officially recognized religion in Finland, because Swedish laws and regulations were still largely in force in the grand duchy. The Lutheran church was a state church, and its members enjoyed a privileged position. The Tatars' religious activities were initially organized in private homes, and the formal organizational process took a long time. The first Muslim charity association was founded in 1915 in Helsinki, and a congregation in Terijoki¹ in 1916, but the latter dissolved only two years later (Leitzinger 1996, 159–160; Leitzinger 2006, 166–167). After Finland's independence in 1917 legislation governing religion was liberalized. The Freedom of Religion Act of 1923 made it possible for Mus-

1 Terijoki is now known as Zelenogorsk and has been part of Russia since 1944.

lms and non-Protestant Christians to register as state-recognized religious organizations (Heikkilä, Knuutila, and Scheinin 2005).

The Mohammedan (later Islamic) Congregation of Finland was founded under Finnish law in 1925, and its sister community in Tampere in 1943 (Leitzinger 2006). These were the only Islamic organizations in Finland until the mid-1980s, when the slowly growing non-Tatar Muslim community, consisting of Arabs in particular, began to organize on its own. The Islamic Society of Finland (*Suomen Islamilainen Yhdyskunta*) was registered in 1987 as the first non-Tatar community. It remains one of the largest and most active Muslim organizations in Finland. Dozens of new Islamic organizations have been founded as increasing numbers of Muslims have settled, with a growing presence around the country since the 1990s. The Islamic Society of Finland has played an important role in the process and has tried systematically at least to support the founding of new mosque associations both in the capital region and elsewhere in the country (Sakaranaho 2006).

According to Teemu Pauha (2017, 245–250) there were 129 registered associations in Finland that were probably Islamic in 2015. Among them were some eighty mosque communities, of which about thirty were in the Helsinki capital region. This suggests Finnish Muslims have a diverse and nationwide religious infrastructure that provides basic religious and ancillary activities to the growing Muslim presence in Finland. The Islamic field is very varied, although the Islamic Society of Finland aspires to become a nationwide central organizer of Islamic activities. Despite the general rhetoric that all Muslims share similar concerns and interests, there are many particularities in the profile and emphasis of Islamic organizations.

The officially recognized Muslim religious community organizations (*rekisteröity uskonnollinen yhdyskunta* in Finnish) had 13,300 members in 2015, as Figure 4 shows. This has risen from 1,200 in 2000, but it is important to note that a large number of Muslims do not officially belong to these organizations. This peculiarity of the Finnish statistics may be confusing, but official non-membership is common among immigrants and less so among the native population, meaning they are underrepresented in national religious statistics (Martikainen 2011). Nevertheless, the statistical increase indicates the growing numbers of Muslims and a growing tendency to become registered members.

In the initial organizational phase of Muslim activities in a new locality we find significant ethnic diversity among members of Muslim societies. However, as the Muslim community grows, it tends to splinter along ethno-religious lines, although some multi-ethnic communities persist. The basic

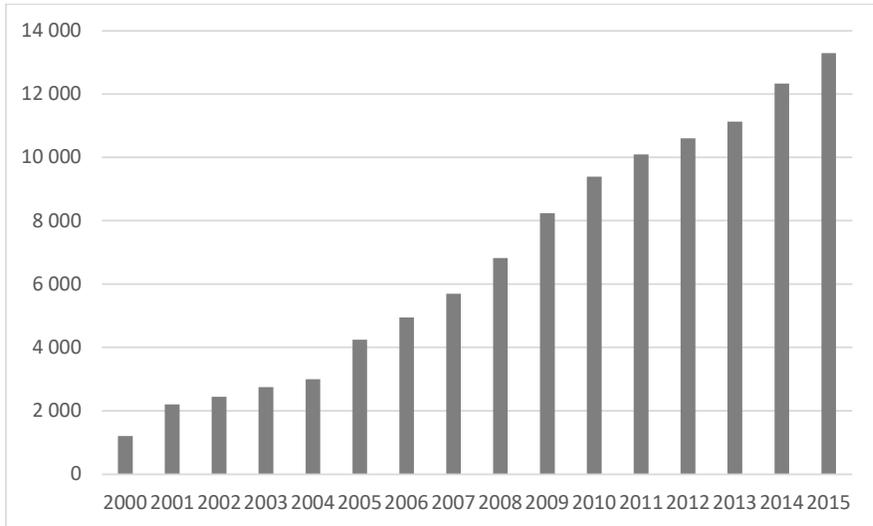


Figure 4: Registered members in recognized Islamic organizations, 2000–2015. Source: Statistics Finland, Population Structure, Population by religious community, age, and sex, 2000–2015.

division runs between Sunnis and Shias, who work together exceptionally in more practical issues. The Finnish Shia population consists of Iraqis, Afghans, and Iranians. The second main line of division is ethno-national. This is more prominent among Sunnis, because they are a more diverse group to begin with. Among them we find a significant share of mosque communities divided along ethno-national lines. For example, there are mosques numerically dominated by Somalis, Arabs, Kurds, Pakistanis, Turks, and Bosnians in the larger Muslim settlement cities. The third line of division is based on particular theological preferences and often relates to sympathy towards or membership of an Islamic movement. For example, the Tablighi Jamaat is known to be influential in some mosques. A more detailed academic understanding of the internal diversity of Finnish Muslim organizations has yet to emerge, but there are groups related in different ways to the Salafi/Wahhabi movements, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Diyanet, and various Shia movements. Beside these groups and influences, we find splinter groups that essentially relate to the personal relations of Muslim activists, a feature that is common among many other religious – immigrant and non-migrant – communities (Martikainen 2013).

In addition to local Muslim mosques and other associations a national representative body, the Islamic Council of Finland (SINE, *Suomen Islami-*

lainen Neuvosto), exists. SINE was founded in 2006 with significant help from the Ombudsman for Minorities. The Council received state funding from the outset, which allowed it to focus on its core activities instead of expending its effort in fundraising, which is a common feature of migrant organizations' activities. Although SINE has become an important organization from the perspective of the Finnish public administration, it has not developed fully into an all-inclusive representative organization. However, some of SINE's key individuals belong to various networks that aim to enhance interreligious relations in Finland (Martikainen 2007, 2019).

Interreligious relations have gradually become an important state-recognized activity for enhancing societal peace. Interreligious activity was still a grassroots movement in the 1990s and early 2000s, but has now attained a higher profile. The key motivation for the Finnish state's interest lies in the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 9 September 2001, the Cartoon Controversy in 2006, and the many Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe over the last decade. In this context interreligious activity is seen as playing an essential role in upholding good ethnic and religious relations in the country. The National Forum for Cooperation of Religions in Finland (CORE) is a representative organization that brings together the 'Abrahamic' religions – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Its main task is to provide a common voice for these historic religions. Its foundation goes back to President Tarja Halonen's desire to improve interreligious relations in Finland. However, the organization was founded ten years later. Several other initiatives and NGOs work in the field (Martikainen 2016). At least in the cities of Turku and Helsinki local Muslim organization–public authority networks have also been established.

The growth of the Muslim population in Finland has led to several mutually reinforcing developments. First, Muslims now have an extensive and increasingly professional national network of Islamic societies and associations. Second, many of these Muslim organizations are increasingly considered in both local and national decision making, which has completely changed the previously peripheral role minority religious organizations played. For example, Turku has created a committee that focuses on fostering relations with local Muslim associations. Third, interreligious relations are seen as an important way to improve societal relations and prevent unwanted social phenomena such as radicalization. Although the authorities' interest is largely based on countering terrorism and radicalization, the connections have broader repercussions, changing historic state–religion relations and bringing minority religious issues to fore. Previously,

the Finnish state has largely maintained active relations with the majority Evangelical Lutheran church, but much smaller religious organizations are now becoming serious negotiation partners (Martikainen 2016).

Public image and opinions on Islam

Islam and Muslims were long a distant and marginal topic in Finland. Despite the Tatar presence, Islam was not seen as native to Finland, and when it was discussed in public, it was in the context of foreign news and issues. Knowledge of the Tatar presence was poor; knowledge of Islam as a Finnish phenomenon was almost non-existent. This has changed over the years, with Islam increasingly being seen as a Finnish issue.

Teemu Taira has studied the image of Islam in the main Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, between 1946 and 1994. He has identified four phases in the debate about Islam. First, Islam, or 'Mohammedanism' (*muhamettilaisuus* in Finnish) as it was then called, was seen as a backward religion. Islam began to come to the fore in the early 1960s in relation to political developments such as the Algerian War, when it was seen as a socially cohesive force for people's nationalist aspirations. Second, this nationalist phase was reimagined in the late 1960s in the light of Soviet and US interests that squeezed Islam between capitalism and communism. Islam was viewed as a passive player in the battles between the great powers. Regionally, the imaginary was still largely concerned with the MENA region. Third, with the rise of political Islam and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran, Islam began to appear as an independent force. The developments in Iran were viewed with horror, but Islam as a religion was gradually seen as compatible with modern society (Taira 2008, 202–206).

Fourth, the presence of Muslim minorities in European countries slowly emerged as a topic during the 1980s. The *Satanic Verses* controversy was much debated in the Finnish media from 1988. As greater numbers of Muslims arrived in Finland during the 1990s, Islam was gradually seen as a phenomenon more closely related to Finland. Although Islam was generally not a key element in the presentation of immigrants with a Muslim background, who were more often described in national or ethnic terms, Islam was now no longer seen as merely something somewhere far away. The political crises that led to asylum seekers arriving in Finland in the early 1990s, including the breakdown of Somalia and the wars following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, received much attention, gradually leading to a growing recognition of Islam as something present in Finland too (Taira 2006, 206–208).

The media researchers Pentti Raittila and Mari Maasilta (2008) have compared media debates on Islam in 1987, 1997, and 2007 that supplement Taira's findings. Their analysis confirms that Islam is represented in media debates mainly in political contexts. This means it is seldom examined in cultural or religious frameworks, but as part of other developments. Over the twenty-year period the study examines, Islam is increasingly presented as something present in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden), meaning that almost a quarter of media mentions situate Islam in the region. This figure was about a tenth at the start of the period. Nevertheless, mentions of Islam are situated mainly in non-European territories. Moreover, issues related to political violence are dominant during the entire period, creating a somewhat one-sided image of Islam, although the journalism as such is unsensational and of good quality. While no systematic overview of Islam in the media has been produced since the above studies, it seems likely that the overall picture has remained the same. Islam is often presented in a problematic light, and associated with political violence and terrorism.

Finnish public opinion on different religions, including Islam, has been surveyed since 1989. Islam has been viewed consistently in a very negative light, and the attitudes to it have remained quite stable. About half the population has great reservations about the religion, and only a small percentage views it positively. Other religions Finns view quite critically include the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. The main difference compared with other world religions with a minor presence in Finland (Buddhism, Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism) is that over the same period they have gradually come to be viewed more positively. Kimmo Ketola suggests that a feature uniting those religions viewed by Finns especially negatively may be that they are seen to cross the line between personal devotion and the public visibility of religion. The former is seen as non-problematic, and the latter as much less acceptable (Ketola 2010, 45–46).

Kimmo Ketola and Teemu Pauha have analysed Finnish attitudes to Islam, which they suggest are exceptionally critical even by international comparison. Based on the 2011 *Gallup Ecclesiastica* poll, 6 per cent of Finns viewed Islam positively, 33 percent neutrally, and 50 percent negatively, while 11 percent had no opinion. Ketola's and Pauha's analysis identifies more prominent criticisms that reflect right-wing political preferences, patriotism, and a worldview that emphasizes differences between population groups. Strong religiosity also manifests views critical of Islam, but they are absent from moderate mainstream religiosity (Pauha and Ketola 2015, 100).

The negative media image and public attitudes to Islam contrast strongly with the more accepting administrative responses. A planned multi-million-euro grand mosque and dialogue centre in Helsinki provides a telling example of the same dynamic. The administrative planning processes ran quite smoothly, but political and public views were far more critical (Pauha and Martikainen 2017). The plan was eventually withdrawn because of political rather than administrative or planning issues. However, it should be remembered in the current debates about Islamophobia that negative Finnish attitudes to Islam have been very stable. Not even the growth of the Muslim community in Finland has markedly changed overall attitudes. It is therefore likely that whatever lies behind the attitudes, they are related to broader cultural values than an Islamophobia perspective would suggest.

Finally, one aspect that may over time influence these public attitudes is the growth of the anti-Islamic rhetoric and agenda in the Finnish political system since the mid-2000s. A social movement known as the 'immigration critics' (*maahanmuuttokriittisyys* in Finnish) emerged in the blogosphere and on social media in the early 2000s. Over time, it found a political home in the Finns Party (also known as the 'True Finns'; *Perussuomalaiset* in Finnish) and has won significant political victories in several elections since 2008. Their relationship with Islam shares many of the premises of the proponents of Eurabia: that Islam is a threat to Europe, and Muslims aim to conquer the continent by various means (Carr 2006). These ideas are blended with a general critique of humanitarian immigration and are associated with a dystopian view of European cultural weakness. Although they are not completely dominant even in the Finns Party, it seems likely they have also begun to influence broader political thought.

Conclusion

Finland provides an interesting case study of Muslims in Europe, as it has both a historical Muslim minority and Muslims who have arrived more recently, but almost no labour migrants from the 1960s and 1970s. The Tatar Muslims of the nineteenth century were able to organize themselves effectively with little societal attention and remained invisible to the broader society. The new Muslim presence has benefited from the Tatar presence, because organizing Islamic societies in Finland has generally been easy, and the formal acceptance of Islam has therefore been unproblematic. This contrasts significantly with many Finns' very negative view of Islam, and it remains to be seen how increasingly anti-Islamic political rhetoric will influence the situation.

The Tatars and new Muslims maintain contacts, but their main concerns are quite different. The Tatars have a good infrastructure to support their traditions. They know how Finnish society works and benefit from good societal connections that support their cause. New Muslims are still creating a space for themselves, and have much to learn about Finnish society and how to promote their interests within it. New Muslims are a very heterogeneous group, and in many cases it would be difficult for them to work for a common cause. The main issue that unites most Muslim groups in contemporary Finland is the pervasive negative image of Islam. This is the most common complaint of all Muslim groups and individuals.

The Finnish State's engagement with Muslim organizations is also noteworthy. They have supported them by including Muslims in discussions about contributing to societal peace and improving interreligious relations. This suggests we are seeing the operation of a new model of the relationship between the state and religion, in which minority religions are actively included, and which was not the case before the 2000s. Muslim organizations have emerged from the margins of society to take a more prominent place in an evolving Finnish society. Much of this has happened because of external developments in Europe, and less because of actual events in Finland. We may therefore assume that Islam's future trajectories in Finland will be elementarily affected by affairs elsewhere – and therefore unpredictably.

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Appendix.

Image 1. The Järvenpää Tatar Mosque, built in the 1940s. Photo by the author.





Nowhere and everywhere: Everyday religion in the intergenerational transmission of craft making

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Abstract

This article investigates the intergenerational transmission of craft making, including the role religion and spirituality play in this transmission. The theoretical approach is based on everyday religion and Bengtson's theory of intergenerational solidarity. The data for this qualitative study was collected in interviews. The results show that warm relationships and closeness between generations are at the heart of transmission: craft making brings different generations together, creates space for intimate relationships, and serves as a way of showing care for children and grandchildren. What about religion? At first glance it seems absent. However, a closer look reveals multiple religious aspects of this process, such as transmitted values and shared craft-making moments associated with religious memories and experiences. Above all, craft making is a venue for warmth and closeness between generations, which is at the heart of religious transmission.

Keywords: craft making, everyday religion, intergenerational transmission

Textile crafts like knitting are usually related to the home and women; traditionally, this activity has been highly gendered, has belonged to the domestic sphere, and has been passed on by older female relatives (Turney 2009, 5; see also Kouhia 2016, 17f.). The situation has changed globally somewhat in recent years, as women have started to gather in cafés and other public places to craft, especially to knit (Shin and Ha 2011; Groeneveld 2010, 266; Turney 2009, 144; Minahan & Wolfram Cox 2007, 6f.), and the skills are increasingly learned outside the family context, whether from peers both in face-to-face contact and online, or from schools, as is the case in Finland (Stalp, Gardner & Beard 2018; Gardner 2016; Stalp 2007; Stoller 2003; Garber 2002). Increasing numbers of men have also publicly taken up their knitting

needles (Pöllänen 2013a). However, textile craft making remains mainly a women's hobby, and the tradition is handed down from one woman to another (e.g. Pöllänen 2015; Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2011; Turney 2009, 12; Johnson and Wilson 2005; Bittman and Wajcman 2000). It is still one of the ways to pass on the gendered practices of femininity (e.g. Stalp 2015; Parker 2010; Kokko 2009). As such, it is very similar to the other areas of both care and women's leisure (e.g. Henderson et al. 1999; DeVault 1991, 2; Green, Hebron, and Woodward 1990). In contrast, craft making, like other leisure, can also offer a means to gain public space and resist patriarchal structures (Turney 2009, 40; Henderson et al. 1999; Wearing 1998, 49f.).

However, even today, mothers and grandmothers often remain the initial source of inspiration and help in craft making (Stalp, Gardner, and Beard 2018; Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2011; Riley 2008; Johnson and Wilson 2005; Nelson, LaBat, and Williams 2002). Yet the academic literature on the intergenerational transmission of craft making has been somewhat scattered thus far. Scholars have found that a warm and close relationship between the instructor and learner plays a crucial role in the learning process of craft making (Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2011), and grandmothers or great aunts are often better at offering this warm acceptance than mothers (Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2011; Johnson and Wilson 2005). The literature also shows that craft making is a way to hand down the family culture: women do craft making because they want to 'keep the family tradition alive' (Johnson and Wilson 2005) or 'leave a legacy' of previous generations to future ones, and so weave the next link in the chain of generations (Piercy and Cheek 2004). Conversely, craft making gives women an identity that is separate from the role of mother, wife, or daughter. Women are not defined by their relationship with someone else but through their own skills as craftswomen (Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell 2001; Nelson, LaBat, and Williams 2002). The existing literature on these themes is quite limited, and it raises interesting questions about the place and roles of emotions, experiences, and values related to womanhood, family, and the surrounding culture in both intergenerational relationships and transmission in craft making. Nor has the place of religion in the intergenerational transmission of craft making been studied before. This study addresses these themes.

Besides craft-making skills, values, worldviews, and beliefs are transmitted from one generation to the next. As the earlier literature shows, different generations in the family are bound to each other in several ways. Values, norms, habits, and skills are transmitted from parents and grandparents to children and grandchildren in the socialization process, which is reciprocal

and continues for a lifetime (e.g. Burr et al. 2015; Bengtson 2013, 58; Nauck et al. 2009; Myllyniemi 2006, 65; Bengtson, Biblarz, and Roberts 2002; Bengtson 2001; Schönpflug 2001; Kohn, Slomczynski, and Schoenbach 1986). According to the previous literature, a warm and accepting relationship between parents and children strongly influences the transmission of values and the continuity of faith and religious views (Bengtson 2013, 74, 79; Grønhøj and Thøgersen 2009; Bekkers 2007; Schönpflug 2001, 182). This also applies to grandparents, who play an important role in the transmission of family values, norms, habits, and skills to younger generations, as has been demonstrated for the field of craft making (Bengtson 2013, 105; Minahan and Wolfram Cox 2011; Nauck et al. 2009; Copen and Silverstein 2007; Johnson and Wilson 2005; Bengtson 2001, 5, 13f.; Giarrusso et al. 2001).

This research is located in a landscape where two realities encounter each other: the transmission of craft-making skills from one generation to the next, and the role culture, values, and religion play in this transmission. The combination is novel, and it is interesting for two reasons. First, craft making seems quite often to tangle with the religious realm: for example, in contemporary discourse craft making is often referred to as spirituality (Myllys 2020; Fisk 2017). Yet craft making continues to be an important part of congregational involvement for many women (Myllys 2020; Voittosaari 1994). This interesting twofold relationship raises the question of the place of religion in the transmission of craft making. Second, studying the intergenerational transmission of craft making highlights the manifold emotional and cultural bonds that bind people. When mothers and grandmothers transmit craft-making skills from one generation to the next, elements of local tradition and culture are also passed on. Nobody has yet considered the extent to which this includes religion. Although the role of religion in people's lives has declined in recent decades in Finland, Lutheranism still occupies a major place in the culture (e.g. Ketola et al. 2016, 28, 40), making it a good place to explore the interesting interconnection of culture and religion in intergenerational transmission.

Research question and theoretical background

In this article I will analyse the intergenerational transmission of craft making, focusing on how textile crafts connect women with previous and future generations, and aspects of religion and values in this transmission.

My focus is on women for two reasons. First, gender affects how religion is lived (e.g. McGuire 2008, 159f.). Second, leisure and craft making differ

between the sexes (Pöllänen 2015; Bittman and Wajcman 2000). Limiting the research to women makes it possible to get a clearer picture of both craft making and everyday religion.

A fruitful way to connect intergenerational transmission, religion, and spirituality is Bengtson's theory of intergenerational solidarity (Bengtson and Roberts 1991, 257; Bengtson 2001, 8). This defines the six behavioural and emotional dimensions needed to pass the values, worldviews, and culture of a family down to younger generations: (1) affectual solidarity, which is the closeness of the relationship between family members and generations; (2) associational solidarity, which is the type of contact between family members; (3) consensual solidarity, which is agreement in values between generations; (4) functional solidarity, which is the quality of support across generations, including both instrumental resources and services and emotional support; (5) normative solidarity, which is expectations regarding parental obligations and norms about the importance of familistic values; (6) structural solidarity, which is the opportunity for cross-generational interaction and spending time together (Bengtson and Roberts 1991, 257; Bengtson 2001, 8). According to the theory warm, close, and accepting relationships between generations are at the core of intergenerational transmission, and this also applies to religious transmission (Bengtson 2013). As I will now show, this theory of intergenerational solidarity affords us an interesting insight into the synergy of intergenerational relationships and the transmission of religion between generations.

Although religious transmission usually happens in the everyday life contexts in which religion is lived, research on this transmission focuses largely on official religious traditions or non-religion, and it neglects religious action and experience as they are lived in everyday life and partly outside religious institutions. The research traditions of folk religion (e.g. Honko 2013; Yoder 1974) and vernacular religion (e.g. Primiano 2012) go some way towards this, because they seem to contain, at least implicitly, the idea of passing down religious beliefs and traditions outside an institutionally bound context. However, there is little research on the transmission of everyday lived religion or folk religion itself (e.g. Liu 2018), which is the focus here.

What is everyday lived religion? According to Ammerman (2007, 5; 2013, 4) it contains all the everyday related actions, emotions, experiences, and interpretations that can to some extent be counted as religious or spiritual. They do not need to be bound to the dogma or tradition of any religious institutions or traditions, but they can be. There is no straightforward definition of religion or religiosity in everyday life. However, the focus is on

the interpretations and experiences of an individual, not the institutionally defined dogma or tradition. Spirituality and religion are not clearly separable but frequently overlap (e.g. Ammerman 2014; McGuire 2008), and the difference between these concepts is rarely clear, as Ammerman (2013, 47, 49) states. Everyday religion, according to Ammerman, grows from the large-scale discussion of lived religion (e.g. McGuire 2008; Orsi 1997). However, it also comes close to the study of folk and vernacular religion, which also focus on religion as it is lived in everyday life but recognize the cultural elements it contains (e.g. Honko 2013; Primiano 2012; Yoder 1974). In this study everyday religion provides a good basis for exploring possible religious and spiritual aspects in the intergenerational transmission of craft making. Besides, notions derived from folk and vernacular religion help the consideration of the cultural context, with which religion is in constant dialogue.

Context of the study

Finland, the site of this study, has been a predominantly Lutheran country for the last five hundred years. In recent decades the situation has changed, especially in urban areas. However, Finland remains one of the most Lutheran countries in the world: 69.7% of Finns belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland in January 2019, according to the church's own website. There are several other smaller religious communities in Finland, while almost a quarter (24.3%) belonged to no registered religious community by the end of 2015 (Ketola et al. 2016, 7-11). As in other Western countries, individually defined spirituality has grown in Finland, especially among women, both inside and outside the Lutheran Church (Ketola et al. 2016, 48; Ahonen 2015; Ketola 2006). However, Lutheranism still plays a major role in Finnish culture and spiritual heritage (Ketola et al. 2016, 28, 40).

Traditionally, handicrafts have been highly valued in Finland. For centuries people have had to be able to make the tools and artefacts needed in daily life. Carefulness, neatness, attention, precision, and patience were and are all highly appreciated qualities of Finnish crafts(wo)men. Craft making skills have been learned both at home and at school, where textile crafts and technical skills are compulsory subjects for boys and girls. Many people therefore have craft-making skills, and craft making remains one of the most popular hobbies (Pöllänen and Urdzina-Deruma 2017; Garber 2002; Heikkinen 1997). Making cheap and useful products has been considered a well-organized and beneficial use of time (Pöllänen 2013a; 2013b).

Data collection and analysis

Data collection began with an observation period of a year. Observation makes it possible to discern how and when religious and spiritual themes are presented and communicated in everyday life (Bender 2003, 137). Between January and December 2016 I observed four different textile craft-making groups. Two were based in the Lutheran Church; two were not church-affiliated. Two made crafts for charity; two did not. The groups met in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

When I began the observation, I first contacted the hosts of the groups by email. At the first meetings I attended I introduced myself, explaining who I was, and what I was going to do. I also told the group members that the observation was participatory (Knott 2010). As a crafter, I would do the same things they were doing at the meetings, which usually meant knitting. The groups were selected for diversity in terms of religiosity and purpose. I soon realised that they also differed in many other ways: for example, in average age, number of participants, the identity of the group and values represented, reasons for coming together, and the role craft making played in the meetings. There was a wide variety of crafts: knitting; crocheting; sewing (including with a machine); mending; and even spinning. Religious orientation was one of the main characteristics that distinguished the groups, yet even this was not clear-cut: although non-religiosity was clearly essential to the identity of one of the non-religious groups, the other organized a knitting devotion with a local Lutheran parish. Such diversity offered a rich opportunity for me as a researcher to gather rich and colourful data.

However, the theme of intergenerational transmission did not emerge during the observation but later in the post-observation interviews. During the observation I had and followed several discussions. Based on these, I asked for interviews with women who had said or done something I wished to explore more deeply. Anneli (65), who spoke to me about the journey to her roots through craft making, was one such woman. In general, I was especially interested in the different kind of meaning, including spiritual, given to craft making. I also wished to interview a variety of women in terms of age, education, and social relations (they were not from the same group of friends). I interviewed four women from each group, making a total of sixteen interviews. The interviewed women were between 40 and 70 years of age, with equal numbers from each decade. They had both lower and higher educational backgrounds. None of the women worked for the church, and they all lived in the Helsinki metropolitan area. They are given pseudonyms here based on the most popular Finnish female names in their birth decade.

The interviews were semi-structured: there were five themes, but the discussion was not otherwise guided. I asked each woman questions about her craft-making history; the general, religious and spiritual meanings given to her craft making; the place of religion and spirituality in her life; and the meaning of the craft-making group in which she participated. The theme of intergenerational transmission emerged spontaneously in the first two interviews, after which I included it in my questions. Most of the women talked eagerly about their lives and craft making. Religious aspects related to the intergenerational transmission of craft making emerged in the interviews, regardless of whether the women belonged to a religious-based group. This was probably because they knew me already from the observation, and we shared an interest, because I am also a crafter. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed – they lasted from fifteen minutes to an hour and a half; the average duration was one hour.

The research method employed was theory reflection: data was examined using qualitative content analysis, and the results of the analysis were discussed theoretically. However, the purpose of this study was not to test theory. In the analysis I followed Ammerman, who states that anything a researcher or informant defines as religious ought to be considered in studying everyday religion. Cultural context and definitions of what is religious or has a transcendent character (e.g. religious rituals or actions connected to a religious community) are also important (Ammerman 2007, 224–225). I used Atlas.ti. to code the data after it was transcribed. First, I grouped the data by theme. One quotation could belong to more than one theme. I then grouped the data into more detailed subthemes (e.g. Generations_Doing with mother or Generations_Teaching children). I continued with the theme of intergenerational relationships and craft making. First, I read through the material a couple of times and made notes on it. Second, I clarified and added subthemes where required. In the third step I began to categorize the subthemes in larger themes to obtain a clearer understanding of the emerging phenomena. I next returned to the interview material, reading it through again in relation to the themes to ensure that they described the same reality. In the final step I organized the categories so that the analysis told a coherent story of the data.

Results

Based on my data, craft making connects women with preceding and succeeding generations in four ways. Tradition, skills, and values are trans-

mitted; time is spent together with different generations; care is shown for children and grandchildren; people are connected with their roots. Religious and spiritual elements are present in all of these.

Transmission of skills and values

In my data craft-making skills and tradition were usually inherited from home, and they connected women to their family's roots and cultural heritage. As 39-year-old Kristiina said: 'My mother's side of the family has really made a lot of crafts, as well as arts and crafts. They're from Ostrobothnia.' In many families, mothers, grandmothers, and other older relatives were skilful crafters who provided an example and role model to younger generations. They had also actively passed on their skills, which many of the women I studied told me they had learned at home before they reached school age. For example, Minna (41) described how she learned her craft-making skill from her grandmothers, with whom she spent a lot of time in childhood. 'Both my grandmothers had looms, so when I went there, I was able to do something with them. ...And my grandmother, my father's mother, taught me to knit.' Mothers had also played an important role in passing the tradition on. This was also the case for 63-year-old Pirjo, whom her mother had taught the basic stitches.

The women I interviewed saw craft making as an important tradition to pass on, connecting children with a continuum of generations. For example, children were taught the basics of craft making if they were interested. Both Minna and Maria (40) made crafts with their children, though their children were still quite young, and Kaarina (71) felt she set an example as a passionate crafter to the younger generations. Younger women did not see craft making as a purely gendered activity. They felt it was important that boys were also taught basic textile craft skills. Transmitted tradition could also acquire a religious tone, as it did for 70-year-old Leena. She told me:

My mother was skilful – her father was a carpenter, and my brother is a watchmaker. So, I suppose we have a gift. ... Well, I think it's already religiosity that I feel it's a gift. I feel I have the kind of gift that allows me to delight children and those close to me. ... I feel it's a gift. I have a gift and an opportunity to give.

Leena saw her craft-making talent as connecting her to both directions in the continuum of generations: it was something she had received from previous

generations that she could also use for future ones, and all this was covered by her religious thinking, which she had inherited from her mother.

Besides basic skills, attitudes towards and values associated with craft making were inherited from home. These included ecological values like countering the consumerist culture. The data showed that basic craft skills were appreciated: mending clothes and sewing on a button were seen as essential skills even today. Kristiina saw craft making as a civic skill everyone should have. 'It would be awful if I didn't know how to sew on a button or darn a sock or something like that.' She also felt it was important to show her children the value of mending clothes at home, seeing it as a way of combating the throwaway culture.

Kristiina was not alone. Maria had inherited the idea from her grandmother that craft making was a culture of sustainability in which clothes were mended and reused. As a trained handicraft teacher, her grandmother had also taught her granddaughter to appreciate detailed and precise handicraft work. Not only were ecological values and attitudes to making and mastery seen as important; the data showed that the attitude of doing good for others was inherited from previous generations. For example, Annikki (71) described how she made clothes for her children and grandchildren just as her mother had done. She saw doing good for others as an essential part of her life as a Christian and an embodiment of her religious thinking: 'Doing good for someone else is religious, at least. That's doing good.'

As can be seen, in this study craft making is mainly learned from home, and this applies regardless of the age of the women. Skills are passed on to future generations, albeit to a lesser extent than in the past. The results obtained here thus point in a slightly different direction than the findings of Stalp, Gardner, and Beard (2018), or Gardner (2016), who both argue that craft-making skills are primarily learned today from other sources. The truth probably lies somewhere in between. However, the importance of the home cannot be overlooked, as this study shows. Intergenerational transmission within a family makes it possible to pass on elements of family heritage and culture alongside craft making, which can be seen both here and in the work of Minahan and Wolfram Cox (2011), and Johnson and Wilson (2005). It seems that craft making is an activity that connects different generations not only very practically but in a much deeper sense. Sometimes this also includes religion, as was case with Leena, whose understanding of craft making as a gift from God reflected an idea of life and its goods as God's gifts, which is characteristic of Finnish Lutheranism even today (Ketola et al. 2016, 28).

At this deeper level values are passed on by craft making. According to Bengtson (2001, 8) shared interests and orientations strengthen consensual solidarity, which is at the core of the transmission of values. It is easy to see how craft making can help with this, especially when both generations are interested in it. In this data environmental values and prosocial behaviour were central to the transmission, as in the studies of Grønhøj and Thøgersen (2009), or Bekkers (2007). Interestingly, however, gender roles in craft making seem to be changing, and younger generations are challenging the traditional model. This study does not therefore wholly support Kokko's (2009) argument that craft making is a way of fostering the gendered practices of femininity. Nevertheless, the requirement of accuracy and neatness, which were valued qualities among Finnish crafters in earlier years (Heikkinen 1997, 70), seems to be being passed on to younger generations. It can therefore be asked to what extent this reflects traditional gender roles.

Values also relate to religion in this study, which is unsurprising, because doing good for others has strong religious associations. In the United States Ammerman (1997, 196–216) pointed out that there were people to whom doing good for others was at the core of religion. She called them Golden Rule Christians. In Finland ethical religiosity is rooted in the Lutheran concepts of everyday vocation and universal priesthood, and serving others in the midst of everyday life is seen as a significant element of religious commitment (Hytönen 2018; Ketola et al. 2016, 25–26). This study shows that it can be linked to craft making and its transmission.

Spending time together

An important aspect of craft making and transmitting the culture was spending time together across generations. The women told me how they did crafts with their mothers and grandmothers. For example, Pirjo cut strips to make rag rugs, and Riitta (65) knitted with her mother. Craft making was also associated with warm and intimate memories of connection with mothers or grandmothers, as was the case with both Leena and Päivi (53). 'When I was a child it (craft making) meant we shared some lovely evenings together. My mother, sister, and I sat around the kitchen table, listened to the radio and did some knitting. ... It was evening at its best, being close to mum.' Leena described the relationship with her mother, with whom she shared a passion for crafts and creativity.

Craft making was a way of sharing time with succeeding generations, with children or grandchildren, and it involved a powerful element of inti-

macy, creativity, and play. For example, Kaarina used to organize summer camps for her grandchildren where they did all kinds of creative things. She also described how her grandchildren came to her and asked what crafts they could do together. Spending time and doing crafts together also created space for shared spirituality with different generations. This was the case for Päivi, who spent a lot of time with her grandmother when she was young. 'This (craft making) is related to her (grandmother's) gentle spirituality, too. She believed in angels and spoke about them like natural everyday things, so this is related to it, in a very positive and warm sense.' Meanwhile, Leena connected craft making with her mother, their warm relationship, and the latter's religiosity, all of which belonged together in her mind.

What is noteworthy in these stories is that so many of them tell us about close and warm relationships between generations. At their core is the time spent together, usually with crafts. According to Bengtson warm emotions and close relationships play a role in intergenerational transmission: he calls them affectual solidarity. Spending time together is in turn called associational solidarity (Bengtson 2001, 8). Making crafts together with different generations connects both these aspects: being together and having a warm and accepting relationship go hand in hand in the women's lives. This creates the solid ground for the intergenerational transmission of values, norms, habits, and skills, as this study shows. The closeness and approval experienced are a good basis for religious transmission (Bengtson 2013, 58, 105; Nauck et al. 2009, 328). It may not be overstating to say that this was the case for Leena and Päivi. However, in this study craft making is probably not the primary cause of religious transmission but acts as a mediator, bringing people together, and creating shared experiences and intimacy to enable it.

However, craft making does not always create a connection between generations. Although shared skills and creativity were important in bringing Leena closer to her mother, her mother's and sister's relationship was not especially close. Nor did she see her sister as a particularly creative crafter. Johnson and Wilson (2005, 122) found that daughters learned craft-making skills from other relatives like their grandmothers, because they could not learn them from their mothers. This approaches what Leena told me about her sister. However, Leena's story suggests the opposite interpretation of the cause and consequence: because Leena's sister did not share a skill with her mother, they remained distant. It might also be that the lack of a shared experience prevented the relationship from developing.

Personalized care

Besides skills and values or time together, craft making includes elements of caring and being useful. These two were also intertwined quite often in this study. The interviewees saw their mothers' and grandmothers' crafts as largely useful, not for entertainment or their own pleasure. Päivi, for example, said that for her mother 'it was mostly a matter of usefulness, unlike me and my sister, for whom it is something other than being useful'. However, mothers and grandmothers showed their care for their children and grandchildren by making and mending clothes. Women in this study also described how they made or mended clothes for successive generations. Like her mother, Annikki used to make clothes for her children and grandchildren when they were little, Pirjo knitted a cardigan for her granddaughter, and Tuula (70) made socks for her grandchildren.

Caring also extended beyond tight nuclear family boundaries. For example, Annikki and her sister took care of the family of their deceased sister by making and mending clothes, especially woollen socks. This care and the handmade objects were also personalized: crafts were designed and made personally for a recipient. Handmade objects could also carry religious meanings, as was the case for Marika (40) with a handmade christening robe. When I asked her about the spiritual meaning of craft making, she told me about the christening robe her mother's cousin crocheted for her children when they were unable to find their own. Besides being a wonderful arts and crafts artefact, the robe had deep spiritual meaning for her.

In his theory Bengtson (2001, 8) calls such support, which may be both material and emotional, functional solidarity that strengthens intergenerational transmission. With his colleagues he found that women's support for their parents was often motivated by warm relationships and emotional intimacy (see Silverstein, Parrott, and Bengtson 1995, 473). Material and emotional support are intertwined in my data. In craft making one rarely appears without the other; emotional support is embodied in handmade objects. Luutonen (2008) suggests that handmade items represent the relationship and carry with them the emotions connected with the person who made them. This was the case in this study. Traditionally, craft making has been seen more as a necessity than purely a source of pleasure or personal well-being (e.g. Turner 2009, 12). As can be seen here, this does not diminish the value of the care the women experienced from the previous generations or offered to the next ones in the form of crafts.

Connection with one's roots

Craft making can also connect people with their roots and ancestors through inherited shared skills and craft objects. This was the case with Anneli: craft making took her to the places where her family had lived through the centuries. Craft making connected her with her roots not only physically but emotionally; it created a yarn-like bond that tied her to the generations who had lived before her. She saw it as a skill shared across the generations.

Interviewer: But it (craft making) is like yarn – it connects you.

Anneli: Yes, in a very strange way. ... It's like connecting me to my ancestors – it's a physical connection, but it also connects in a way that allows me to get close to those people. ... [I]t's the same thing my ancestors from both sides have done, and it brings them close. ... To me it brings those places close, but also these people, somehow.

This experience was life changing for Anneli. She felt that after hard times craft making had given her life back to her. The link with earlier generations was also religious. She described finding the places where her ancestors had lived as a divine dispensation that had connected her with them. In the earlier literature ancestors are present through religious texts that maintain the links in the chain of generations (Spännäri 2008, 249–251). Anneli found something different: the connection with older generations itself was a religious experience for her.

What about religion?

In this article my primary concern is with whether religion and spirituality play a role in the intergenerational transmission of craft making. At first glance religion is not visible anywhere in the data. However, a closer look reveals something different. As described above, Annikki inherited the model of doing good for others from her mother, which had clear religious overtones for her; Marika had a handmade christening robe made by one of her relatives; Leena saw her craft making skill as a gift from both God and previous generations; Päivi saw craft making as related to her grandmother's gentle spirituality; Anneli also saw the connection with her roots through craft making as a religious journey.

Other themes emerging from the data are the closeness between generations, care, shared culture, and values. Taking into account both the strong Christian heritage of Finnish culture (Ketola et al. 2016, 28, 40) and Ammer-

man's (2014, 272-273; 2013, 44-45; 1997) findings that ethics and values are one aspect of spirituality, and Golden Rule Christianity is one of its manifestations, one must ask whether closeness, care, and shared values are really completely separate from religion. The stories of Leena and Päivi indicate otherwise: craft making was an important part of their close relationships with their mothers and grandmothers, who also contributed significantly to their religiosity and religious thinking. From this perspective the apparent absence of religion from this study is turned on its head – instead of nowhere, religion is almost everywhere. There seem to be many different religious and spiritual dimensions to the transmission of craft making.

Discussion

I have analysed the intergenerational transmission of craft making, focusing on how textile crafts connect women with previous and future generations, and the role religion and spirituality play in this transmission. The data indicates that craft making acts as a venue for the chain-maintaining, tradition-shifting, and memory-nourishing force that is warmth and closeness between generations. Bengtson (2001) maintains that these are at the heart of religious transmission.

Craft making connects women with previous and succeeding generations in various ways. Tradition and skills are transmitted, and different values are passed from one generation to another. Craft making brings women together from different generations, creates space for togetherness and intimate relationships, and provides a way of showing care for children and grandchildren. It also connects people with their roots and past generations. In short, craft making seems to have the power to pass cultural traditions on from one generation to the next. These findings support Bengtson's concept of the importance of intergenerational solidarity in the process of transmission. Close and warm relationships (affectual solidarity) and time spent together (associational solidarity) with different generations were both meaningful to the women I studied. Support, both material and emotional, given to the next generations especially (functional solidarity) also played an important role in craft making. As well as skills, values were shared and transmitted in this process, strengthening consensual solidarity. All in all, close and warm relationships were tightly intertwined in the data with the time spent together. This raises the question of whether it is even possible to have one without the other. Shared time creates warm and affectual relationships, and vice versa.

What then of the religious and spiritual aspects of the transmission? To answer this, we must return to the definition of everyday religion. This study reveals some new insights into the phenomenon. The first and largest may involve where and what to look for when defining everyday religion: is it merely a new methodology for studying religion, the medium to practise it, or its content? I would argue that it is all of them. First, everyday religion is certainly a lens through which to focus on people's religious activity and spiritual experiences in everyday life. Crucially, it does not approach them from the perspective of the institutionally defined dogma or tradition of any existing religious institution but on their own terms. Second, everyday life is the medium through which such religious and spiritual life is practised. Finally, the content of religion is lived and experienced in the midst of ordinary people's everyday lives. We can access this content using the methodology of everyday religion. In short, everyday religion is both the content and medium of religion as interpreted and experienced by the individual.

It is now time to return to the religious aspects of intergenerational transmission. Can they be identified? The answer at first glance is no. Religion seems absent. However, if we look more closely, the picture is different. The women studied here had shared values, gave and received handmade religious artefacts, and associated shared craft-making moments with religious memories and experiences. They also experienced crafts as care and good done for others. It is fair to ask to what extent these expressly reflect religion and not just values in general. It seems that these two cannot be separated in this study, at least completely: in both the women's stories and the theoretical literature they are somewhat intertwined in intergenerational transmission. Finnish Lutheran culture, in which caring and doing good to others are expressions of the universal priesthood and everyday vocation, lies at the bottom of all this (Hytönen 2018; Ketola et al. 2016, 25-26). In this context, therefore, craft making seems to act as an expression of Finnish folk religion in which both the religious and cultural veins encounter each other and are passed on.

This prompts the question of whether everyday lived religion itself can be transmitted from one generation to the next. There is no easy answer, but there are some hints. First, time spent doing crafts with religiously oriented relatives influences the women's religious thinking. Second, prosocial values and doing good for others, which Ammerman (1997) refers to as Golden Rule Christianity, have been transmitted from generation to generation. In such cases one may see a glimpse of transmission of the everyday religion

about which the women talked. Everyday life is in any case precisely where religion is passed on to the next generations. It is where family life is lived, and values are taught. As shown here, it is also where generations interact and can create the warm and close relationships that Bengtson (2001, 8) sees as crucial when passing on religion. This suggests one should ask to what extent religious transmission is precisely the transmission of religion as it is lived in everyday life. This should be a greater focus of future studies.

To summarize, this study shows that craft making acts as an instrument of intergenerational transmission that happens in the context of everyday life. It is a venue which brings together different generations, their values, and interests. In this context religion and spirituality are present and passed on, both explicitly and implicitly. Furthermore, craft making is a way of conveying love, warmth, and care from one generation to the next and beyond. Hervieu-Léger (2000) sees religion as a chain that enables the collective cultural memory to move and stay alive from generation to generation, but which is broken. However, this research shows that religion as lived in everyday life can act as a chain that transmits values and religious thinking between generations. Above all, the chain-maintaining, tradition-shifting, and memory-nourishing force is warmth and closeness between generations, which also enables religious transmission from one generation to the next. All this happens in everyday life.

* * *

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Ricœur's Historical Intentionality and the Great Goddess Freyja: Some Problems in the Phenomenology of Religion and Interpretations in the Study of Religions

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Abstract

The main question in this article concerns whether hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology can address some of the problems and critiques raised in the study of religions. Inspired by Gilhus's proposal in her article 'The Phenomenology of Religion and Theories of Interpretation', I investigate the possibilities in this strand of thought concerning interpretation and explanation from the perspective of Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology and language theory, taking Norse mythology and the goddess Freyja as examples of how this method might work. I argue that Ricœur's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology is important to methodology in the study of religions, and that the *historicity* of the interpretation of religious phenomena is based on a lifeworldly intentionality. I also analyse the depth of understanding, the formation of ideas, and meaning in its historical context at the level of the historian's process of interpretation, and I argue that the method may constitute a theoretical basis for an objective science.

Keywords: historicity, interpretation, understanding, context, Ricœur, hermeneutic phenomenology.

The phenomenology of religion as a theoretical tradition has undergone serious critiques and challenges concerning its viability and usefulness in the study of religions. In her article 'The Phenomenology of Religion and Theories of Interpretation' (1984) Ingvild Sælid Gilhus raises important questions about the development of hermeneutic phenomenology. She sees recent phenomenological and hermeneutical theories of interpretation as affording the possibility of resolving some of the theoretical issues and debates

raised in the study of religions, and she advances the idea that Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology offers something valuable for elucidating the interpretative process in research into religious phenomena. Gilhus identifies several problem areas in the hermeneutic phenomenology of religion.

First, since Gerardus van der Leeuw's *Phänomenologie der Religion* (1933), there has been little theoretical development. Gilhus attributes this to a lack of theoretical renewal and to the fact that post-war developments in philosophical hermeneutics and theories of interpretation have not been applied (Gilhus 1984, 27).

Second, the issue of empiricism prevails: 'The phenomenology of religion has been criticized for searching for Platonic ideas and essences, for detaching the phenomena from their historical and cultural connections and for not being empirical' (Gilhus 1984, 27). This criticism has led to a defensive attitude, in which phenomenologists 'are reluctant to discuss the concept of empiricism and the theoretical problems connected with the discipline as such' (Gilhus 1984, 27).

Third, Gilhus identifies the major concerns in recent discussions within the field as *objectivity* and *empiricism*, and thus a tendency to work towards making the phenomenology of religion empirical, which in turn favours the typological phenomenology of religion (Gilhus 1984, 28).

Finally, Gilhus's article takes up the issue of 'understanding', a question she maintains needs close attention. In van der Leeuw's phenomenology there is a determination to analyse the process of understanding, but his concept of understanding does not take into account the depth-structure of the phenomenon (Gilhus 1984, 30). This is a problem which also hampers the hermeneutic branch (Gilhus 1984, 31).

Her article further raises the objection that religion is not considered an integral part of culture (Gilhus 1984, 32). To remedy this, Gilhus proposes that Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology can offer an understanding of the human being in a cultural context, expressed through language in signs and symbols. Symbolic language is opaque, and interpretation is necessary to indirectly reveal intentionality and meaning (Gilhus 1984, 34-35). This approach combines the insights of phenomenology and a rigorous attention to context and language. Her main concern is the theoretical problems concerned with the understanding, explanation, and interpretation of religious phenomena (Gilhus 1984, 38).

Gilhus's claim is that recent hermeneutic phenomenology can offer a better theoretical foundation, because it combines pure phenomenological interpretation with analytical explanation. Gavin Flood makes a similar

point in a more recent work, *Beyond Phenomenology: Rethinking the Study of Religion* (1999). Flood argues that what is needed in the study of religions is a metatheoretical reflexive discourse on the manner in which religious practices are embedded in cultural matrices (Flood 1999, 3). He suggests combining phenomenology with a hermeneutic and narrativist tradition, especially that of Ricœur: 'Awareness of historical contingency means that a research programme is reflexive in the sense that interacting or conversing with its 'object' will also illuminate its own context, its own assumptions and its own theory of method (or methodology)' (Flood 1999, 9).

This article's main problematic concerns whether hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology in the study of religions can address some of the problems and critiques raised in the academic field. Inspired by Gilhus's proposal, my article will offer a theoretical analysis of meaning and interpretation in the study of religions from the perspective of Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology and language theory. My focus will be on the historicity of the interpretation of religious phenomena, the depth of understanding, and the formation of idea and meaning in its historical context, taking into account Ricœur's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology.¹ Snorre's narrative about the Norse goddess Freyja will serve as an empirical example of a religious figure upon which to employ Ricœur's interpretative method.

The historicity of interpretation

The historicity of interpretation is the researcher's knowledge and viewpoint in an historical place and time, with his or her particular language(s), traditions, and practices. Every subject has his or her own background in history, language, beliefs, practices, and customs. To deal with historicity is to contextualize the researcher's cultural situation and academic framework (in this case the study of religions) in a particular place-time in history and language. We must concede that every researcher will steer the academic non-confessional study of religions according to a linguistic, historical, and cultural/religious background and academic habitus. This also applies to the object of research. The ideals of objectivity and empiricism are noble but hampered by the influx of interpretative biases. In this text I will offer an analysis of how an awareness and explication of historicity in the interpretation and explanation of religion may address some of the metatheoretical problems in

1 On perception and the importance of embodied perception see, for example, Ó Murchada and Faugstad Aarø 2016; Faugstad Aarø 2010.

the study of religions. Interpretation and explanation can be explicated by a deeper understanding of the mechanisms involved in the formation of cultural meaning and the understanding of historical and religious ideas, and may be justified theoretically by an analysis of the most basic and original formations of understanding of and insight into the source material.

An elucidation of the processes that govern the individual researcher's formation of understanding and experience of meaning in encounters with religious and historical ideas will shed light on the subjective and contextual conditions activated in the interpretative process. Furthermore, it is my thesis that an insight into the cultural meaning formation of the self will place the ideals of objectivity and empiricism conveyed by the academic discipline itself into critical relief.

The article will aim to answer some of the metatheoretical questions concerning the status of interpretation and explanation in the study of religions with the help of hermeneutic phenomenology, such as the problems indicated by Gilhus and Flood.

The ideals of freedom and engagement in the humanistic fields can be perceived to be in conflict with the required objectivity in scientific endeavours: that is, objectivity in the form of reproducible, intersubjectively communicable interpretations. Is there a necessary requirement of 'objective' humanistic research that precludes elements of the self's own experiences from contributing to interpretation; or can interpretations be grounded in the actuality of one's own subjectivity, in which interpretation reveals transcendence, openness, and multiple meanings? The conception of objectivity in the humanistic fields, including the study of religions, would benefit from a nuanced explication, based on the necessary *preconditions for understanding* that the community of people engaged in the activity share and by which they are motivated. However, my argument will not be based on a philosophical analysis of objectivity in itself, which has been thoroughly debated in recent decades. It is rather this article's emphasis that different perspectives on the subjects of the interpretation of religions and their historical context may affect how the community of learning, and thereby the sphere of objective knowledge, is perceived.

Understanding religious ideas and practices

Let us investigate how the academic self – the historian of religions – and his or her formation of cultural and historical meaning work, and subsequently how *objectivity* is understood based on hermeneutic phenomenological

analyses. The question is relevant within both the research and didactic in the study of religions. The primary concern is a meaning formation based on the *different* cultural frameworks from which interpretation arises, and the researcher's historical backgrounds and personal conditions, which may be considered to contribute to the process of forming cultural ideas. Thus, the thematic places this question into the central problematic regarding the study of religious beliefs and practices with researchers' and students' various individual backgrounds, and how a metatheoretical approach may allow for this aspect of interpretation, as Gilhus and Flood have proposed. Interpreting religious ideas and practices faces the deep and inexhaustible question of the various elements that are in play in understanding, and which belong to every human being's horizon of understanding and his or her making meaningful uses of ideas and thoughts in their own intellectual endeavours. The thematic thus resonates with central texts in hermeneutic phenomenology by Ricœur and Husserl, and in the existential phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty. By focusing the research on this basic and prerequisite groundwork we may shed light on the individual thought processes involved in understanding religious ideas and practices – thought processes that are presupposed in the idea of a common goal or ideal of a reflective and critical attitude in the tradition of the academic study of religions.

Theoretical framework

We can base the analysis of subjective formations of cultural meaning on the central works in hermeneutic phenomenology, perception, and historicity, specifically the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Paul Ricœur, and the debate following their writings on the field of subjectivity, focusing on aspects of special relevance to the study of religions. One such theoretical problem is that historically situated subjective meaning formations are not sufficiently elucidated to ensure the desired independent and critical reflections in research. There is therefore a need to critically question the theoretical foundation and methodology of this practice through hermeneutic phenomenology, theories of perception, language, and the historical formation of understanding and explanation.

The formation of meaning

The philosophers Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Paul Ricœur and their conceptions of meaning offer a useful path for the academic task

of interpretation in the humanistic field. The unfulfilled character of self-reflection, however, belongs to a fundamental problem in analysing thought and the formation of ideas in the individual self. The analysis of this problem elucidates the reflective process of thoughts, ideas, and meaning formations. My concern is to focus on the phenomenological analysis of the formation of meaning, with its critique and elucidation of a problematic theoretical obstacle in our understanding of the self, such as the dualism of mind and world. The chosen theories in this article are determined in part by the theorists who themselves have formulated the problem of historicity in the constitution of meaning: namely, that of hermeneutical theory and phenomenology.

Continental philosophy has traditionally placed a greater emphasis on the *historical* element in the meaning constitution of the self, such as in the works of the late Edmund Husserl. I will take this historical element as a starting point, drawing on the basic understanding within philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology. Paul Ricœur is one among several philosophers whose works arise from the central theme of the historical existence of the human being, which is best understood by the concept of *historicity* (Ricœur 2000, 373, 480).

An important aspect of the historical being in modern continental philosophy is that meaning formation is interpreted in a way that seeks to avoid objectivist understandings of subjectivity and history, which in different ways describe history as an external reality in relation to an objective 'givenness' of the human being. Human meaning formation and self-reflection are not produced by an analytical distance from the self's history apprehended as an object, but are seen as interwoven in an internal relation to situations and engagement in an historical and cultural society. I will clarify how an understanding of the world in this philosophical tradition is closely tied to and interrelated with historicity and experience, something which includes conceptual and linguistic traditions. Bringing the interplay of language and thought further to the fore undoubtedly complicates the question and is a separate field of study in itself. However, it must be acknowledged that it has a certain bearing on how we understand and describe culture and religion, and is thus another necessary part of the groundwork or reflection for which this problematic inevitably calls. The concepts we learn to use regarding religion, culture, and history belong precisely to the tradition into which we are initiated, and naturally complicates any reflection on the self's constitution of cultural meaning (Ricœur 2000, 307; 1990).

The question concerning *meaning* is central in twentieth century philosophy, whether in linguistic traditions or in the more ontological or transcendental theories on the continent.

After Kant there was a reaction against understanding the self as an autonomous rational subject existing in a void produced by a distance from the world, an understanding that has been criticized by phenomenological philosophers in the twentieth century and especially by critical theory in the twenty-first century. This critical tradition is represented by Deleuze and Guattari among others. They have developed a view of *thought* as process, a becoming or incident that stands in a multifaceted connection with perception, experience, and our responses to the world. Theorists of this school claim this view explains the interrelations of meaning throughout existence in a new way (See e.g., Goodchild 2004, 173.). Modern continental philosophy has claimed that critical analysis of the inner/outer dichotomy is needed to avoid naturalistic interpretations of meaning and to discern how the historical, generative element in meaning formations is in effect. It is not sufficient to direct awareness towards history as *knowledge of history* and the elements we find relative to our time and cultural situation. This making conscious of the self's meaning formation presupposes a deeper analysis of the generative processes that underlie our understanding of different types of meaning, whether they are cultural, religious, or historical. Yet the generative functions disclose a problematic with regard to the inner/outer duality of the self and nature, or the constituting and the constituted. This problematic will also be dealt with in my investigation of meaning and its constitution, through an examination of the perception theory of Merleau-Ponty in his late writings, among others, to elucidate the processes in situations that are fundamental to the perception of ideas.

This question may be conceived as a meta or transcendental thematic, as in the argumentation of philosopher Steven Galt Crowell, who argues for the transcendental turn by pointing to how the question discloses that philosophy *itself* is constituted with regard to understanding meaning and reasons. He argues that transcendental phenomenology is indispensable to the philosophical elucidation of the space of meaning (Galt Crowell 2001, 3). Again, this points to the importance of analysing conceptual frameworks of the perceptions of cultural issues and religious ideas.

Husserl's historical consciousness is grounded in a deep reflection on meaning (*Besinnung*), in which we clarify what is ours, thereby returning to ourselves with regard to the historical being that we are. Husserl's statement in *Ideas II* that human science is based on pure intuition is an important claim in this connection (Husserl 2002, 374). The question of how intuition is compatible with the demand for objectivity in the human sciences is important, and by analysing the implicit ideals of freedom and engagement in

the humanistic tradition in the Nordic countries and Europe today we may discuss the concept of objectivity with which the academic world engages. Husserl defines objectivity thus in *Ideas II*:

In the broadest sense, it refers to (we are speaking of empirical Objectivity, not of the Objectivity of the idea) a being which in an open personal association is thought as determinable in such a way or as determined in such a way that it is in principle and at any time determinable in an absolute way by every possible Ego-subject of the association of researching subjects (Husserl 2002, 398).

This paragraph points to an important perspective on objectivity in the case of interpretations of historical texts, a perspective which calls for further analysis in connection with the possibility of individual engagement and freedom in humanistic study.

Husserl's exposition in *Ideas II* describes the sciences as a theoretical attitude with their own constituted apperception of what constitutes the object of science, which in its turn means that the sciences are preconditioned with regard to scientific intentions (directedness) (Husserl 2002, 4). His analysis of objectivity within the human sciences leads him to the critical reflection that the transcendental reduction represents (Husserl 2002, 398). The question of how intuition in interpretation is compatible with the demand for objectivity in the human sciences is not unclear when seen in connection with the reduction and eidetic variation, and is thus an understandable goal for science.

Ricœur views selfhood as a process or action instead of a posited 'I' (Ricœur 1990). As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari have also developed a view on *thought* as process, a becoming or incident. Merleau-Ponty in his late writings investigated the question of historical situatedness with the aim of elucidating the processes of the perception of ideas (Merleau-Ponty 1964).

Whereas Husserl's understanding of historicity and historical self-consciousness is always transcendental, by presupposing a reduction to the immanent sphere on which meaning and constitution of meaning is reflected, Heidegger's understanding of history is characterized by being part of the factual *being-in-the-world* that encloses Dasein as an indeterminate, or non-finite and therefore not fully explicable, existence (Guignon 2006, 551; Crowell 2001, 5. Heidegger, 1927). Ideas in recent phenomenology such as *wonder* in face of the world, *striving* or *desire* (Toadvine 2003), and *passion* (Heinämaa 2002) towards seeking meaning have been suggested

as interpretations of the constitution of meaning. For example, Anthony J. Steinbock argues for the experience of the divine in *Phenomenology and Mysticism: The Verticality of Religious Experience*. He is interested in what is actually given to us in real human experience. 'The spheres of experience and givenness that are more robust than just those of objects, I call vertical givenness, or verticality' (Steinbock 2007). We do not merely experience objects and artefacts; we have inner experiences, dreams, visions, hopes, and fantasies that drive us to seek *something* that will reveal itself to us.

Interpretation and subjectivity

Applying a phenomenological and hermeneutical method in analysing meaning, interpretation, and historicity in the study of religions may take us along several different routes. Ricœur's epistemological and hermeneutical analyses of the historical condition in *Temps et récit* (1983), translated as *Time and Narrative* (1990), with its concept of historical intentionality, will figure in the foreground in Section two. In addition, Edmund Husserl's *Ideen, Buch 2–3* (1952) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* (1945) are central texts in philosophical phenomenology, which both treat the problematic of understanding.²

Considerations of objectivity seem at first glance to require the taking of a position with regard to the extent to which the self's own home-world can be allowed to contribute to interpretation. This question has resulted in several opposing traditions (e.g. Steinbock 1995; 2007, 1). Paul Ricœur has expressed reservations about grounding interpretations of the actuality in one's own subjectivity or arising out of what many conceive as that which is immanent in the cogito (Ricœur 1975; Bleicher 1980, 221). He emphasizes that interpretation points towards transcendence, openness, and multiple meanings. The problem can be resolved, Ricœur claims, by means of the phenomenological reduction (*epoché*), which makes our own contributions apparent and thematic, and may therefore provide the necessary distance from the object of interpretation by means of the eidetic method. In this context the eidetic method entails that the interpreter, by means of an open imagination, reaches a core that is not relative to one's own experiences

2 See also Merleau-Ponty 2008.

or actuality.³ A deep understanding of the constitution of meaning seems important to the idea of a reflection on meaning as *self-understanding*, according to Ricœur (Ricœur 1980, 242).

Paul Ricœur's conception of *historicity* entails seeing the concept more as a form of *being*, which means that the relation to a great extent must be thought of as an ontological trait. I believe his perspective is promising, and that it may be important in this context to develop further the view of subjectivity as fundamentally an *understanding* or *interpreting* of being in encounters with otherness, a theme of great importance in the study of religions.

It is hoped such a hermeneutic phenomenological focus on the subject of interpretation in the study of religious ideas and practices will uncover the presuppositions underlying the study of religions, as Gilhus suggests.

* * *

In Ricœur's theory of history and narrative in *Temps et récit* a narrative understanding based on the internal temporality of the soul indirectly engenders an historical orientation or understanding (Ricœur 1990, 93). If we can begin to understand how such a narrative and temporal historical understanding comes into effect, I would like to show an example of how an historical understanding is phenomenologically possible by our construction and explanation of historical time. It will become clear in the following why Ricœur's theory and concepts are useful in the study of religions in its effort to portray historical or otherwise inaccessible entities. 'My thesis rests on the assertion of an indirect connection of derivation, by which historical knowledge proceeds from our narrative understanding without losing anything of its scientific ambition' (Ricœur 1990, 92). A crucial point in his delineation of historical knowledge is the concept of *intentionality*. Intentionality is one of the key concepts in phenomenological philosophy, and a prerequisite for all perception and cognition. It means the assertion of the fundamental directedness of all perception and consciousness towards something or other. If we are conscious, we are conscious of something. Ricœur explains the bearing this principle has on the historian's work: 'To reconstruct the indirect connec-

3 This ontology of understanding is neither precise nor fully attainable. The problem may also point to the later writing of Merleau-Ponty, who in *Le Visible et l'Invisible* attempted to show the fundamentally unfulfilled character of reflection on the most grounding, constituting elements of being. Merleau-Ponty 1964: 'Réflexion et interrogation': 17–73, 'Interrogation et intuition': 142–171, 119, 171; 1968: 3, 45, 105, 129; 1945; 2008.

tions of history to narrative is finally to bring to light the intentionality of the historian's thought by which history continues obliquely to intend the field of human action and its basic temporality' (ibid.).

There is no possibility of an objectivist conception of history in Ricœur's theory. The historian's subjective intentionality, which stretches to several temporal planes, guides the historical understanding and explanation of the time and/or entity in question. The mind is already historical in the sense that we remember and imagine the past and plan into the future by using stories or *narratives*. Ricœur emphasizes that the inherent temporality of the mind, as Augustine already observed in his *Confessions* with his concept of *distentio animi*, engenders a narrative understanding of the likeness or *mimesis* of the field of human action and value that is already known by the reader/researcher; a practical, lifeworldly understanding regarding any possible human action in any period based on our experience (Ricœur 1990, 55). Mimesis is understood as the act, whether in art or science, in which we model our understanding of something known to us – or imitate it. Understanding a narrative is based on an historical or diachronic, rather than a contemporary or synchronic, order of events. It is a discourse with the text/item in a sequence of temporal depth in an historical context. Ricœur borrows from linguistic vocabulary in describing understanding as syntagmatic: that is, to do with syntax, a broader system of parts to the whole phrase/narrative. The historical context is clearly present here as a vital part of the narrative discourse. Note the origins of Ricœur's inspiration, Augustine's *distentio animi*, 'in whose wake will follow Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty' (Ricœur 1990,16).

To gain a fuller methodological picture of 'the field of human action and its basic temporality', I would add the concepts of *historicity* and *lifeworld*, both to be found in Edmund Husserl's oeuvre, notably in his later work *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie*. Historicity is the term for the fundamentally historical character of the human being, its culture, and religion, encompassing everything in its lifeworld from institutions and traditions to language. By using a language we participate in an historical development that is throughout intersubjective in that we, through the handing-down and internalizing of the language of our ancestors, become immersed in a communal linguistic elaboration and inflection of the language over time. In the following I will demonstrate how these concepts might be useful in interpretations in the study of religions, as we examine more closely the meaning of the goddess Freyja in Old Norse mythology.

Interpreting the meaning of the Great Goddess Freyja

My example in elucidating the method at work is the understanding and explanation of the meaning of the goddess Freyja in Norse mythology to Viking contemporaries between 750 and 1050. Freyja was the goddess of beauty, love, and fertility and had access to the otherworldly, and as such is comparable to the Egyptian goddess Isis and the Greek Aphrodite. The first summary of Norse mythology is the *Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241), the Icelandic poet and historian who portrayed the Viking myths of deities and their battles in a skaldic dramatic fashion. The character of the *Prose Edda*, written between 1223 and 1235 as a work on poetics, is also a factor in assessing the reliability of the accounts of the Norse gods, because he based large parts of the account on older poems. Britt-Mari Näsström discusses the meaning of the goddess Freyja in her work *Freyja, The Great Goddess of the North* (1995) and the various opposing qualities associated with the goddess. She is the goddess of beauty, love, and fertility, and an aid to women in childbirth, as well as an erotic adulteress and cunning sorceress. Her promiscuity goes hand in hand with her power over fertility, death and the battlefield, love, seduction, and cunning; a goddess of simultaneously positively and negatively laden qualities. Freyja's twin brother Frey serves as the complementary other, a deity with power over rain and sun, crops, sea, and weather. There is a possibility that the accounts of the Norse myths are biased by the contemporary religious climate in the Nordic countries when Snorri wrote his *Prose Edda* as a handbook for young poets. A reluctance to accept the Christian faith in the eleventh century led Hallfréður Vandræðirskáld to lament: 'The wrath of Freyr and Freyja comes upon me, when I am deserting the belief in Njorðr' (Näsström 1995, 18). Thus, the *historical context* must also be part of the process of interpretation and explanation in the study of religions.

Snorri's presentation of Freyja is both a situated perspective and embedded in an historical and cultural context, with the upheaval associated with the forced imposition of a new religion by the Norwegian king Olav the Great. This calls for a critical analysis of Snorri's context and situation. The novel Christianity (Iceland officially became Christian in 1000) may have coloured Snorri's account of the old myths. Snorri portrays the Nordic Gods as ancient kings with various characteristics. They were mortal, as the following citation from Snorri testifies: 'Freyja kept on with the sacrificial rituals [*blotning*], because she was the only [one] of the Gods who was still living' (Snorri 1979, 19). She was above all the goddess of love and fertility. Both men and women might invoke her name in the pursuit of a love conquest and in erotic

adventures. She lost her husband Od, who left her, and she wandered the world, searching far and wide for him, and crying tears of gold when she could not find him. Snorri remarks that Freyja is to be called for by men who may be confused in relationships with women. In Snorri's *Ynglingesaga* there is a short remark about her promiscuity or straying from the regular path [*lauslyndt*] (Snorri 1979, 15). She was willing to sleep with men for material riches to secure her position (Lyngdrup Madsen 2014, 124). She was proud and offended when accused of undertaking a manhunt: 'Do you think that I am mad for men?' (Lyngdrup Madsen 2014, 130, my translation). She was a goddess and sorceress [a *seid* woman], and might cast good or bad spells on people. She was also a temptress (Lyngdrup Madsen 2014, 127). She was also prayed to in childbirth and thought to aid women in giving children life.

Should one venture an interpretation of the story, it would be that the husband Od's absence may serve as a warning that women are vulnerable in their relationships with men and should not entirely trust their spouses always to be there; love and abandonment go hand in hand, and with great love comes great deceit. Freyja has a temper. Much like the Olympian Gods she is angry, offended, hurt, and she voices her reactions to those insults. A common insult is the allegation that she is a 'whore'. When she is accused of going to bed with several men, she is proud and furious.

With all her concerns she seems very human. Freyja's weakness gives her the reputation of being a 'loose woman'. It also serves as a reminder to women who compromise themselves and risk social exclusion. Thus, Freyja loves but is left by her husband Od, whom she mourns. She is clearly a strong woman, or as I imagine her, simultaneously strong and vulnerable. We are exposed in love, and the female figure of Freyja may serve as a forewarning of the exposures and challenges women may encounter. As a phenomenologist and woman, the figure of Freyja resonates with my experiences and role as a spouse and mother of three children, not an especially religious person, but born into the Lutheran church and concerned about the human condition. Although an explication of my stance and historical narrative in expounding the goddess Freyja would take up volumes, it would be required in a fully structured phenomenological analysis of the meaning of the goddess Freyja (for me as the phenomenological subject). Arriving at an understanding of what Freyja meant to an Iron Age woman is another matter. All my narrative understanding as a reader would need to be set aside in parenthesis – the phenomenological reduction.

According to Ricœur reaching an understanding of the meaning of the goddess Freyja for pre-Christian contemporaries would entail a continuous

exploration of the available narratives in the source material in which the researcher combines a narrative understanding with an historical explanation. Thus, it is hoped various histories complement and can complete one another (Ricoeur 1990, 176). A narrative understanding is not bound to a limited subjective perspective; on the contrary, setting aside at an analytical distance that which may constitute a 'point of view' facilitates the 'passage from the narrator to the historian' (Ricoeur 1990, 178). Ricoeur emphasizes in *Time and Narrative* that the epistemological historical considerations call for a new type of dialectic between historical inquiry and narrative competence to preserve and safeguard the narrative's *epistemological* and *historical* character (Ricoeur 1990, 177). We cannot allow just any imaginative narrative account to represent our historical insight into the past. "The solution to this problem [the simple narrativist thesis] depends on what could be called a method of 'questioning back'. This method, practiced by Husserl in his *Krisis*, stems from what Husserl calls a genetic phenomenology – not in the sense of a psychological genesis but of a genesis of meaning" (Husserl 1970; Ricoeur 1990, 179).

The questions that Ricoeur raises in the historical sciences, corresponding to Husserl's questioning of the natural sciences, concern the *intentionality of historical knowledge*: what is it that singles out an historical questioning into the past? With which faculties does the historian of religions confront his or her material, and ask of what its concrete events or entities consist? The intentionality of historical knowledge is directed at the past and knowledge of the past, and we may therefore ask what the meaning of our asking back (into texts for instance) and conferring with the historical to form an opinion of the historical events are. How does this differ from knowledge of related subjects such as economics, geography, demography, ethnology, sociology, and ideologies? (Ricoeur 1990, 180). History has in a sense already received an interpretation through our narrative competence in matters of lifeworldly human endeavours. Our questioning back refers to a past 'world of action that has already received a configuration through narrative activity, which with regard to its meaning is prior to scientific history' (*ibid.*).

Remembering this in returning to the goddess Freyja, the various textual sources that exist concerning her, and the events in which she figures as a prominent agent, we may clearly see the narrative activity that has occurred concerning the world of action that was Freyja's in the narratives. At the level of the researcher's historical understanding, the intentionality of historical knowledge is at work when we interpret these sources and form a meaning of Freyja's character and position. However, most importantly, Ricoeur

maintains the researcher's narrative activity has its own dialectic, which makes it pass through the stages of *mimesis*, based on elements inherent in the order of action, by way of 'the constitutive configurations of emplotment to the refigurations that arise due to the collision of the world of the text with the life-world' (Ricœur 1990, 180). The collision of the world of the text with the lifeworld refers to our imagination on the narrative plane in accordance with a world of action based on our meaning formation in our lifeworld. Thus, we may say that Freyja mimetically mirrors elements in our lives and allows us to recognize the field of practice in question and its pre-narrative resources in a society long gone (we may, for example, recognize common universal elements in human life in activities such as childbirth, child-rearing, sickness, death, agriculture, fishing, hunting, etc. in distant eras). The historian's process of historically analysing Freyja as an important divine actor is thus modelled on the historian's own imagination of lifeworldly elements.

The question of objectivity revisited

The charges of subjectivity against van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion are certainly relevant in this context. The question of objectivity has been dealt with in the above discussion mainly through the concepts of *historicity* and *reduction*: that is, placing our questioning at an analytical distance from a concrete perspective. The role of reduction, which Husserl calls a suspension of beliefs and prejudice, is to allow a more intersubjective objectivity to be formed in understanding and interpretation. Erik Reenberg Sand raises this question in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, suggesting that to remedy the almost programmatic subjectivity of the classical phenomenology of religion, a situated contextual sociocultural typology of religions is a necessary framework for the comparative study of single religious phenomena, which indicates to this reader that Husserl's concept of historicity would assist greatly in clarifying this question and avoiding psychologism (Reenberg Sand and Podemann Sørensen 1999, 9).

Concluding remarks

My main question has concerned whether hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology in the study of religions may address some of the problems and critiques the study of religions raises. Inspired by Gilhus's proposal in her article 'The Phenomenology of Religion and Theories of Interpreta-

tion', I have explored the possibilities in this strand of thought with regard to interpretation and explanation from the perspective of Ricœur's hermeneutic phenomenology and language theory, taking Norse mythology and the goddess Freyja as examples of how this method might work. My focus has been on the historicity of the interpretation of religious phenomena, the depth of understanding, and the formation of ideas and meaning in its historical context, taking into account Ricœur's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology. Although I agree that knowledge of the situated, sociocultural-religious lifeworld(s) is a necessary requirement for building a phenomenology of religion, I would argue that the phenomenology of religion can be more than a typology or an inventory of various classifications of religious phenomena. Rather, if based on the philosophies of Husserl and Ricœur, it can constitute a theoretical basis for an objective science.

* * *

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Religious Governmentality: The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir

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Abstract

In this article on the role of religion in the formation of modern subjectivities we use a contemporary transnational Islamist organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir, as our example. We examine how technologies of domination are combined with norm-setting technologies of the self in shaping new modern Muslim subjectivities among its members. First, we present our theoretical perspective and analytical framework. Then we describe the ideological roots of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the intellectual universe of nineteenth-century thinking about Islamic reform. Third, we analyse the practice of tooling or processing minds, souls, convictions, physical appearance, and behaviour among members of the organization. As our major interest lies not in Hizb ut-Tahrir as such but in the role of religion in the formation of modern social subjectivities, we conclude with some general reflections on this question.

Keywords: modernity, religion, subjectivity formation, governmentality, Hizb ut-Tahrir

The construction of individuals as subjects was a central aspect of modernity in the later works of Michel Foucault. In studying ‘the constitution of the subject across history’, Foucault saw a ‘third way’ in the light of the methodological dominance of logical positivism and structuralism (1980, 160). Foucault observed two different but connected forms of the formation of the modern subject: technologies of domination and technologies of the self – i.e. external and internalized strategies for disciplining. He took the interaction and intersection of these technologies as his point of departure for the study of the broader modern regulation of social behaviour through coercion and technologies of the self. Foucault referred to this point of departure for controlling modern individuals as governmentality: a combination of institutions, bureaucratic processes, practices, and knowledge in cooperation that transforms the individual into a subject (Bröckling et al. 2011).

Historically, the modern nation state became the central actor for the implementation of these different forms of governmentality. State and subject formation, and modernity at the macro and micro levels occurred in parallel and intertwining processes, as the German sociologist Norbert Elias argues in his landmark book *Der Prozess der Zivilisation* (*The Civilizing Process*, Elias 1936). However, unlike Elias, Foucault discerned the origin of the historical process leading to these modern ‘hermeneutics of the self’ in religious technologies of the self. Christianity transformed the ancient obligation of knowing oneself into confession, ‘knowing the truth about oneself’ (Foucault 1980, 164): ‘In Christian technologies of the self, the problem is to discover what is hidden inside the self; the self is like a text or like a book that we have to decipher’ (Foucault 1980, 168). This supposed genealogical origin of modern governmentality in Christian technologies of the self has almost been forgotten in the field of contemporary studies of governmentality, which are largely dominated by a focus on governmentality as a neoliberal strategy for an indirect style of social control through the modern state (cf. Busse 2018, 40–65).

In this article we take the ideology and action of the Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir as an example of ‘religious governmentality’ in contemporary modernity. We argue that religion defines the authentic Muslim subject in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s ideology and provides the main source for the party’s disciplinary strategies and means of control. We thus rediscover religion as a reservoir for modern technologies of both domination and the self in an Islamist non-state organization, and thereby as apart from their implementation by neoliberal forms of modern statehood.¹

In public media discourses in Europe, Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Party of Liberation) is known for its explicitly hostile agitation against democratic governance and liberal rights. We can observe the party’s public appearances invoking the greatness of God (*‘Allahu akbar!’*) under the black flag of an imagined Islamic Caliphate. In its organizational structures, Hizb ut-Tahrir builds on features such as written regulations, conditioned membership, generalized motivations, and authoritative patterns of behaviour, thus closely following Niklas Luhmann’s definition of a specifically modern type of organization (Luhmann 2008, 214). Thereby, the re-establishment of an Islamic polity referred to as a Caliphate is its political goal, and the organi-

1 Previously, we published an article on Hizb ut-Tahrir as a modern actor vis-à-vis state ideals and state formation in the Danish journal *TEMP*. See Jung and Sinclair: ‘Modernitet, subjektivitet og religion: Hizb ut-Tahrirs forestillinger om den moderne muslim’ in *TEMP – tidsskrift for historie* 6 (12): 130–47, 2016.

zation understands this Caliphate as a reassurance that Muslims around the world can practise Islam correctly and construct corresponding forms of modern subjectivity based on 'true' Islamic values and lifestyle choices. As a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, you are expected both to be able to refer to the party's ideological framework in a specific manner and to represent the party in dress and behaviour, constituting yourself as a religiously guided, moral modern Muslim subject.

Founded by the Palestinian Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani (1909–77) in 1953 in Amman, Hizb ut-Tahrir has spread to Europe, the Caucasus, South Asia, Australia, and the US, and it has more than forty national branches today. The first European branches were established in Germany in the 1960s, and in Britain in the 1980s. In Britain Hizb ut-Tahrir grew from 400 members in 1990 to approximately 2,000 in ten years due to the efforts of the controversial leader Omar Bakri Mohammed, who had immigrated to Britain from Syria via Saudi Arabia. Membership in Britain has since dropped to about 1,000. In the 1990s Palestinian refugees brought Hizb ut-Tahrir to Denmark. The membership of approximately 150 individuals has been stable since then. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the largest national branches are in Indonesia and Uzbekistan (Ahmad and Stuart 2009, 54, Baran 2004, 78, Osman, 2010).

In examining the global spread of Hizb ut-Tahrir, it is important to note that the party and its ideology have travelled with individual members from the Middle East to the rest of the world (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010, Osman 2010). Thus, the expansion is not the result of a conscious leadership strategy but can be explained with reference to general trends in contemporary migration, such as individuals fleeing war and persecution, or seeking work in other parts of the world. This is emphasized in an internal strategy document sent from the international leadership in Amman to European branches in 2005. This document makes evident that it was only in 2005 that the leadership in Amman realized – or officially recognized – that members who had migrated to Europe had no intention of returning to their Middle Eastern homelands (Sinclair 2010).

Using Hizb ut-Tahrir as our example, we seek to understand how a modern transnational Islamist organization combines technologies of domination with norm-setting technologies of the self in its ambition to shape new modern Muslim subjectivities. Thus, it is not Hizb ut-Tahrir itself which is at the centre of our inquiry but the more general question about the way in which a non-state organization employs strategies of governmentality in the construction of religiously defined modern subjects. In other words,

Hizb ut-Tahrir serves as a paradigmatic example in the examination of the implementation of an Islamist vision of modernity based on the assumption that an authentic Muslim modernity must be built on Islamic traditions.² Despite the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir is a relatively marginal organization in terms of membership numbers, it holds research interest because of its deep roots in the more general and historically important modernization and reform initiatives among Muslim thinkers in the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. The organization affords a good illustration of the combination of modernity and religion in attempts to construct specifically Islamic forms of modernity by representatives of the Islamic reform movement.

We start with a short presentation of our theoretical perspective and analytical framework, which combines the works of Norbert Elias with those of Michel Foucault and Shmuel Eisenstadt. We then show the ideological roots of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the intellectual universe of the nineteenth-century movement of Islamic reform and its modernist thinking. We next move to the establishment of Hizb ut-Tahrir as an independent modern organization in the context of Middle Eastern state formation and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood as the otherwise dominant Islamist movement of the twentieth century. Following this excursion into the party's historical evolution, we discuss some organizational and behavioural patterns in Hizb ut-Tahrir, based on examples from its Danish branch. It is not the Danish context that makes these examples interesting but the general patterns of governmentality we can illustrate with these cases. We therefore analyse the more general practice of tooling or processing minds, souls, convictions, physical appearance, and behaviour among the organization's members instead of the local specificities of its Danish branch.³ We conclude with some reflections on the role of religion in the formation of modern social imaginaries based on the example of Hizb ut-Tahrir.

2 It is important to note that not all Muslims construct modernity with reference to Islamic traditions. There are big variations in secular, nationalistic, and religious modernity imaginaries among Muslims, and only in the last couple of decades has the discourse of the Islamic modern achieved a relatively dominant position (cf. Jung et al. 2014).

3 The empirical material consists of interviews with members and former members alongside participant observations at organization events, which were largely conducted in connection with a PhD thesis entitled *The Caliphate as Homeland* (Sinclair, 2010). The most recent interview with a Danish Media Representative was conducted in June 2013 (with Chadi Freigeh), while the most recent meeting with the current Media Representative (Junes Koch) took place in November 2014. Correspondence with former members is ongoing.

Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault and Shmuel Eisenstadt: from modernity to multiple modernities

Almost fifty years before the rise of contemporary governmentality studies, Norbert Elias discovered the mutual dependence of the evolutionary development of the modern state and the modern individual (Elias 1936). In his book on the 'civilizing process' Elias described how historically specific power configurations moulded the behaviour and habits of the modern individual. He examined the formation of the modern national state with its foundational monopolies of physical force and taxation; yet he also examined the micro-sociological dimension of the modern state-building process in the particular moulding of the human drive economy, that is, in the advancement of shame and embarrassment thresholds among modern individuals. According to Elias a more differentiated and stable self-control of the individual accompanied the macro-sociological process of the increasing social complexity of modern social structures. Elias maintained that the formation of modern state institutions was closely tied to the formation of the modern subject. Combining macro and micro sociological perspectives, Elias described modernization as a 'civilizing process' of the modern individual, in which outer constraints had gradually been transformed into self-restraint (Elias 1994, 164).

This connection between the emergence of social macro structures and modern forms of subjectivity was also a central concern in the later work of Michel Foucault. With his concept of governmentality Foucault contrived to reinvent Elias's theory of modernity. He reformulated Elias's transformation from outer constraints to self-restraints as a move from technologies of domination to those of the self. From a genealogical perspective Foucault described the evolution of the authority of the national state and the autonomy of the modern subject as mutually dependent. As a panoptic institution the state managed the individual, as well as the entire population (Foucault 1995). Thus, modern governance was understood as the discrete integration of technologies of subjugation or domination with technologies of the self (Foucault 1980, 162f.). In defining modernity as the ultimate challenge and task for individuals in creating their selves, Foucault stressed the fundamental role technologies of the self played as a core social mechanism in the construction of modern identities. Turning one's self into the object of a complex development task – identity formation as a constant process of self-hermeneutics – lay at the heart of Foucault's concept of the modern subject (Foucault 1984, 41). This complex development or unfolding of the self was the basis of modern subjectivity formation and referred, in Foucault's eyes, to the paradoxical nature of the modern subject: the fact that

the modern subject was partly the result of its own creation and partly of cultural structures determining which forms of subjectivity were socially recognizable and acceptable. Foucault thus emphasized the hybrid nature of the modern subject. He perceived modern subjectivity formation as a complex result of self-development and subjugation, just as he pointed to the modern subject as the result of historically different and competing forms of social order and discursive practices.

While Elias's theory builds on a long historical process regarding the connection between the formation of states and individualization, Foucault's theory includes analytical approaches to forms of governmentality not directly linked to states. Foucault defined governmental practices and technologies of the self as a complex consisting of relatively independent but interrelated or interdependent social practices, in which both the state and non-state organizations, social movements, and religious and non-religious ethics contributed to modern subjectivity formation (Dean 1994). Moreover, as already mentioned in this article's introduction, Foucault located the origin of modern governmentality in Christianity's historically specific transformation of the self-hermeneutics of antiquity. Foucault thus added a 'religious element' to Elias's theory, in which religious norms and values played no role in the 'civilizing process'. However, this religious element in Foucault's work refers only to the origin of modern self-hermeneutics. His connection with religion is only of a genealogical nature: Christianity is later absent from his description of the modern practices of the technologies of the self. Consequently, both Elias and Foucault maintain a kind of 'secularist bias' in marginalizing religion in their theories of modernity.

In his theory of multiple modernities, the late Israeli sociologist Shmuel Eisenstadt suggested making religion an essential element of the sociology of modernity (Eisenstadt 2000 and 2001). Modernity has been an essentially contested concept in the humanities and social sciences, and the certainties implicit in the conceptual framework of the modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s had vanished. The theory of multiple modernities marked a clear break with the classical notion of modernization as a linear process of the gradual convergence of societies towards a general model. Even more importantly, Eisenstadt's approach refuted the perception of classical modernization theories of a zero-sum relationship between modernity and religion.⁴ Instead of understanding modernization as the inevitable subsequent retreat of religious traditions, Eisenstadt explained the emergence of a multiplicity

4 For another revision of this assumption with respect to Christianity and Islam, see Casanova 1994 and 2001.

of different forms of modern culture as a combination of a 'programme of modernity' with distinct historical and religious traditions. He suggested making religion a key variable in the explanation of the factual varieties of social orders and individual identity constructions that could be observed in modern life. In short, the theory of multiple modernities reintroduced religion as a key factor in constructing historically observable forms of modernity.

In this article, our theoretical perspective is inspired by some of the key assumptions of Elias, Foucault, and Eisenstadt. Combining their perspectives leads us to an analytical frame of reference that combines modern forms of management with religious traditions and practices in historically specific applications of technologies of domination and the self. Foucault's concept of governmentality thus serves as a heuristic lens for our analysis of the historical emergence of the relationship between these technologies of domination and the self. We find that this heuristic concept is applicable not only to the analysis of state institutions but to the observation of the disciplining strategies implemented by non-state actors such as Hizb ut-Tahrir. Although Hizb ut-Tahrir's establishment and activities were never completely detached from the modern state as a political macro structure, Hizb ut-Tahrir is a non-state organization founded on religious grounds amidst a broader stream of modern Islamic reform movements. In striving for its long-term goal – the (re-)establishment of an Islamic Caliphate – Hizb ut-Tahrir seeks above all to create an ideal modern Muslim subject. In our reading, this modern Muslim should be generated through a regime of self-management and control, combining particular forms of technologies of domination with technologies of the self. Consequently, we understand Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities as an attempt to inscribe and justify specific forms of modern Muslim self-understandings among their members. Turning Elias's theory on its head, in Hizb ut-Tahrir's endeavour we can observe a kind of state building in reverse: a vanguard group with the aim of transforming individuals on the micro level to prepare Muslims for the state-like macro structures of a future Islamic Caliphate. However, this endeavour occurs in a context of secularization, understood as an increasingly pluralistic scenario in which Islamic ethics compete with alternative religious ethics and non-religious bodies of knowledge and morals (Taylor 2007). Religious traditions can, but do not necessarily, play a role in the construction of modern subjectivities. The later sections of this article will demonstrate how members of Hizb ut-Tahrir must juggle with these different ethical demands.

To summarize, our approach to the analysis of the example of Hizb ut-Tahrir is informed by contemporary perspectives from the sociology of

religion and elements of the work of Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault. We complete this framework with insights from the theory of multiple modernities by Shmuel Eisenstadt. The theory of multiple modernities has challenged the simplistic juxtaposition of modernity and secularization fundamentally. Rooted in civilizational analysis, the concept of multiple modernities expresses the spread of modernity to different cultural contexts. Eisenstadt's work describes global modernity in all its local varieties through a combination of modern patterns with religious traditions. He sees religion as a civilizational phenomenon par excellence that can play an important role in the formation of cultural variations of modernity (Arnason 2003, 232).⁵

The Islamic reform movement which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century affords an excellent example of the role religious traditions can play in the formation of modern social imaginaries. The movement's emphasis on Islam as a modern identity marker underpins Eisenstadt's theoretical perspective. Forming an opposition to secular modernists and religious traditionalists, intellectuals such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Mohammad Abduh (1849–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935) argued for political, social, and religious reforms in which the reference to the Islamic traditions worked as a cultural anchor for the establishment of authentic forms of Muslim modernity. Thus, the idea of 'an Islamic modern' has developed during the twentieth century into a core reference in the competing Muslim discourses on modernity. In this discourse a broad variety of combinations of modern norms and institutions with reinterpreted Islamic traditions compete in their claim to represent an authentic form of modernity. Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology is an offspring of this stream of thought, which has been shaped and informed by this Islamic discourse of modernity.

The Islamic discourse of modernity: Hizb ut-Tahrir as an example

The foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir took place in the context of the decolonization of the Middle East. In this historical process, the formation of modern national states in the Middle East and the spread of Islamic reform thinking were intertwined. The founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the Palestinian Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, came from the area near Haifa in northern Palestine. After the 1948 Arab–Israeli War he settled in Jerusalem but later moved to Lebanon, where he lived until his death in June 1977. His successor, 'Abd al-Qadim

⁵ Arnason, *Civilizations in Dispute*, 2003, 232. It should be noted that Eisenstadt and Arnason merely discussed religion as a cultural macro structure, without relating it to the internal diversity of religion's social practices.

Zallum lived in Amman in Jordan, where the leadership is believed still to be located (Taji-Farouki 1996, 1–36)⁶. He received his traditional Islamic education in both religion and law from the leading classical educational institution in Sunni Islam, al-Azhar in Cairo, among other places. Al-Nabhani was affiliated to a group of Palestinian intellectuals in Jerusalem close to the Muslim Brotherhood. This group consisted of a new generation of modern intellectuals who had graduated from Western-oriented universities and were familiar with modern forms of political organization and activism (Taji-Farouki 1994, 369). The Islamist discourse on modernity by the Muslim Brotherhood and this kind of modern political activism strongly inspired Nabhani's worldview and his concept of an Islamic state. Historically, we can perceive the foundation of Hizb ut-Tahrir as belonging to the more general expansion of the modernist but religious worldview of the Muslim Brotherhood movement throughout the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood was established by the Egyptian schoolteacher Hasan al-Banna in 1928. Hasan al-Banna was influenced by the classical Salafi reformers al-Afghani, Abduh, and Rida, from whom he adopted the idea that the answer to the political, social, and moral crises of the Muslim world lay in a conscious return to early Islam's exemplary order. To al-Banna only the Prophet Muhammad and the first four rightly guided Caliphs correctly represented Islam as faith, normative guidance, and social order (Mitchell 1969, 210). The struggle for independence and the formation of both a just Islamic social order and morally integrated modern Muslim subjects had to happen with reference to this 'Golden Age of Islam'. In his concept of the Islamic state, Hasan al-Banna emphasized the holistic perception of Islam by Islamic reform thinkers and further developed it into an all-encompassing socioreligious system, implicitly following globally relevant modern models of human development and social progress (Shephard 1987, 315). Besides, al-Banna contributed to the popularization of the intellectual idea of Islamic reform, and with the creation of a modern mass movement he took 'the defence of Islam' directly to the people (Mitchell 1969, 211). Through the Muslim Brotherhood he advocated a conscious reconstruction of society based on Islamic law (*sharia*), gradually developing the idea of Islamic governance by enhancing it from education to disciplining state control of the arts and the surveillance of correct religious practice (Commins 2005,

⁶ The information about the location of the international leadership has been confirmed regularly since 2003 in conversations with members of the Danish and British branches of Hizb ut-Tahrir, most recently in conversations with journalists and former members in Copenhagen in January 2019.

140). As a sociopolitical movement, the Muslim Brotherhood transformed the ideas of Islamic reform into an ideology in which a vanguard leadership constructed an authentic Islamic modernity by controlling people through a combination of technologies of domination and the self.

The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood occurred in constant tension between its normative ideal of a transnational Islamic community of believers (*umma*) and the factual establishment of territorial national states. Regarding this tension, the Muslim Brotherhood was eventually to play a double role in Middle Eastern politics. The movement was founded with reference to the Islamic reform movement's pan-Islamic tradition and advocated the unity of the Islamic *umma* in the shape of an Islamic Caliphate; yet the Muslim Brothers began to organize themselves in different national branches that contributed in their daily practice to the confirmation of the modern political landscape of territorial national states in the Middle East. This explains why the concrete politics of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in different national states such as Syria, Jordan, Egypt, or Tunisia was and is different, despite their shared ideological premise.

In Jordan the monarchy applied its own version of Islamic modernity as state ideology, in which the King represented the country's religious and national unity.⁷ In May 1946, Jordan achieved formal independence from Great Britain. In the same year King Abdullah I accorded the Muslim Brotherhood legal status as a charity organization (Jung et al. 2014, 47–64). In 1950, Abdullah succeeded in incorporating the West Bank in the Jordanian state. The Brotherhood's official recognition as a movement in Jordan and on the West Bank was due to two things especially: first, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan presented itself as an Islamic charity organization rather than a political party. Second, the individuals behind the Brotherhood paid special attention to the need to present its activities in accordance with existing law, recognizing the new Jordanian national state and the Hashemite monarchy as the political framework. Although Nabhani was ideologically close to the reform thinkers, he opposed the Brotherhood's increasingly nationalist and – after the introduction of martial law in 1957 – almost loyalist attitude to the Jordanian monarchy.⁸ Therefore, Nabhani clung to his resistance to the formation of national states and pursued his own political project of an Islamic Caliphate.

7 The Hashemite Jordanian monarchy traces itself to the Banu Hashim, the tribe from which Prophet Muhammad was descended.

8 From the late 1950s to the 1980s the Jordanian regime was tolerant of the Muslim Brotherhood because of the integration of religious legitimacy in the modern Jordanian state (Jung et al. 2014, 51–60).

In 1952 and again in 1953, Nabhani applied to the Jordanian Minister of the Interior for permission to establish a new political party based on an Islamist ideology and with the aim of re-establishing an Islamic way of life in a transnational Islamic polity. The party's aim was thus directed at both the formation of Muslim subjects and an Islamic social order. Although the creation of parties was allowed by the Jordanian constitution, the Ministry of Interior rejected both applications. Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, Nabhani was not prepared to tone down the political content of Hizb ut-Tahrir and compromise its ideology and revolutionary goal to ensure the party's approval (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010). The political content of Nabhani's party is evident in the name: Hizb ut-Tahrir. *Hizb* means 'party', an indication of the organization's clearly political purpose. Meanwhile, the concept of *hizbiyya* (party) had negative connotations for Hasan al-Banna, who therefore chose not to name the Muslim Brotherhood a party.

The Jordanian regime assessed that the underlying ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir failed to conform to the country's new legal foundation because of Nabhani's project's aim of replacing the newly founded Middle Eastern national states with a transnational Caliphate. The Jordanian government considered this political aim of Nabhani a threat to the territorial integrity of the Jordanian state and the political legitimacy of the monarchist regime. Furthermore, the Hashemite rulers feared Hizb ut-Tahrir's political agenda might result in religious strife in the population. As a consequence of his political activities and after his futile applications for permission to establish Hizb ut-Tahrir, Nabhani was eventually imprisoned. However, his prison sentence did not lead to the abolition of political activities in the name of Hizb ut-Tahrir. Between 1950 and 1954 the party began to spread Nabhani's ideology from its newly established offices in Damascus, Amman, and Beirut, as well as its main office in Jerusalem.

This ideology was documented in eight books Nabhani had written before 1953. These writings formed – and still form – Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideological backbone (Taji-Farouki 1996, 9). They have since been supplemented by five titles: today's members talk of thirteen books forming the textual corpus that is read in study circles and constructs the premise of the party oath taken by all its members.⁹ This material is referred to as 'adopted', because it represents the party's official views and political goals. The texts provide the background for

9 In his book *Afhopperen* (2008) (*The Defector*) Mohammed Hee explains that before 2008 individuals were only to read three books before swearing the oath. Another former member explained that the study circle had to complete five. In the British branch more books are read before members take the oath.

what Nabhani launched as the correct insight into Islam, and they present the recipe for how the world's balance of power can be challenged and changed. The fact that Nabhani wrote himself into the modern political discourse was evident in 1953, when he authored a draft constitution for a future Caliphate. The draft constitution contains six chapters and 181 articles, covering general reflections on Islam as the doctrine and foundation of the political system (Caliph, leadership committees supporting the Caliph, leaders of jihad, provinces, administration, the *umma* council, the army, and courts of law), the social system, the financial system, education, and foreign policy. The draft constitution, which was revised and republished in 1979, demonstrates that the party ideal of an Islamic caliphate was built on elements characteristic of a modern state – despite not referring to its territorial dimension.

At the very basis of Nabhani's argumentation was the understanding that his interpretation of the life of the Prophet Muhammad was the most correct and precise. Yet compared with common definitions and understandings of central words and concepts in the Qur'an and descriptions of the Prophet's customary practice (*sunna*), it is clear that Nabhani added new and modern meanings to these religious concepts. Good examples of this practice are the concepts of party, *umma*, and awakening. According to Taji-Farouki, al-Nabhani read and understood the Islamic *umma*, the description of the Prophet's closest followers in Medina, as a group of individuals bound by persuasion and belief to such an extent that they could be addressed and mobilized as a unit. His perception of the original *umma* is thus very similar to what is otherwise normally understood by a modern political avantgarde party (Taji-Farouki 1994, 375). Nabhani maintained the Caliphate would be established through the creation of a political vanguard. He imagined Hizb ut-Tahrir as a modern political party forming a kind of revolutionary vanguard capable of transforming common perceptions and patterns of thought in society from their roots (Taji-Farouki 1994, 370). He therefore introduced detailed descriptions of how such a political elite would spread the message to the masses through the correct understanding of Islamic tradition and religious practice. The parallels with Lenin's party concept are easily recognized (Taji-Farouki 1996, Sinclair 2010, 136–144).

Al-Nabhani's goal of social and individual transformation included two elements, both of which have been core ideas of the Islamic reform movement's constructions of modernity: the connection between new interpretations of Islamic tradition and societal reform. He wished to start at the root of the Islamic textual religious corpus and initiate what he understood to be more precise readings. An example of this is his reading and reinterpretation-

tion of the concept of *umma* as discussed above. He next wished to alter the social life of the contemporary Middle East from its roots with reference to these more correct readings of the religious scriptures. With such new readings and understandings of the Islamic tradition's central concepts Nabhani turned towards the political project: the transformation of contemporary societies through the formation of a modern Muslim subject, with the aim of establishing a Caliphate. In this transformative strategy of 'the individual first' we can detect a reversal of Norbert Elias's model of the civilizing process. Nabhani's Islamic transformation was to be based on an awakening among Muslims as individual believers first; an awakening based equally on political and religious elements, as well as new inventions and references to Islamic tradition (Taji-Farouki 1994, 374 and 393). The formation of the ideal modern Muslim subject represents the first step towards the organization of the *umma* within a political, albeit non-state, framework. The establishment of an Islamic Caliphate through consciously organized subjectivity formation at the micro level was at the centre of Hizb ut-Tahrir's aim.

We now turn to examples from a European context of how Hizb ut-Tahrir can be understood through the concept of governmentality, based partly on technologies of domination and partly through guidance for self-disciplining. As mentioned in the introduction, the examples are from Britain and Denmark, and were shared in interviews with former members conducted between 2003 and 2009 as part of a wider study of Hizb ut-Tahrir in these two countries. However, the aim here is to provide illustrations of the instrumentalization of modernity in Hizb ut-Tahrir rather than to analyse the two national branches at any length.

Discipline in Hizb ut-Tahrir: a gradual transition between the external and internalized forms of discipline

Nabhani's 1950s ideal of an avantgarde party leading the masses towards the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate has been followed by detailed strategy documents. These documents describe a number of technologies of domination for how party members should work, seek influence, and manipulate – which positions in society are thought to bring the party closer to a takeover of power and the establishment of a new Islamic polity. Moreover, they demonstrate the departure point of the individual in this transformation process. The latest strategy document to which we have had access (2005) describes how the party's European branches should seek to manipulate individuals holding certain positions in society. Individuals of interest are influential in the military,

the political system, or as opinion makers or academics. Party members are also to direct different types of attention at these individuals, depending on whether they plan to remain in Europe or express a desire to 'return home' to a (Middle Eastern) Muslim-majority country (Sinclair 2010, 87–90).

In the 2005 document, we find an acknowledgement that not all Muslims in Europe may wish to return to Muslim-majority countries, and that a large percentage is expected to remain in Europe. Although the timing of the party's top membership's realization is remarkably late, given that the first waves of guest workers arrived in the 1960s and have since been reunited with wives and children, with many having had grandchildren in their new European homelands by 2005, the content of the document has had consequences for the European branches' daily work. As mentioned, members are to direct their attention to opinion makers and other individuals regarded as influential. A former member of the Danish branch, Mohammed, explained that it was part of his job description as a member of the Danish leadership committee to monitor and communicate with Danish researchers studying the organization, and if at all possible seek to influence their work. The purpose of this effort was to manipulate analyses and statements about Hizb ut-Tahrir in a Danish context, and over time influence the researcher's attitudes to the organization's ideology and activities – something we have experienced first-hand when publishing on the group in Denmark.

Another party document, the *Administrative Dossier* of 2001, reveals that the guidelines for recruiting new students of al-Nabhani's writings to study circles and conducting them are very detailed, aiming to create or enhance certain traits. It must always be clear in study circles that the goal is to cultivate an Islamic personality and mentality. It is thus prohibited to discuss anything but the content of the adopted material during study circle meetings. The leader of any study circle, the *mushrif*, must prepare well, remain calm, and maintain a low tone of voice, regardless of the questions or discussions that arise. He is also responsible for all study circle members and must be informed of each individual's private address, occupation, and general condition, because he is advised to check up on them regularly throughout the week. However, apart from this more general interest, he must pay special attention to new members of the circle and ensure he identifies those with the greatest potential (Hizb ut-Tahrir 2001, 18–22). The dossier documents thus demonstrate that party members are instructed both concerning their individual behaviour and attitude and in how integral to party activities social control is.

Party strategy and ideology become a frame within which members are guided in their religious practice and other behaviour. In study circles and

discussions members are taught to perceive Islam as an all-encompassing ideology, and that any attempt to differentiate between politics and religion is counterproductive. Members perceive Islam as the beginning, middle, and end of everything and as the answer to every conceivable question. It is important in this connection to note that among members of Hizb ut-Tahrir no differentiation is made between religious texts and their interpretation in ideological books. Furthermore, in party study circles members learn that working towards the establishment of the Caliphate is equivalent to correct Islamic practice – thus being ‘a good Muslim’ and working for Hizb ut-Tahrir’s political goals become one and the same cause. The complete conflation of the party’s political goal, the establishment of the Caliphate, and the perception of correct religious practice was obvious in a conversation with a former member in the UK. This person shared with us that his first doubts about the validity of Hizb ut-Tahrir’s message and aim preceded his final break with the organization by more than a year. The reason was his fundamental fear of hell. Working for the party and aspiring to salvation as a practising Muslim had become inseparable for him. Although he had no fear of repercussions from other members if he left, he had a real fear of divine punishment. We can interpret this as an expression of a technology of domination in Hizb ut-Tahrir supported by the monopolizing of religion and the promise of salvation. The party and its rules are perceived as gatekeeping the transcendent world and affecting the member’s access to salvation.

Faruk’s story affords another example of how external domination and internalized disciplining become difficult to separate in Hizb ut-Tahrir’s creation of a moral religious subject. In an everyday situation, Faruk became aware of a discrepancy between his primary and secondary socialization, and as a moral subject found himself in a dilemma. One day, while still a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Faruk found himself nervous and uncomfortable in a lift with two strangers, a man and a woman who were not acquainted. Faruk realized that if the man reached his destination and left before Faruk, Faruk would be left alone with the woman and would have to rush out, because being alone with a woman who was neither a spouse nor a relative in a confined space was deemed inappropriate for a Hizb ut-Tahrir member. He did not feel nervous and uncomfortable because he was uncertain as to what was expected of him in the situation, but because he realized that the behaviour into which he had been socialized as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir would appear rude or provocative. A quick unplanned exit from the lift would be noticed, and his skin colour and Middle Eastern background meant

Faruk expected the woman to conclude that she was being discriminated against by a reactionary Muslim man – and he felt he might be guilty of this.

Faruk therefore began to question the behaviour to which he had grown accustomed as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The technologies of the self Hizb ut-Tahrir had communicated to him, and which he had internalized to be recognized as a moral subject in the circle of members, no longer felt right or justifiable, and increasingly discomfited him. He became unsure that he wanted to be a person whose behaviour might be seen as rude or discriminatory. Before the situation in the lift Faruk had spent eight years studying Nabhani's texts and argumentation, and he had adopted and internalized the message, vision, behaviour, dress code, and everything else. He socialized with other members almost exclusively and propagated the party vision on family holidays in Muslim-majority countries. For eight years, he had done his utmost to live up to the party's standards for good behaviour and work for the Caliphate.

The lift experience and its associated doubt and discomfort were the beginning of Faruk's exit from Hizb ut-Tahrir. However, more than a year passed before Faruk could leave for good, and he emphasizes the lift story when he explains why he found leaving Nabhani's organization difficult. The story is a good example of how members internalize party rules, thereby distancing themselves from the rules and norms of the surrounding society. In the lift, Faruk began to understand that the adopted behaviour was in opposition to the norms of his upbringing and those shared by the Danes around him. In light of these contrasting and opposing moral imperatives he realized he could not remain a Hizb ut-Tahrir member. He could not continue working for a religiopolitical project alongside people who had stopped treating others decently. The example shows a conflictual meeting between two sets of ethics and two kinds of moral subject in the individual's hermeneutical formation of the self. Moreover, the example shows that Hizb ut-Tahrir is challenged in controlling individual members through technologies of the self, because these are often in opposition to alternative self-technologies adopted by the primary socialization in the family and by Danish educational institutions.

Modernity endeavours in Hizb ut-Tahrir

The examples above serve as illustrations of the top of the party's structures providing guidelines determining the activities of individual members in the various national branches. In all activities there is a clear goal, from which there must be no deviation. The party clearly acts as a modern organization in

highly generalizing the motivations and behaviour of its members. In the 1953 draft constitution (1979), and as the various strategy documents demonstrate, Hizb ut-Tahrir does not work from a loose sketch of their ideal state but with a clear strategy for the obtaining of its goal – the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate through individual social transformation – and members follow these guidelines strictly to the letter. Both the ideal and the external guidelines regarding the strategy and goal are internalized. It is here that religion and questions of belief, including the quest for salvation, play important roles for members. Religion becomes instrumental in making the modern transition from technologies of domination to technologies of the self. Former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir have explained that the successful execution of events results in satisfaction due to the national and international leadership's recognition, serving as a reminder of the political project's aim and how the individual member sees themselves as a Muslim. A female former member, Aisha, said that her role as hostess and being responsible for childcare at large public events made her feel she was demonstrating what the Caliphate was about, namely discipline, order, social responsibility, and striving for justice. In this role she was – in our words – already present mentally in the Caliphate.

For members of Hizb ut-Tahrir, membership results in the interlacing of work and hobbies, worldviews and morality, providing a strong sense of direction and meaning. Membership becomes a lifestyle. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you bring the party and its attitudes, persuasion, religion, and ideology with you. This is illustrated by Faruk's encounter in the lift and is made very visible by a uniform dress code. In daily activities, women wear a headscarf and a *jilbab*, an ankle-length coat, which at conferences in Denmark are usually black and white (black *jilbab*, white scarf), making them very easily recognizable. As a rule, male members wear dark trousers and shirts, trimmed beards and short hair – all in all a discreet look. The body is a very important self-technological element, because one expresses where one belongs with it. Thus, the visible identity markers of dress and behaviour are used by members to create and express the party's and their own expectations concerning what the Caliphate will bring: discipline; order; a sense of group belonging; and unity. We find this to be the result of the unification of external and internal discipline.

Governmentality through religion

In the introduction to this article, we highlighted the centrality of the concept of governmentality for the understanding of modernity in the later works

of Michel Foucault. The concept focuses on the specific connection between technologies of domination and the self in the formation of the modern subject. From this theoretical vantage point we have interpreted Hizb ut-Tahrir's activities as an example of modern governmentality by a non-state actor. We have situated the party's construction of modern Muslim subjects within the intellectual tradition of the modern Islamic reform movement. This approach to understanding Hizb ut-Tahrir suggests two findings with implications for the more general discussion of the role of religion in historical imaginaries of modernity. First, using Hizb ut-Tahrir as our example, we find that governmentality as an analytical strategy extends beyond what is merely concerned with relations between the state and the formation of modern subjects. Non-state actors, organizations, and (religious) social movements also use technologies of domination and inculcate technologies of the self in striving to create modern individuals as subjects. Second, our analysis is critical of the understanding that modernity is a purely secular construction. The establishment, ideologically constructed worldview, and organizational make-up of Hizb ut-Tahrir is utterly modern, affording a good example of how imaginaries of a modern social order and modern subjectivity can be closely tied to religious traditions.

In this sense the modern Islamic reform movement in general and Hizb ut-Tahrir in particular provide examples that illustrate Eisenstadt's theory of the role of religion in the historical development of multiple modernities. The party is a paradigmatic example of the concept of multiple modernities Eisenstadt defines through the interlacing of modernity and religious traditions. The religious discourse is a determining tool in the party's variety of modern governmentality. Hizb ut-Tahrir's strategy documents present prescriptive texts with norms and values for the generalization of membership, and thereby the formation of the desired modern subjects. The tradition of Islamic reform has been the core bearer of the construction of such modern imaginaries, in which the reference to Islamic religious traditions plays a key role in shaping different forms of Islamic modernity. However, these very different interpretations of Islamic modernities generated by major representatives of Islamic reform also point to the limitations of Eisenstadt's theory. His theoretical framework does not allow explanations of the emergence of multiple modernities within civilizational complexes such as Islam. During the twentieth century, the Islamic reform movement has branched out into a network of political, social, and cultural positions. There is a diverse variety of Muslim modernities, among which the Muslim Brotherhood stands out simply because it has developed into a worldwide

mass organization and achieved a certain dominance in the choir of voices in the Islamic reform debate (Jung et al. 2014, 37–46, Jung and Sinclair 2015).

We suggest that Hizb ut-Tahrir's ideology and activities are understood as forming one voice within this diversity of competing constructions of Islamic modernities that has evolved in the context of the modern Islamic reform movement. The emergence of multiple modernities within Islam is due to a broad set of contextual variables that influence the more general idea of constructing specifically Islamic subjectivities and social orders (cf. Jung 2016). Moreover, we consider Hizb ut-Tahrir a prime example of a non-state actor aiming to implement a form of 'Islamic modernity' in its members' modern imaginaries of religion, politics, and the self through technologies of domination and the self. Hizb ut-Tahrir is thus both a religious organization and a political project aiming to create a modern form of social order and corresponding types of Muslim subjectivity.

Nabhani's resistance to the territorial form of the modern state was an important contextual variable in the development of the peculiar modern imaginary on which Hizb ut-Tahrir relies as a contemporary organization. The ideology of the party shares central elements of the Muslim Brotherhood's worldview regarding the creation of an Islamic order and the modern Muslim subject. However, it differs decisively from the Brotherhood in its rejection of the territorial order of modern national states. Although Nabhani constructed the Caliphate in line with an institutional plan – constitution, party, leadership organization, military, courts, and provincial administration – reminiscent of the structure of modern national states, he did not accept the territorial limitations of such a statehood. He maintained that the modern political order in the Muslim world should encompass an undivided Islamic *umma* and not be based on the 'artificial' unity of an international organization of a diversity of Muslim national states. Hizb ut-Tahrir thus spoke against the dominant structure of the modern political system with the consequence – and this is our hypothesis – that the party ultimately played a relatively marginal role among Islamist organizations, because the majority of them had accepted the national state as the arena for their activity. Furthermore, the global political structure proved a powerful context that also influenced Hizb ut-Tahrir. This is evident in the fact that even Hizb ut-Tahrir eventually had to organize some of its activities as a transnational party with national branches.

In terms of modern subjectivity formation at the micro level the party employs Islamic traditions as a disciplinary means of controlling the access to the transcendent world and thereby to individual aspirations for salva-

tion. In its transformative strategies, the party draws on its members' fear of hell as a technology of domination. Hizb ut-Tahrir has monopolized the interpretation of Islamic religious traditions as a means of disciplinary control with respect to its members. The organization maintains this monopoly of religious interpretation through the sectarian separation of its members from the rest of society. Social exclusion and religious monopoly are the two most prominent tools the party uses in governing its members. The party employs religious faith as a core element in the transition from the technology of domination to the technology of the self. According to Hizb ut-Tahrir, the process of forming the Muslim subject in accordance with the party's interpretation of Islam is completed when members have internalized the prescriptive norms and values of the party as pivotal to salvation.

Returning to the more general theoretical considerations of Foucault, however, the formation of modern subjectivities is a permanent process of negotiation between various and often contradictory social practices rather than a final result. The example of the lift perfectly illustrates these constant negotiations, in which the governmental practices of Hizb ut-Tahrir compete with other social practices and normative discourses at local, national, and global levels. Faruk directly experienced this competition in the lift, and it led to the manifestation of a moral conflict between different normative frameworks, eventually justifying his decision to leave the organization. Thus, the example of the lift can be read as an indication that the party's means of religious governmentality are no stronger than those other moral structures with reference to which the idiosyncratic individual identity constructions of modern subjects occur.

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Temenos Lecture 2019

Theory in the Interstices: Queering and Transing Religious Studies, Religioneering Trans and Queer Studies¹

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On a cool October Sunday in 2007, two nuns went to Mass. Their new archbishop was presiding in their parish for the first time, and they were interested to hear his homily and to see how he interacted with their community. They sat prayerfully through the service, approached the altar to receive the Eucharist at the appointed time, and mingled with welcoming parishioners afterwards. One thanked them for being there. Also at the Mass, and for similar reasons, were members of other parishes. Several were part of a conservative men's group and had travelled about eighty kilometres to be at Mass that day. They weren't entirely focused on the service, though, because at least one of them spent quite a lot of time taking video recordings of the nuns on his cell phone. That footage quickly went viral, accompanied by outraged claims of hate crimes from conservative Catholics and self-righteous glee from progressives (see KnowTrth 2007; Crawford 2018; Wilcox 2018). What seemed to alternately enrage and delight these audi-

1 I am deeply honoured to have been selected to deliver the 2019 Temenos Lecture. This project has benefited greatly from the comments and queries of audience members at the Queer Shepherds conference, and from the questions and critiques of members of Undisciplined Normativities, the research group on queer and transgender studies in religion at the University of California, Riverside. Special thanks to Danielle Dempsey and Taylor Riley for extensive feedback, to Allie Arend for expressing generative doubts, to Kori Pacyniak for in-depth education on cosplay, and to J Selke for helping me to better hone my clarity.

ences most was the footage of Archbishop George Niederauer respectfully serving the Host to two nuns clad in traditional black and white, with their signature white makeup artfully edged in around facial hair and bright but tasteful decorative touches on their habits.

As may be evident, the nuns who attended this particular Mass do not belong to a Roman Catholic order. One of them is a practising lay Catholic in what these nuns call their secular lives; the other is a Buddhist who mistakenly thought it would be disrespectful not to participate in the full ceremony. But their order is religiously unaffiliated, even though it is over forty years old and is active on four continents. Its members hail from many different religions and from none at all; some are staunch atheists, while others are neopagans, Buddhists, Jews, practitioners of Hindu-based new religious movements, Anglicans, evangelicals, and indeed, Roman Catholics. Many are gay men, but the order welcomes people of all genders, embodiments, and sexualities to join. Although they take vows for life, this group is a volunteer order; the nuns only appear, or 'manifest', on occasion, often once a week or less. And while each chapter is called a 'house', the latter is a term of art drawn from their emulation of Roman Catholic orders; in fact, other than the occasional situation where members of a house are partners or roommates, these houses are not actually residential. They are not celibate, either, apart from the occasional member who may be asexual or temporarily between partners. And having been founded in San Francisco's Castro District in 1979, these Sisters have historically had an especially strong commitment to safer sex education and advocacy. These are not your grandmother's nuns, nor are they the nuns made so lovably familiar by Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*. If anything, they are more like the love children of Andrews' Maria von Trapp and the famous drag queen Divine. The nuns whom Archbishop George Niederauer served without so much as a blink at the Mass at Most Holy Redeemer in the Castro District of San Francisco were Sister Σplace. and Sister Delta Goodhand, of the San Francisco House of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

As word spread of Sister Σplace. and Sister Delta's attendance at the Mass, reactions were strong, and sharply divided between delight and horror. All of these reactions, though, rested on the same two assumptions: that the Sisters' consumption of the Eucharist was sacrilegious, and that it was deliberately so. Opponents of the church crowed with delight that the nuns had successfully disrupted Mass; conservatives, whether Catholic or not, reacted to the alleged disruption with outrage. But watching the video of the two Sisters quietly and respectfully taking Communion, one is faced with a puzzle. Where, precisely, is the disruption?

Although I am unaware of anyone making this connection explicitly, some commentators seem to have had in mind the famous Stop the Church protest at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York City in 1989. The Sisters were there, too, unbeknownst even to many other members of their order – in fact, the protest marked the founding of the New York City house (Hysterectoria 2012). Performance artist Ray Navarro was there, enacting a feminist and gay liberationist Jesus (Petro 2017). Most infamously, also in attendance was an affiliated protestor who went beyond the die-in in the cathedral aisles during Mass by crumbling a consecrated communion wafer in protest against the Church's policies on AIDS, same-sex desire, condom use, and women's rights to their bodies. Although, as Anthony M. Petro has argued (2015), both this protestor and Navarro – and, indeed, the protest as a whole – can easily be read as religious or specifically Catholic, both detractors and supporters perceived these as irreligious or anti-religious acts engaged in by irreligious or anti-religious people. The same assumptions were made about the Sisters, and while they are probably mistaken assumptions in the case of the Stop the Church protest, they are definitively mistaken assumptions in the case of the Sisters at Most Holy Redeemer. So why do people at both ends of the political spectrum make such assumptions in the first place?

At the core of this story is an insistence on the part of queer, straight, transgender, and cisgender people alike that queerness, gender variance, and so-called 'true', 'real', or 'proper' religion cannot go together (Wilcox 2019). This is not just a popular assumption; it pervades queer theory and sexuality studies, trans studies and gender studies, and religious studies too. Often the only allowable exception to this rule comes at the price of homonormativity (Duggan 2002) and cisnormativity. In other words, there is sometimes space for gay men, lesbians, and even more rarely bisexual and transgender people who have invested deeply in assimilationist, 'we-are-just-like-you' tactics of gaining inclusion to also be allowed access to 'proper', 'real' religion. Typically, the homonormativity and cisnormativity that are expected in such cases include regular attendance at a mainstream, widely accepted religious organization. We might call this the 'add-queers-and-stir' approach to queer and trans inclusion in the study of religion, in that it involves adding a largely inert ingredient to an already established mixture. Adding a more active ingredient, such as Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence partaking in the Eucharist, quickly moves us back beyond the realm of so-called 'real' or 'true' religion. In what follows, I explore the contours and possible causes of these persistent and troubling separations of queerness, transness, and religion, and I suggest several areas in which queering and

transing the study of religion and what we might call religioning queer and trans studies can offer all of us generative new pathways in our scholarship.

Opiates and fakes

The terms ‘opiates’ and ‘fakes’ summarize two of the most common assessments of the intersections of queerness, transness, and religion. For example, in his 2012 book *Gaga Feminism* famed queer and trans studies scholar J. Jack Halberstam abandons whatever shred of nuance there might be in the book when he makes a fleeting foray into the topic of religion. ‘When it comes to gender norms and sexual mores,’ he writes, ‘religion really is the root of all evil, and that cuts across many religions ... religion is a no-no and God has got to go-go’ (Halberstam 2012: 28). Most of us have heard such broad and flat dismissals of religion before, of course, many of them inspired by Karl Marx and a few, in queer studies at least, by Freud. But having been cast as neurotics themselves for many decades by the famed father of psychoanalysis and his intellectual descendants, most queer and trans folks seeking to dismiss religion seem to prefer not his theories of religious neurosis but Marx’s more sinister dismissal. Religion, in the eyes of Halberstam and many others like him, is the opiate of the queers. Interestingly, Halberstam goes beyond materialist analyses when he declares – albeit grandiosely and probably somewhat facetiously – that religion is the root of all evil. It seems that he never stopped to consider where his idea of evil came from in the first place, because Halberstam engages in a religious narrative, ironically, in order to dismiss religion. This should give us pause not only because of Halberstam’s oversight but also because it brings us back to the issue of assumptions. What is Halberstam assuming about religion, in addition to a lurking Islamophobia, that allows him to make this sweeping claim? To answer this question, we must first consider the alternative representation of religion as fakery.

In 1974, sociologists of religion Ronald Enroth and Gerald Jamison published the first book-length social scientific study of a gay religious organization. Their slender volume entitled *The Gay Church* reported and analysed their findings from attending services primarily at the Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco (MCCSF). The Metropolitan Community Church, or MCC, had been founded in Los Angeles just six years before the book was published, and MCC San Francisco was one of its earlier branches. Now a denomination, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, or UFMCC, has over 200 congregations in 33 countries around the world (UFMCC 2020). When I first discovered Enroth and Jamison’s book

as a graduate student researching MCC for my doctoral thesis, I was excited to see that the sociology of religion had been so forward-thinking, and that I had such a strong lineage of research to draw on in my own work. That was before I read the book. I was unaware at the time that Enroth and Jamison were conservative evangelical Christians, and that Enroth had been heavily involved in the Anti-Cult Movement; if I had known this background, I would have read their work with more trepidation. But discovering the dismissive ways they represented the gay men they had studied was hardly the first unpleasant surprise I had experienced with regard to sociological approaches to the study of religion and queer communities, so although I was disappointed, I was hardly shocked.

While *The Gay Church* is of little help as a secondary source, except to the extent that one can read beneath the overlay of Enroth and Jamison's prejudices in order to discover the voices of gay Christians in the early 1970s, it is of significant value as a primary source for studying the curious barrier that scholars and activists alike have built between queerness, transness, and so-called 'true' or 'real' religion. These two sociologists dismissed MCCSF as just another gay cruising ground. The carefully crafted services, MCC's unique weekly communion practice – these all counted for nothing, because Enroth and Jamison took them to be a sham, a cover for the real purpose of the weekly gathering: to find a date. But how many straight people have sought and found partners in religious settings?

Whether they be old-school matchmakers, youth prayer circles, or even Minder (a dating app for Muslims), religious spaces have always functioned as locations for seeking an appropriate mate. Surely, Enroth and Jamison were aware of this; surely, they would not have disapproved of, for instance, a heterosexual Christian singles' night. So, it seems what did not belong in church was not simply the desire for a romantic partner; what did not belong was *queer* desire. Gender variance did not belong, either; there's no shortage of commentary on male femininity in the book to go along with the prurient dismissal of churchly cruising. It seems that MCCSF got dismissed as fake religion because it was a queer and trans space. Moreover, it seems queer and trans people, in Enroth and Jamison's reading, automatically encode sexuality, even if they are only looking for someone to have coffee with and are planning to save sex for marriage. So, part of why 'true' religion, queerness, and transness cannot go together, in these logics, is that religion and *sex* don't go together – at least for these authors and for others who think similarly. In fact, the convergence of sex and 'true' religion appears to be possible only when the religion is orientalized, as attested, for example, by the queue stretching well back into the nineteenth century of white, elite,

male scholars and esotericists eager to delve into the hidden secrets of the Tantras. To better understand this state of affairs, a brief exploration of the concepts of religion, sexuality, and gender is in order.

Religion, Sexuality, and Gender as Social Constructs

Scholars such as Talal Asad (1993), Tomoko Masuzawa (2005), and Meredith McGuire (2008) tell us that the concept of religion as we know it today – a universal human phenomenon that takes forms similar enough that they can be identified, classified, and compared across cultures and historical periods – is a social construct, a socially useful fiction that, once invented by socially dominant groups, took on a life of its own. While they have no objective, universal existence, social constructs nonetheless are real in their effects. Thus, ‘religion’, while the brainchild of Enlightenment philosophers seeking peace between Christians and, likely, justification for the rampant spread of European imperialism, has become today both a personally important word for people around the world and a strategically important concept – so important that it appears as a borrowed word in languages without a comparable concept.

Along the course of these developments, religion came to be defined on the basis of belief, especially in Global North/Global West cultures.² Although there may be Protestant influence here, this definitional focus has a great deal to do with the Enlightenment emphasis on the reasoning individual. Reasonable individuals, after all, could agree to disagree on matters of religious doctrine, but the more such matters were separated from practice and subjected to the laws of reason the less likely it was that they would disagree to begin with. Further, as Enlightenment thinkers pondered the ‘true’ purpose of ‘true’ religion, they focused on ethics. Still today, many of us hear this phrase from our students and in public discourse: the ‘true purpose’ of ‘true religion’ is to provide guidance for an ethical life. This remains an argument, too, for teaching basic religious literacy in state-sponsored schools, in countries that allow for such a curriculum.

The more reason and ethics came to the fore in the definition of religion, the more practice – especially that taking place outside of official settings, which meant much of what women, poor people, colonized people, and other non-dominant groups did – became magic, and officially unapproved

2 For the term ‘Global North/Global West’ I am indebted to the organizers of the ‘Fucking Solidarity’ conference, part of the Queering Paradigms conference series, which took place in Vienna in September 2017.

beliefs became superstition. True religion thus came to be aligned not only with reason, with texts, and with mainstream, culturally Christian, Global North/Global West values, but also with elite men, and typically elite men of northern and western European heritage. The mind–body dualism that Enlightenment philosophers inherited but also intensified thereby came to characterize religion as well. ‘True’ religion, or at least evolutionarily advanced religion, came to be that of the mind, whereas that focused on the body (or practised by people defined as body – the Enlightenment’s others) took on the labels of superstition and empty ritual. When combined with the emphasis on individualism, particularly in its Protestant religious versions, this set of intellectual, social, and cultural developments also produced a narrative of ‘spirituality’ as individualized religion that may draw on but is ultimately independent from institutional religion (see, among others, Parsons 2018). Which is preferable – religion or spirituality – depends on one’s attitude towards questions of communalism and individuality. From an individualist perspective, religion may provide a space for developing spirituality, but the latter is far more important than the former, and the former may even inhibit the latter. From a communalist perspective, religion provides guidelines, clarity, and cohesion, whereas spirituality is a sort of anything-goes, unstructured, selfish navel-gazing. It also bears remembering that the same person may have wildly differing approaches to religion and spirituality, depending on which religion or spirituality is under discussion at the time.

Religion, in the academic logic that grew from these developments and is with us still today, is cerebral, logical, orderly, sombre, and ‘civilized’; it has an institutional or communal form called religion and an individual form called spirituality. Superstition, on the other hand, is embodied, irrational, ‘primitive’, and wild. Over time, more traditions came to be accepted within this definition of religion, but always at the same cerebral, elitist price. There is no room here for bodies, sexualities, or genders, so the ones who have come to represent ‘true’ religion are those who inhabit the privileged unmarked categories of European and European-derived cultures, those whose embodiment disappears into the woodwork because it is the norm: elite, heterosexual, masculine, white men (see also Ramberg 2014).

As the narrative of religion as a natural, universally shared feature of human culture was consolidating in nineteenth-century Global North/Global West discourse, a similar narrative was developing around sexuality and gender that, like the concept of religion, also demarcated the lines between ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ enactments of both and tied propriety tightly to

elite, Christian, European and European-derived norms (Tobin 2015). Like religion, sexuality and gender became not only universalized but tightly essentialized. Indeed, not only did these developments link gender and sexuality, like religion, intimately with race and with ideas about civilization; they also connected them with religion. A solid taproot of scientizing narrative increasingly bound civilization, whiteness, European imperial descent, masculinity, and reason to cerebral, individualist forms of Christianity – in many regions, Protestantism, in others the Catholicism of the counter-Reformation – or to Christian-influenced beliefs such as Deism. Whether those clustered attributes admitted masculine, same-sex attracted men fully into their circles varied across history and geography, but aside from this occasional exception the growing European association between same-sex desire and gender variance through the model of the invert rendered most if not all same-sex desiring and gender variant people like women. If assigned male at birth, they were feminine; if assigned female, they might be deviant, flawed, or inverted women, but they remained women nonetheless (see also Valentine 2007).

By default, then, with certain exceptions, same-sex desiring and gender variant people came to be aligned in these narratives with the body. Since true religion had come to be defined as cerebral, they, like the Enlightenment's other others, could not – and still cannot today – be truly religious. Many heterosexual, cisgender people continue to promote this narrative; ironically, so do those who wish to reclaim embodiment, and who therefore reject religion as a fundamentally heteropatriarchal, cisgender institution. Between these two poles of queer/trans and religious opposition are those queer and transgender people who are fighting for their own lives and souls, forced to push for religious inclusion by continually shifting the eye of judgement away from their own bodies.

Among the consequences of these intertwined histories is the persistent insistence of religious studies on opposing normative scholarly work – by which many writers in the field seem to mean both work that presumes the existence of a world beyond the human and work that departs from the strict so-called 'objectivity' of normative but erased cis white heteromascularity to embrace anti-racist, anticolonial, socialist, feminist, trans, crip, and queer perspectives. Among those same consequences is a similarly persistent insistence in queer and sometimes trans studies on refusing any possibility of a world beyond the human, and in casting all engagement with such a world as distraction, false consciousness, and the like. Such refusals also align queerness and transness with a modern, Western compulsion toward

secularism, leaving little space not only for religious queer and transgender people but also for the experiences and insights of gender variant and same sex desiring people of colour and indigenous people. Yet some people are thinking – and practising – differently. What does it look like, and what would it look like, to do queer studies, trans studies, and religious studies together, beyond the ‘add-queers-and-stir’ approach?

Epistemology of the prayer closet? Religion, transness, and queerness in unexpected spaces and compromising positions

Trans studies/queer studies and religious studies have more in common than many of their practitioners are aware. One of the areas in which they are most aligned is in their very approach to their topic: all three fields understand their core focus to be socially constructed. In this section, I consider two sets of co-constituted categories, or conduits of power, that I argue cannot be fully elaborated without the tools of all three fields: the confluence of sex, gender, race, religion, and imperialism; and that of religion, economy, and the state.

Sex, gender, race, religion, imperialism

Because the Enlightenment’s others tend to stick together (I mean this literally; the categories are sticky, viscous), each of these categories leaches into the other in mainstream cultural representations and in state responses to them. As Megan Goodwin points out, for instance, in *Abusing Religion: Literary Persecution, Sex Scandals, and American Minority Religions* (Goodwin 2020), religion is both racialized and sexualized. Goodwin analyses twentieth-century bestselling books in the U.S. that purported to expose the scandalous sexual treatment of white women and girls in minoritized U.S. religions like Islam, polygynous Mormon groups, and Satanism. But while non-dominant religions are the target in each case, as Goodwin makes clear, the narrative turns on tales of sexual perversity and the representation of the religion as deeply, ontologically other – in ways, she argues, that not only underscore the racialization of Islam but expel even white religious minorities from whiteness.

Although Goodwin focuses on the intersection of non-dominant racial, religious, and sexual categories, we can also trace the other side of this same coin: in the U.S. and, I would argue, in much of Europe and its other settler colonies, ‘true’ religion continues to be cast in both popular narratives and

government policies as aligned with whiteness and cisgender heterosexuality (see Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004; Runions 2014; Seitz 2017; Kruttsch 2019). The irony of all of this, as Goodwin emphasizes, is that the majority of sexual abuse in fact takes place in precisely these spaces.

In a forthcoming book project on the intersections of queer theory and religious studies, Yannik Thiem inverts the common analysis of the racialization of Islam to argue that race is also, as he puts it, 'religionized' (Thiem 2019). Whereas Orientalist stereotypes of Islam have historically been subsumed in generalizations about Arabs – or, in earlier centuries, in the racial category of 'Semite', which rolled together stereotypes of Jews and Muslims – Thiem argues that in some cases today that dynamic has been reversed. This reversal allows racism to occlude itself under the cover of 'rational' opposition to certain religions, and likewise effaces the whiteness (as well as the Christianity) of secularism. With racism a constant yet ostensibly forbidden presence in much of the Global North/Global West, and with the elision of the categories 'Muslim' and 'terrorist' so widely and readily available that Myanmar's military has made use of it (in European languages specifically) to excuse violence against the Rohingya people, Thiem's argument seems not just reasonable but even self-evident. Likewise, the widespread violence in the U.S. against anyone with brown skin following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 – a Native American woman was even told to go back where she came from – indicates the religionization of race through the trope of terrorism. And we need look no further than the atrocities at Abu Ghraib, or the more quotidian inclusion of two men kissing in a Dutch citizenship film in the mid-2000s, for the intertwined sexualization and religionization of race.

In many ways the third combination of these categories, the racialization and religionization of sexual difference, is most obvious in the losses incurred by dominant religious and racial groups – white Christians, or in many cases specifically white Protestants or Catholics – because of cultural biases and state strictures against non-dominant sexual or gender identities. Jasbir Puar has argued, for instance, that movements for same-sex marriage rights are often driven by white gay men and lesbians whose sexuality has caused them to be deprived of the dividends of whiteness in a white supremacist society – dividends that are far less accessible to queer and trans people of colour no matter how homonormative, homonational, or cishnormative they may be (Puar 2007, 2017). Likewise, while the right to queer and transgender ordination is critically important in the many societies where conservative approaches to Christianity kill souls and often result

in bodily death, at the same time when queer and transgender people of colour and those from minoritized religions are dying in the streets and in refugee camps just like their straight and cisgender counterparts, it's hard to overlook the racialization and religionization of both gender variance and same-sex desire, as well as the colonial and imperial contexts in which these dynamics are rooted.

The elision of race, religion, sexuality, and gender in the context of global imperialism allows both allies and opponents to cast queer and trans people as simultaneously white and irreligious; as Danielle Dempsey argues, this is precisely the dynamic underlying Pope Francis's repeated attacks on what he calls 'gender theory' (Dempsey 2020). I imagine Halberstam would be a bit surprised to land in the same camp as the pontiff, but in many ways his argument about religion being the root of all evil when it comes to gender and sexuality is simply the opposite side of the Vatican's coin.

This same elision allows white supremacist states to discredit black and brown people as too religious, or as not belonging because of their actual or ascribed religion. Widespread Islamophobia and French *laïcité* are easy examples, but so too are the old debates about the secularization of Europe (e.g. Bruce 2011), in which what was often actually being tracked were changes in the religious practices of white Christians and whites of Christian heritage, casting aside as implicitly un-European or at least unimportant anyone who was not Christian or whose family had arrived in Europe in the past few hundred years and thereby fundamentally misrepresenting the status of religion in Europe at the time. Similar flaws, of course, attended much of the secularization debate in the U.S., with the added complication that in that country even white people insisted on being religious (e.g. classically, Finke and Stark 1992).

A third consequence of the elision of race, religion, sexuality, and gender in the context of global imperialism is its ability to simultaneously occlude and reinforce the all-consuming hold of Protestantism on culturally Protestant states, especially those that claim secularity. This case is particularly stark, and particularly well-developed, in the U.S. context, where historians tell us that at least since the nineteenth century European immigrants who adhered to minoritized religions – mostly Judaism and Catholicism – gained the grudging acceptance of their new home by altering their religious practices to be more like Protestantism (see Orsi 2010; Sarna 2019). Catholics downplayed the large public displays of saints' festivals that particularly characterized southern European folk practices, for instance, and established Catholics in the U.S. tried to avoid association with recent

immigrants who brought decidedly non-Protestant practices with them to the country. Likewise, Jewish congregations added pews, hymns, and sermons to their services, integrated genders within the synagogue, and even curtailed their adherence to dietary laws. The Reform movement that originated in Germany was popular among many of the earlier Jewish immigrants to the U.S. not only because they agreed with its principles but also because it helped them to avoid the worst of anti-Jewish violence and discrimination through appearing more like Protestants.

But Protestantism also takes many forms. As African Americans, many of them Protestant for generations, discovered when the major black denominations began to grow, the forms of Protestantism that were culturally rewarded were both white and middle- or upper-class. In other words, Protestantization as a route to assimilation or acceptance is in fact a route to, or through, whiteness. And as many minoritized racial and religious groups have experienced in the U.S., cisgender heterosexuality is a necessary part of this religio-racial citizenship package. Jasbir Puar (2007) argues that homonationalism both restores the rewards of whiteness to white queers and offers partial access to the dividends of whiteness to certain queer people of colour; I would add to her argument that Protestantization is not just a religious parallel to homonationalism but, in fact, its corollary. Although I have made this case in the specific context of the U.S., I would suggest that it is also applicable in at least some parts of Europe and its other settler colonies.

Religion, economy, and the state

These considerations lead, perhaps inevitably, to the state and to the connections between religion, the state, and economic structures. These connections are, to be sure, a very longstanding concern among scholars of religion, tracing back as far as the work of Max Weber. While I am interested in the relationship between certain forms of Protestantism and capitalism, however, I want to trace a different set of connections than those Weber examined. My argument, first outlined in an online publication in 2017, playfully suggests that rather than the so-called 'separation of church and state' governments that claim to be secular, at least in the Global North/Global West, actually enforce the separation of church and *sex*. This argument also brings us back to the Sisters, ACT UP, and the ubiquitous communion wafer.

Why were the protestor at Saint Patrick's who crumbled the Host, and the Sisters at Most Holy Redeemer who consumed it, portrayed as not only irreligious but even anti-Catholic? It is not especially difficult to imagine

a Catholic theological explanation for the wafer crumbling, after all: the protestor could have accepted the consecration and even the transubstantiation involved in the ritual, but rejected the divinity or the authority of the superhuman being invoked in the consecration; he might have rejected the efficacy of the consecration itself, on the grounds of claims to the celebrant's unrepentant sinful nature; or he might have rejected the efficacy of the consecration on the grounds of a rejection of the celebrant's theology. Likewise, Sister Splace and Sister Delta Goodhand were far from anti-Catholic, even if they might have taken issue with the approach to Catholicism advocated by the conservative men who filmed the service.

The explanation for the public denial of religiosity to these queer activists also cannot simply lie in popular portrayals of Catholicism as conservative and closed-minded, because many popular portrayals of the religion in fact paint it as loving, accepting, and even liberatory. Activists working for the inclusion of other marginalized groups, such as those involved in the United Farmworkers' Movement, are perfectly legible as Catholics in the public imaginary, so why are these activists not legible in the same way? Some would say the illegibility stems from the Sisters modelling themselves after Roman Catholic nuns, but in many contexts (and indeed, among the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence themselves) such imitation is considered not sacrilegious but complementary. What the Sisters at Most Holy Redeemer and the protestor at Saint Patrick's do have in common, however, is their identity as gay men. I would suggest that the communion service in the Castro had a disproportionately powerful public impact because of the Sisters' violation of three key tenets of the neoliberal state: the privatization of religion, the privatization of sex, and the separation of church and sex.

Classic articles in queer studies by Lauren Berlant, Michael Warner, and Lisa Duggan have argued that over the course of the 1980s, neoliberal economic principles infused the cultures in which they were being put into place, developing into a set of cultural and political principles. According to Berlant, Warner, and Duggan these principles began to impact gay and lesbian activism by the early 1990s (Berlant and Warner 1998; Duggan 2002). Central to these principles were privatization and deregulation – not just of industry, as neoliberal economic principles dictate, but of culturally powerful phenomena such as religion and sex. With religion deregulated, as Jakobsen and Pellegrini argue, culturally dominant religious groups – especially the politically active ones, such as evangelical megachurches and parachurch organizations – gained increasing power while also using the cultural mandate of privatization to keep minoritized religions behind closed

doors (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004, 2008). Likewise, the neoliberal principle of privatization lured increasingly open queer communities back into the closet, making privacy the price of their deregulation, whereas straight, cisgender people continue to enjoy widespread visibility of their sexuality and gender (Berlant and Warner 1998). Finally, because of the privatization of religion, the privatization of sex, and the older factors discussed above, within these neoliberal regimes religion and sex cannot interact, and certainly cannot do so in public, unless they are part of dominant groups. Thus, evangelical Christians can have highly successful public sexual ministries for heterosexuals, but queer nuns cannot take communion in habit without violating the principle of the separation of church and sex.

At the same time, religious traditions and the state remain close companions in a number of the so-called 'secular' states of the Global North/Global West. As with all unmarked dominant categories, however, the religion in question here is the dominant one, in most cases Christianity and often specifically Protestantism. The latter has played a less-than-subtle role in the U.S. government since its inception, inspiring everything from art to opening prayers for congressional sessions to major narrative tropes in U.S. popular culture, such as the saviour narrative and the conversion tale (see Albanese 2013). Furthermore, the very concepts of secularism and the privatization of religion have Christian, perhaps specifically Protestant, roots (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2004, 2008; Sanchez 2019). So, the much-vaunted separation of church and state is clearly misleading; the true separations come in the form of the privatization of religion, the privatization of sex, and the separation of church and sex.

In lectures at the Collège de France in the late 1970s, Michel Foucault was already arguing that neoliberalism was becoming a mode of governance and far more than an economic system; intertwined with this argument is the development of his concept of governmentality as an important node of connection between states, economies, and bodies (Foucault 2008). The production of disciplined, docile, governable bodies both stems from and benefits economic systems and particularly the neoliberal state. But where does religion come into biopolitics and governmentality? One might begin by considering any number of commodified forms of spirituality – yoga and mindfulness meditation have come under significant academic scrutiny in this regard, for instance (e.g. Jain 2015; Purser 2019; Lucia 2020) – but I want to turn our attention to play.

Forms of play designed for adults, which I call 'grown-up play' to indicate that they include non-erotic as well as erotic forms, have seen a marked

uptick in popularity in the past few decades. Cosplay, where people dress up as fictional characters and attend gatherings and often massive conventions such as Comic-con, is one example. Furrries, people who dress up as anthropomorphic animal characters, also fall into this category. Brooklyn, New York has seen a growth in grown-up playgrounds in the past decade ('Adult Playground' 2014), and festivals like Burning Man, where people can take on different names and identities, and just – well – play have exploded in popularity and size. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence emphasize joy in their mission statement. Perhaps play is also the draw of some aspects of Neopaganism today; certainly, Reclaiming Wicca, in particular, values and encourages playfulness (Salomonsen 2002). And although these communities have long roots, is it simply coincidence that practitioners of BDSM (bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism, and masochism) refer to scenes not just in theatrical language but also as play – without the indefinite article that would make the word mean theatre, as in 'a play'?

Grown-up forms of play are often *very* grown up. Games that children play become professional sports for adults, with high pay-checks, high stakes, and often highly serious fans. But though some aspects of Comic-cons and festivals have moved in this direction, for the most part the movements that continue to grow retain at least a search for innocence; these newly popular forms of grown-up play also try to retain their light-heartedness and fun. Where do they fit within regimes of governmentality? Certainly, some are commodified – it's become increasingly pricey to attend a burn, for instance, and someone who wishes to set up a well-appointed BDSM dungeon can expect to put out a lot of money to do so. Yet these forms of play, I think, are not – or at the very least, not *yet* – commodities in and of themselves.

On the other hand, grown-up play is often considered by participants to be a form of or a space for spiritual expression. Is this spirituality in the service of governmentality and the neoliberal state? It would not be difficult to make this argument in the context of expensive yoga retreats in exotic locations, where the mostly white practitioners disconnect from the world around them and focus on finding their bliss in their stylish new yoga pants made by just the right company (Lucia 2020). But in considering this question further, I think we can take guidance from the clearly too-easy rejection of religion in which queer and trans studies have historically engaged. If we think with scholars like Foucault and Butler (e.g. 1990, 2004) about power, conceptualizing it as a set of interacting forces to which there is no outside, no space beyond the walls from which to lay siege, then does play perhaps also offer spaces of resistance from within the regime of neoliberal

governmentality? Does spirituality do the same? Questions like these are driving my new book project on leather spirituality in queer and transgender communities.

Subjectivity, subjectivation, affect, desire, resistance

Considerations of governmentality and subjectivity point towards a more direct consideration of the insights that the study of religion has to offer to queer and trans studies. In several areas of late, these fields have been working along parallel tracks; each has been developing interests in and analyses of certain phenomena, but largely without interacting. In this section I consider four areas where such interactions would, I argue, take both fields to an entirely new level. These are performativity and ritual, queer subjectivities and embodiments, queer desires, and temporalities.

Worlding worlds: performativity and ritual

In an incisive study of contemporary devadasis in South India, anthropologist Lucinda Ramberg writes of 'worlding worlds', the process by which people bring certain conceptions of the world into reality (Ramberg 2014). We all world worlds, and we do so not only, or perhaps not even primarily, through thinking about them or conceptualizing them. We do it through action, through practice. By conducting pujas, marrying both female-bodied and male-bodied women to the goddess Yellamma, and living in a world where the goddess is real, the devadasis with whom Ramberg worked worlded a world in which Yellamma plays a major role, one in which refusing the call of the goddess results in severe affliction and even death. The activists and government workers who oppose the devadasis worlded a world where Yellamma either is fictional or is properly (heterosexually) married and domesticated, and through persuasion, coercion, and direct force they attempted to replace the world of the devadasis with their own.

The idea that worlding a world brings it into being, into reality, through practice resonates with the concept of performativity. Indeed, in a telling moment that she has tended to disavow when questioned eagerly about it by religionists, Butler herself has referred to the repeated, citational enactment of gender as ritual (1990: 178). Whereas conversations about the application of this idea rarely move beyond considerations of whether gender is like religion, or of whether ritual studies and performativity might be useful in combination (but see Armour and St. Ville 2006; Mahmood 2005), I think

the idea of worlding the world gives us a broader tool that allows us to sidestep the often-awkward conversation about the relationship between performativity and religion. If we can understand the citational reiteration of established norms as worlding the world, bringing worlds into reality, even in the case of subversive citation (as Butler suggests may be the form taken by resistant performances of gender), we can understand the performative nature of gender as one facet of a larger sociocultural process, and the performative nature of ritual as another facet of the same process. We might come to a better understanding of how ritual and gender function together, or of how resistant forms of ritualization can bring non- or anti-normative subjectivities into being.

Queer subjectivities and queer embodiments

Those very non- and anti-normative subjectivities are also far from new; consider Yellamma herself, for instance. Even though the very core of queer and trans studies is rooted in resisting normative subjectivities, these fields, like most academic fields, have been profoundly resistant to the idea that subjectivities beyond the easily perceptible world might exist. Ramberg, though, makes it clear that part of living in the world that her teachers world is living in a world where Yellamma is real. Deities and other spirits are among the very few forms of anti-normative subjectivity that queer and trans studies have generally been unwilling to accept. Some, like the enlightened goddess whom the famed Buddhist monk Shariputra challenged about her embodiment, can even change their bodies – and the bodies of insolent humans like Shariputra – from female to male or vice versa with lightning speed. Are they too queer to be queer?

As Roberto Strongman argues (2019), the African diasporic traditions that developed in the context and the aftermath of the transatlantic slave trade, as well as the West African traditions from which they stemmed, have an understanding of the self that differs radically from the Enlightenment self that so strongly influences even the most radical of trans and queer theorists. Because these traditions world worlds in which superhuman beings communicate with their human communities through spirit possession – co-presence, as Aisha Belizo-de Jesús (2015) has termed it – they have also developed philosophies of the self that explain precisely how possession functions. Strongman terms this philosophy *transcorporeality*, which he defines as ‘the distinctly Afro-diasporic cultural representation of the human psyche as multiple, removable, and external to the body that functions as

its receptacle' (Strongman 2019: 2). He uses the cashew pear as an illustration of transcorporeality, because with this fruit the seed (the cashew nut) grows not inside but down below the fruit itself. If the psyche is external to the body and is removable like the cashew is from the cashew pear, then it can travel without the body, as some people believe happens in certain kinds of dreaming or trance; it can be kept elsewhere for safe keeping, but with serious consequences if the body dies in the meantime; and it can be set aside temporarily to make room for another consciousness, which is what happens in possession. Like the existence of spirits and deities, co-presences and transcorporeal selves are subjectivities that are queerer than queer.

Another deeply queer form of subjectivity exists in many of the worlds that indigenous communities world; anthropologist Ana Mariella Bacigalupo calls these sentient landscapes (Bacigalupo 2019). In the communities with which she works, the mountains are not only sacred but alive and sentient; they have consciousness, will, and agency. For this very reason, one group with whom she works with in northern Perú accepts spiritual tourists from the Global North/Global West with open arms. Whereas for many indigenous peoples the spread of spiritual tourism is a necessary evil to be accommodated, a way to keep the people alive through the money that comes with the tourists but also a compromise and commodification of their traditions, many Moche and Chimu people understand the spiritual tourists who visit them to be creating an unbreakable bond with the sentient mountains. This bond carries responsibilities that cannot be shirked, because the mountains can reach across space and impact those who neglect their duties. Thus, in accommodating spiritual tourists, Chimu and Moche people are recruiting allies for the sacred mountains that U.S. resource extraction, neocolonialism, and their own need for survival under these oppressive forces are currently forcing them to mine.

All of these queer subjectivities – goddesses who marry human women and who can make a woman out of anyone they marry, selves that are external and removable, co-presences, sentient landscapes – may seem distant and exotic to an audience in northern Europe. But let us not forget the profoundly queer subjectivities closer to home, such as the one that has been haunting this work throughout: the capacity of a thin flour wafer to become a human/divine body through a ritual properly performed by the right person. Jack Halberstam may think religion is the root of all evil, and Pope Francis may think gender theory is ideological colonization, but there at the heart of Roman Catholicism is a strikingly queer form of subjectivity and embodiment.

Queer religious desires

Not that the queerness of Roman Catholicism has been lost on the many queer people, Catholics or not, who have arched a suggestive eyebrow at the idea of eating the body of Christ. Queer – in particular, gay – Christian theology abounds with the recollections of Roman Catholic gay men who gazed in erect adoration at the beatific and divinely alluring body on the cross throughout their adolescent years (e.g. Goss 2002, but see also Rambuss 1998). These authors, of course, are hardly alone; the history of Christianity echoes with the ecstatic voices of mystics who desired Christ. Some are famous, like Hadewijch, who described feeling ‘outwardly satisfied and fully transported’ when Christ embraced her, or Catherine of Siena, whom he married with his circumcised foreskin as the ring (Bynum 1992). Others are less well known, like the eighteenth-century Moravian brothers who engaged in homoerotic worship of the side wound of the crucified Christ (Peucker 2006). Certainly, we must also include contemporary evangelical Christian women who join their Roman Catholic sisters (though more temporarily, they hope) in celibate marriage to Jesus until such time as a worthy husband comes along. Familiarity can make single evangelical women’s marriages to Jesus, or even the more permanent and official marriages of Roman Catholic nuns, seem unremarkable. Yet these, too, are profoundly queer forms of desire and of relationship. It is both interesting and telling that a devadasi’s marriage to Yellamma strikes many people as far more exotic than a Catholic nun’s marriage to Christ.

Superhuman beings, to be sure, are caught up in human desire and sexuality in settings well beyond Christian ones. Sometimes they make use of those desires to help humans, as with the medieval Japanese Buddhist tale of the bodhisattva who took the form of a beautiful young man and became the lover of a monk in order to help him towards enlightenment (Anonymous 1998). Sometimes, as with the fierce and hungry goddesses of the early Tantras, they grant immense powers to those practitioners who can feed them appropriately with semen, allowing the practitioner in turn to access superhuman powers through the consumption of their vaginal fluids (White 2003). And on a somewhat tamer level Sufi texts record that one way of realizing oneness with God is for practitioners (all men, in this case) to gaze upon an attractive male youth (Babayán 2008: 265, 268). Again here, religion offers us – and rather nonchalantly, at that – a plethora of queer and trans embodiments, desires, and relationships.

Queering time

Given all of this troubling of the self-assured, Enlightenment-based sense of what religion, spirituality, bodies, gender, and sexuality are, it should come as no surprise that queer questions of temporality are also incomplete without attention to religion. In the context of cultures that claim to be pluralist and/or secular but that clearly bear the footprints of centuries of Christian influence, we would be remiss not to question the origins of those societies' understandings of time. As thinkers ranging from queer and trans theorists to philosophers and theologians have taught us, time can be conceptualized in many different ways. Some models of time are linear, and some of those have both starting and ending points while others have neither or only one. Some models of time are circular – for instance, our division of time into minutes, hours, days, and months that repeat on a regular basis – and some are spiral, repeating but with a difference each time. Both geometrically and temporally, spirals are hybrids between circles and lines.

Christian temporalities are generally linear, with a fixed starting point at creation (because even though God pre-exists creation, time is typically said to begin then) and either a fixed stopping point or a fade into eternity at the arrival of the Kingdom of God, the end times and the end of time. Christianity is not the only religion with a linear model of time, to be sure, but in Christian-based cultures there is a reasonable likelihood that linear models of time are drawn from Christianity. This likelihood, then, suggests that both the models of time that queer theorists have critiqued and those they have offered as alternatives should be re-examined with an eye to their origins.

Reproductive futurism, for instance, is a model of society but also a mode of time in which, as Whitney Houston sang, 'the children are our future'. This model makes children immensely valuable, and therefore in need of intense protection; it also makes having children desirable, even the ultimate purpose in one's life. Focusing our attention on the future and the children (the future generations) as what matters, the temporal model of reproductive futurism is both linear and teleological. It might even be described by sociologists of religion as progressive millennialism (Wessinger 2000). But queer modes of rejecting reproductive futurism also encode their own models of temporality. While Lee Edelman (2004), who coined the term 'reproductive futurism', refuses a future at all, insisting on presence and disruption as both resistance to and reclaiming of the dominant representations of gay men as anti-reproductivist, authors who push back against Edelman's narrowly white, cisgender, male model of queerness and his rejection of any future find themselves back in the realm

of linear, teleological time. José Esteban Muñoz (2009), for example, offers a set of queer utopian visions that, while still dismissive of any connection between children and queer futures, nonetheless point to a liberatory (and sometimes libertine) telos. Can there be utopias without linear time? What are the temporal modes of queer utopias? How do Christian temporalities inform queer utopian dreaming, and where might it get us to address those connections consciously and intentionally, rather than blinker ourselves to them by failing to perceive the unmarked dominant category of Christianity that shapes such ostensibly secular radicalism?

Conclusion: resistance in the messy interstices

The interstitial spaces between religious studies, trans studies, and queer studies turn out to be quite messy. There are sexual fluids and fluid bodies, deities and spirits mingling and sharing bodies, desires, selves with humans. There are sentient mountains who bring visions and responsibilities to spiritual tourists, leatherfolk experiencing spiritual ecstasy under the flogger, *tantrikas* consuming vaginal fluids from a goddess, Christians eating the son of God. It's literally messy – bring a napkin! – and conceptually messy. But most of us who do transgender studies, queer studies, or religious studies also have this in common: we know that when things get messy is precisely when they get interesting. We know that the mess is generative, that it offers some of the most important insights, that when things are a bit untidy, we are probably beginning to really understand what we are studying. So here, where transness and religion and spirituality and queerness flow together, where things get really messy, is where we stand to gain the greatest insights.

This is also where the greatest possibilities for resistance may lie, as many scholars working at these intersections have noted. In dismissing religion out of hand, queer and trans studies lose the opportunity both to understand repressive forces more thoroughly and to find even greater spaces for trans and queer resistance, not so much in the sense that specific religious beliefs or practices may offer greater liberatory potential than others, but in the sense that queered and transed spaces, subjectivities, and modes of being are themselves spaces and enactments of resistance against a cisheterosexist world. In this final section, I briefly touch on some examples of these spaces of resistance from my work with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence: religionfuck and serious parody.

I draw the term 'religionfuck' from the activist and gender studies concept of 'genderfuck', which means, basically, 'fucking with' or disrupting

gender. Genderfuck places apparently clashing gender markers together in the same space, and in so doing it often radically disrupts binary gender norms. Genderfuck drag might take the form of a heavily bearded person with an unshaven chest wearing a slinky cocktail dress and stilettos, or someone with a man's haircut and a flat chest speaking in a soprano voice. One could argue that the 'reveal' of the drag performer, the point when the performer removes parts of their costume to reveal that the body underneath is not the body that a cissexist audience would expect, is also a form of genderfuck.

In writing about the Sisters, I have argued that the order engages in a related mode of 'fucking with' religion, and in acknowledgment of that parallel I term this mode 'religionfuck'. As I write in *Queer Nuns*:

If genderfuck challenges and even undermines cultural assumptions about the ways in which genders, bodies, and desires cohere, then religionfuck might be said to challenge and undermine cultural assumptions about the ways in which religious identities, roles, practices, beliefs, and appearances cohere. Religionfuck makes use of performance to raise pointed questions about so-called 'proper' religious embodiment and the authority of religious establishments to dictate the boundaries of religious roles (Wilcox 2018: 85).

One way in which the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence engage in religionfuck is by raising questions about what exactly a nun is, who has the authority to say, and why. For instance, Sister Soami, originally known as Sister Missionary Position (the name is slang for a normative sexual position), tells a story from early in the order's history of a time when the brand-new San Francisco house joined in a protest at the University of San Francisco, a Roman Catholic school. Walking across campus after the protest had ended, Sister Missionary Position encountered an irate Roman Catholic nun who demanded to know why he was wearing her habit. Sister Missionary Position recalls that he pointed out brightly that *she* was wearing her habit and *he* was wearing his own (Soami 2012). At its heart this amusing story indexes a contestation over who can claim the category of nun, and who cannot.

The Sisters do claim that category, and quite seriously, even as they also enact a stinging parody of the Roman Catholic Church and indeed of other aspects of Christianity. In another early protest Sister Vicious Power Hungry Bitch took a list of the order's demands and 'nailed' it to the door of a famous San Francisco cathedral in intentional imitation of Martin Luther, but with one crucial difference: she used a Lee Press-On Nail, a fake fingernail. I call this form of engagement 'serious parody', which I define

as 'a form of cultural protest in which a disempowered group parodies an oppressive cultural institution while simultaneously claiming for itself what it believes to be an equally good or superior enactment of one or more culturally respected aspects of that same institution' (Wilcox 2018: 70).

Serious parody of religion, specifically, is a form of religionfuck. Both serious parody and the broader category of religionfuck offer generative spaces for resistance to the cross-currents of power that course through norms of gender, sexuality, and religion. As I move into my new book project on spirituality in queer and trans leather and BDSM communities, I'm asking similar questions in an even more embodied sense. Many people in these communities find their spiritual engagement routed through intense bodily experiences. Tantalizingly, those very queer medieval Christians who described ecstatic experiences of Christ were also engaging in physical practices of pain and pleasure, with the ultimate top: the divine itself. What possibilities for resistance arise when top and bottom are both human, yet the ecstasy remains?

In this work, I have ranged over a number of promising intersections between trans studies, queer studies, and religious studies. I have moved from the co-constitution of sex, race, and religion to the intertwining of religion, economy, and the state, and I have indulged in a whirlwind tour of the queerness and transness of religion, from worlding worlds where goddesses are real to worshipping the side wound of Christ to reproductive futurism as progressive millennial temporality. I have argued not only that these are fascinating and fun intersections to explore, but that they matter far beyond our own pleasures, because it is also in the messy interstices that we can find the chinks in the armour of power. In this day and age, more than ever, we must find every route to resistance we can. Neither queerness, nor transness, nor religion can be set aside in that quest.

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Book Reviews

Johanna Lidén: *The Taizhou Movement: Being Mindful in Sixteenth Century China*. Doctoral thesis, History of Religion, Stockholm University, 2018, 289 pp.

Discussions of Chinese philosophy and religion far too often repeat stereotypical images of Confucian strictness vs Daoist spontaneity and Buddhist meditation vs the social engagement of Confucians. This book is an exception. It discusses a group of Neo-Confucians whose strictness is moderated by an emphasis on joy, and whose social activism is combined with a strong interest in meditative practice.

The group is the Taizhou movement of sixteenth-century China, in particular its founder Wang Gen (1483–1541), as well as Yan Jun (1504–96), Luo Rufang (1515–88), and He Xinyin (1517–79), who may all indirectly be considered followers of Wang Gen. One of the book's main arguments, however, is that the so-called Taizhou movement was not named as a separate group until a century later, when the scholar Huang Zongxi singled them out as a group and blamed them for social ills of which other Neo-Confucian groups had been (in Huang's mind wrongly) accused, including ultimately the fall of the Ming dynasty.

Lidén's book is sobering reading for anyone who believes in a Confucian society based on harmonious coexistence. Neo-Confucian thinkers and practitioners were by no means

immune to punitive action by the ostensibly Confucian authorities. Two of the four main characters discussed in the book were thrown into jail. Yan Jun was accused of theft, heavily fined, fiercely beaten, made to starve for seven days in prison, and then exiled to Southeast China. He Xinyin was jailed for his teaching activities and killed in prison. His killer is unknown. Although these two Taizhou practitioners may have been considered overly liberal and therefore to have incurred the wrath of more orthodox Neo-Confucians, it was by no means safer to be on the conservative side. In 1525 more than 230 conservative officials knelt outside the imperial palace in protest against certain ritual reforms. A large number were beaten so fiercely with bamboo canes that seventeen died, and 134 were imprisoned.

This latter incident is considered one of the reasons for the strong emphasis on 'self-protection' in Wang Gen and other Taizhou practitioners. The book does not always make clear to which Chinese characters the word 'self-protection' refers, vacillating between *bǎo-shēn* 保身 'protecting the body [= the self]' and *ān-shēn* 安身 'calming the body [= the self]'. In either case the focus is not only on the body as a physical entity (although that was certainly part of the story) but on the mind and ultimately the Way (*Dào* 道). The idea is that protecting oneself is necessary if one is to help and protect others. There is a similar

emphasis on 'self-respect' as a necessary condition for respecting others and even 'self-love' as a precondition for loving others.

The interplay between self and others may be seen as a parallel to the emphasis on meditation on the one hand and social activism on the other. Meditation is said to bring clarity of mind and ultimately to help the practitioner achieve an experience of personal enlightenment. Lidén suggests Wang Gen, Yan Jun, and Luo Rufang all claimed to have had such experiences and value them highly. At the same time, the social activism of the Taizhou practitioners included charitable works, community compacts, a strong emphasis on friendship and mutual protection, an equally strong opposition to the dumbing of the mind involved in rote learning for government examinations, the creation of private academies of joyful learning built on discussion, drinking ceremonies, singing, and poetry recitation, ideas about the equal distribution of land, and plans for the establishment of utopian societies for social welfare and schooling.

Since the Song dynasty (960-1279), the tension between book learning and meditative experience had been a hallmark of Neo-Confucianism, the most conservative groups arguing for the study of the classics and attacking interest in meditation as a Buddhist deviation and threat to orthodoxy. The Taizhou practitioners clearly came out on the experiential side, though mostly without references to Bud-

dhism. Luo Rufang took meditation to its extremes and needed help from his teacher Yan Jun to overcome the resulting mental problems. Yan maintained Luo spent too much time suppressing his desires, which would not bring him closer to enlightenment. Yan Jun's liberal attitude to carnal and material desire became another point of attack against his person, though even he sought to eliminate desire, albeit not by suppressing it.

The Taizhou movement's negative attitude to book learning partly reflected the background of many of its members as uneducated merchants rather than literati and government officials. Of the four main characters Lidén's book discusses, only Luo Rufang held a government post, and both Wang Gen and especially Yan Jun were often criticized for their lack of learning and bad writing style. Like other Neo-Confucians, they read the classics but focused on books such as Mencius with what they conceived of as an affirmative view of feelings and desires. They insisted that the commoner was, at least potentially, a sage. They also held in high regard the notion that the classics were but footnotes to one's own mind. This penchant for interiority and meditation lies behind the subtitle of Lidén's book: 'Being Mindful in Sixteenth Century China'.

Some of Lidén's discussions pertain to general and theoretical issues, especially the distinction between the 'religious' and the 'secular' and between a highly institutionalized

'school' and a loosely organized 'movement'. These discussions portray the Taizhou practitioners as a largely secular and informal movement that combined social activism with a charismatic, emotional, meditative, transcendent, and in this sense, religious orientation, partly directed at individual enlightenment. As the author concludes, however, ideas about the 'religionization' vs 'philosophization' of Confucianism are not very helpful, and these are not the book's strongest parts.

Lidén's book is much stronger in its close historical-philological reading of a wealth of primary sources from the Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as modern secondary sources. This is most obvious in the section on Wang Gen's ideas of protecting and respecting the self, and the one on Yan Jun's ideas and practice of meditation. In these sections, among many others, Lidén takes the required time to thoroughly explore her object of study and bring the reader close to the ways of thinking of the individuals in whom she is interested. In many other parts of the book this patience is lacking, and a wealth of scattered material is thrown at us in an often bewildering way.

A strength of the book is its broad and rich presentation of the Taizhou movement and its historical, cultural, social, and individual background. Since the Taizhou movement has not often been studied in detail in English, this is very welcome. At the same time, it makes

the structure of the book quite confusing. Beyond the concern with the Taizhou movement, it is difficult to discern a thematic approach, far less an overarching argument.

The book ends with a discussion of the demise of the Taizhou movement. Was it due to the arrest and subsequent exile of Yan Jun and the arrest and killing of He Xinyin? Or the criticism of them by other late Ming scholars? Or, as Lidén argues, the prohibition of private academies in 1579, which had been so central to the movement's activities? All these explanations may be part of the truth, but other factors may also have been at work. A loose organization built on charisma and emphasizing individuality may be unlikely to survive for many generations. Finally, since the movement was not in its own day singled out as a separate group, one may indeed doubt that it ever existed, in which case we can hardly speak of a demise at all. Lidén does not mention these two possibilities, but she provides us with the material upon which we can base such arguments. That in itself is no small achievement.

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Lauri Pitkänen, Jouko Alapartanen, Petri Hiltunen, Lea Kaulanen, and Elsa-Maria Kaulanen: *The Night's Edge – Old Lapland Tales* (English edition, translated from Finnish into English by Peitsa Suoniemi). Salakirjat. Tallinna Raamatutruikikoda 2018. Hardcover; pp. 170.

The collaborative work of each of the authors/artists behind *The Night's Edge – Old Lapland Tales* forms a graphic novel based on ethnographic studies by Finnish folklorist Samuli Paulaharju. Samuli Paulaharju (1874-1944) was a well-known Finnish ethnographer and writer, who travelled extensively throughout Lapland and Finnmark, collecting stories and tales from folklore about old beliefs and practices pertaining to magic and the realms of the supernatural powers residing in mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, and the sea. Paulaharju also worked as a curator for the Northern Ostrobothnia museum in Oulu, where there is an exhibition and books about his work and teaching.

The Night's Edge – Old Lapland Tales brings together old stories and narratives from the border areas of Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian Lapland, as well as the Finnmark coast in northern Norway. These stories and narratives are presented for the first time as painted illustrations in book form. The techniques and styles applied to such a narration are very effective in capturing details, symbolism, and

landscapes associated with each of the stories it presents. Conversely, such approaches help demonstrate how beneficial they are to the narratives as a whole, because they help to reveal many of the different perspectives presented within Paulaharju's original texts.

The role and function of the organic landscape, which is very much intertwined with peoples and identities in Arctic cultures and civilizations, plays a central role in relation to the contemporaneous creation of a foundation for the works. In this sense, the landscape provides a basis to elaborate the ways the past has been used as a source of inspiration and focus in a variety of settings. Some of the mythical locations the book presents contain numerous sensory thresholds and landscapes encompassing sacred places in connection with contrasting spheres. These spheres incorporate both besetting darkness and dramatic light depicted on and across the vast open spaces and wildernesses typical of Arctic landscapes. Moreover, topographies are themselves often comprised of great lakes and winter landscapes, and in the furthest north the land reaches the shores of the Arctic Ocean, which is also known as the land of the midnight Sun.

Within its fifteen colourful chapters, human beings encounter night creatures and monsters, as well as mythical beings and witches-shamans, some of whom are victims of

sorcery, cursed by spells and charms – processes that help to enhance and convey many of the concepts and principles, as well as taboos and customs, familiar to those versed in the art of magic. Moreover, the richness of the artwork influenced by Paulaharju's stories inspires each of the authors/artists to produce captivating illustrations of sometimes bright and warm landscapes, whilst others are more chilling and terrifying. However, in each case, their depictions effectively draw attention to the power of imagination and the importance of mythical thinking, and what can sometimes be a chilling vapor that emerges from within stories in relation to culture and traditions, especially those set throughout the course of the dark winter months.

Each artist has revisited Paulaharju's narratives, and their own themes and experiences are thus reflected in their contributions, some of which portray traditional costumes and ritual artefacts intricately tied to customs, traditions, language, and culture. Some accounts are short; others are longer and more detailed. The short stories, for example, are presented so that they merely seek very briefly to introduce themes to the reader. The story then concludes, leaving a restless appetite for further enquiry. The stories therefore demonstrate the power the dark side has to draw in the unsuspecting reader.

Perhaps the book's most outstanding features are seen in how

each of the contributors brings to life the characters in Paulaharju's narratives. These are expressed through a multitude of different contexts typical of Lappish tales, among them strange relationships that have taken place between human beings and beings from other realms of existence. Such forms of communication exemplify the deep longing human beings sometimes have for sensory connections with the realms of magic and enchantment, something outside themselves, which may help to alleviate their suffering or hardships, and recover spiritual powers or feelings from the past that may have been lost because of misfortune or theft.

Pitkänen's artwork captures the book's strongest themes related to Sámi stories that are animated through what is sometimes the fate of the shaman or noaidi in Sámi society, who is versed in witchcraft. The noaidi's power was typically used to attain food sources through hunting practices such as fishing, fowling, and trapping. The power and use of the spoken word through songs, incantations, and spells were also used for cursing and sorcery according to Christian priests, who also feature in the book, highlighting many of the central themes associated with the Sámi people, their spiritual traditions, culture, and historical background.

The plight of the Sámi shaman in the hostile Arctic environment reflects what is depicted within scripture regarding the eternal

struggle between the forces of good and evil in which Christian priests saw the Sámi embroiled. Temptation and orientation towards the darker side of life are the product of the illusory or temporary sense of power it brings. In addition, the consequences of breaking taboos and customs, or venturing into uncharted territory through the lure of malevolent powers are well captured in Pitkänen's contribution, as is the quest for romance, fulfilment and love, which seems largely out of reach for some of the characters. The struggle for survival for the pious and righteous in finding love, food sources, and navigation within the harsh Arctic landscapes to maintain an occupation or lifestyle are communicated well within the stories' contexts.

The texts are compelling and interesting, but in some cases, they lack a link word to bring a little more consistency to the story line. This may be a reflection of some of the challenges involved in translating Finnish into English. However, these are few and far between. At the back of the book Pitkänen has written a helpful series of summaries about the content of each of his stories. However, mention of these at the beginning of the volume would have been advantageous and more helpful in better communicating some of the meanings underlying the stories. The publication's design, layout, and explanations clearly show his depth of interest in the subject matters presented throughout. In addition, each

of the contributors has added a short explanation of the background and inspiration for their work, which is a credit to the publication.

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James L. Cox: *Restoring the Chain of Memory: T.G.H. Strehlow and the Repatriation of Australian Indigenous Knowledge*, 2018, Equinox, Bristol, CT.

In *Restoring the Chain of Memory: T.G.H. Strehlow and the Repatriation of Australian Indigenous Knowledge* emeritus Professor James L. Cox (2018) presents seven years of detailed research into the life and work of twentieth-century Australian linguist Theodor George Henry Strehlow. Aside from what has been referred to as his '*magnum opus*', the nearly 800-page *Songs of Central Australia* (1971), Strehlow is known for his predominantly Arrernte collection of Indigenous Australian secret-sacred knowledge and artefacts. Cox begins his text by considering several criticisms levelled at Strehlow by biographers and academics concerning Strehlow's claims of ownership in relation to the collection, before contrasting this picture with one of Strehlow as both a non-Indigenous Arrernte 'insider', entrusted with helping to preserve the Arrernte and Loritja religions, and as a Phenomenologist of Religion, whose 'detailed discussion of Arrernte myths, ceremonies, song and social organization [aimed] primarily to demonstrate to his readers that Arrernte traditional religion was consistent with the religious longings of humans everywhere' (p. 147). To this end Cox sees the work of Strehlow, as well as his own text, as primarily guided by 'the phenomenological mantra that nothing

human ultimately is alien to other humans' (p. xix).

In Chapter 1 Cox notes that Strehlow, the son of a pastor tasked with reviving a connection between the Lutheran Church and the Indigenous peoples in the local area, spent most of his childhood as the only non-Indigenous child at the Hermannsburg Mission, 130 kilometres to the west of Alice Springs, in Central Australia. It was here that Strehlow grew up speaking not only fluent English and German, but the local Australian language Western Arrernte (it is estimated that roughly 250 Australian language groups existed at the time of colonisation, none of which was the imported English). This early exposure to Arrernte language and life enabled Strehlow to gain the trust of local Elders when he returned to the area in 1932. There he spent most of the next four decades researching 'not only the language of the peoples of the central desert region, but also their culture, religion, social organization, stories, songs, sacred sites and ceremonies' (pp. 2–3).

Though Cox uses the word 'al-tjira' throughout his text to refer to Arrernte religion, the most current form of the word used by Arrernte people themselves is 'altyerr'. As I understand it, the word is in a state of flux, because preferred spellings change, sometimes quite rapidly, as the Arrernte work to regain autonomy over a language that was once at risk of being stifled by British colonisers. In this review I have chosen to use the spelling currently

preferred by the Arrernte (thank you to Christine Nicholls for making me aware of these continuing shifts).

After his death Strehlow's vast collection of Arrernte and Loritja knowledge and artefacts was purchased by the Northern Territory Government and housed predominantly at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs. This collection contains roughly 4,500 song verses and 100 myths, written in Arrernte and Loritja, 26 hours of film featuring 800 ceremonial acts, 8,000 photographs, 150 detailed genealogies, and 1,200 artefacts. Of particular importance in the collection are the *tjurunga* (secret-sacred objects) that are at the heart of the Arrernte's *altyerr* (the Arrernte religion). These predominantly 'thin, flat items made of stone or wood' (p. 71) connected the Elders Strehlow researched to 'the stories of the times of the beginning and 'symbolized the power and authority of tradition' (p. 73).

As Cox notes early on, Strehlow's critics have painted him as betraying the Elders who entrusted him with their secret-sacred knowledge by claiming personal ownership over this collection and selling photos of secret-sacred ceremonies to the German magazine *Stern*, which were then reprinted in the Australian magazine *People*. To this day Arrernte people are split concerning whether Strehlow was a blessing or a curse. In response to critics Cox argues in Chapter 8 that both the Arrernte Elders and Strehlow himself were very aware of external forces that sought to

destroy Indigenous Australian religious practices, and that both acted with the collective aim of preserving quickly disappearing secret-sacred Arrernte religious knowledge. For Cox, the recognition of Indigenous agency is crucial in both Strehlow's initial gathering of knowledge and artefacts, as well as the Strehlow Research Centre's current repatriation efforts. Contrary to his critics, Chapter 9 stresses that neither the secret-sacred knowledge nor the *tjurunga* are now considered the property of Strehlow, the Strehlow Research Centre, or the Northern Territory Government, but belong 'to the legitimate heirs who are re-connecting with past traditions through the medium of the Strehlow Collection' (p. 171).

In Chapters 6 and 7 Cox portrays Strehlow as someone both aware of and attempting to resist 'the gradual commitment of local [Arrernte and Loritja] people to Christian values, accompanied by extensive efforts by the Government to assimilate the Indigenous population into mainstream white culture' (p. 113). In a paper he did not live to deliver Strehlow expresses this when he says '[i]t is now five minutes before midnight and then will come that oblivion that has no end' (p. 5). As well as preserving disappearing Arrernte religious knowledge, it is argued that Strehlow also worked to challenge various theoretical and racist misconceptions that led scholars like Sir James Frazer, whom Strehlow quotes in *Aboriginal Religion* (1978), to claim that Indigenous

Australians were 'the rudest savages as to whom we possess accurate information' (p. 143).

A large portion of Cox's text is dedicated to providing a clear picture of the complex nature of Arrernte religious life, as Strehlow documented across numerous texts. In Chapter 2 Cox emphasizes the necessary and sufficient conditions of kinship systems and geographical location in his working definition of 'Indigenous Religion' before drawing these conditions out of Strehlow's descriptions of Arrernte religious life. To my mind it is Chapters 3 to 5 where Cox's work is at its most illuminating. Here, he shows how Strehlow's work weaves a coherent narrative through the Arrernte understanding of time, death, and the afterlife, while highlighting crucial differences between the *altyerr* creation ancestors and the Christian God.

Cox begins Chapter 3 by contrasting the Arrernte concept of '*altyerr*' with the problematic but popular English translation of 'Dream Time'. Strehlow argued that the complex notion of '*altyerr*' roughly translates as 'out of all eternity', 'from all eternity', or 'ever from the beginning' (p. 50), and was highly critical of anthropologists Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen's (1899) misinterpretation of the term in their *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, where they defined '*altyerr*' (spelled by them as 'alcheringa') as 'a name given to the far past times in which the mythical ancestors of the tribe are supposed to have lived' (p. 41). Here Cox also draws on Stre-

hlow's extensive research to bring out the complex relation between Arrernte individuals and their totemic ancestors, who Cox quotes Strehlow as claiming are 'born out of their own eternity' (p. 45). A picture of how Arrernte religion is embodied in everyday life is then developed in Chapter 4, where Cox outlines Strehlow's notion of a 'personal monototemism in a polytotemic community'. Of central importance is one's personal connection with a particular totemic ancestor through the location of 'where the future mother first became aware that she was pregnant' (p. 60).

Cox concludes this detailed picture of the Arrernte's *altyerr* in Chapter 5 with a discussion of what he calls Strehlow's 'phenomenological method'. This method, according to Cox, aims to provide 'a thorough study of the rituals through which religious beliefs come to life and become real to the participants' (p. 81). Cox traces aspects of Strehlow's accounts of Arrernte initiation, increase, and commemoration songs and ceremonies to argue that Strehlow's 'primary aim was to encourage understanding of Arrernte religion among a wide range of outside audiences, both in Australia and internationally', as well as to 'promote tolerance and improve relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians' (p. 83). In a relatively new 'white' country actively working to dissolve its numerous Indigenous identities, Cox shows Strehlow's work to be an invaluable tool of preservation.

Overall, Cox's text is an impressively detailed discussion of what

he admits is a 'tangled web of complicated issues' (p. 184) surrounding Strehlow and his life's work. At times this can feel slightly jarring, as Cox attempts to balance several perspectives at once, particularly in the later chapters, when Strehlow is positioned in relation to questions of knowledge, repatriation, methodology, and legacy. On the one hand, after the relatively easy transitions between the early chapters focusing on the Arrernte religion, when the text turns to positioning Strehlow within the academic, political, and social spheres of twentieth-century Australia, the reader may at times feel that their attention is drawn off into specifics that take them too far away from a clear picture of Strehlow's legacy, particularly in relation to the controversies highlighted at the beginning of the text. On the other hand, a reader interested in the particularities of each of these later chapters – for example the somewhat awkwardly placed discussion of Strehlow as an 'insider' and phenomenologist of religion in Chapter 7 – can easily locate a particular aspect of Strehlow of interest to them.

This minor issue aside, Cox's text provides an important window into the life and work of a man concerned with preserving the disappearing Indigenous Australian religions to which he was first exposed as a child, and to bring out important aspects of a common humanity in a young colonised country obsessed with whiteness. This text should be read by anyone interested in Stre-

hlow's life's work, as well as anyone interested in the study of Indigenous religions in general and Indigenous Australian religions in particular.

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Andreas Häger (ed.): *Religion and Popular Music: Artists, Fans, and Cultures*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, 263 pp.

Religion and Popular Music: Artists, Fans, and Cultures is one of the latest books to be published in the Bloomsbury Studies in Religion and Popular Music series. As its title suggests, the volume is structured in three parts, exploring artists, fans, and cultures. As such, it succeeds in covering quite a broad range of different contexts and central areas of interest in the study of religion and popular music more generally. Most of the contributors have backgrounds in disciplines other than the study of religions.

The editor's Introduction fulfils its basic function of situating the volume as a whole within a broader interdisciplinary field of research. However, it also attempts to directly relate the study of religion and popular music to several broader sociological debates on contemporary transformations in the (Western) religious field. While this attempt should be commended, the more precise connections of these broader debates with the contemporary relationship between religion and popular music unfortunately remain only imprecisely and vaguely articulated throughout Häger's discussion. The theoretical discussion included in the Introduction therefore seems a little odd, especially since we find few traces of any of the perspectives discussed in any of the volume's individual contributions.

Adrian-Mario Gellel's opening chapter in the 'artists' part explores the prevalence of religious themes and imagery in the music and music videos of Katy Perry through the lens of symbols. As is appropriate for an artist-focused exploration, the chapter devotes a fair amount of attention to Perry's religious/spiritual background. Most of the actual analysis focuses on the music video for the song 'Wide Awake' and the ways in which its bricolage-type use of religious symbolism can be argued to reflect changes in Perry's personal religious/spiritual interests and inclinations. Chapter 2, by Angela M. Nelson, explores black gospel music in light of the life and production of gospel singer CeCe Winans. Notwithstanding some terminological confusion, the chapter convincingly highlights the intricate boundary work required from artists who are faced with constant pressures to reconcile their identities as representatives of a particular form of religious-cultural musical expression with the entrapments of 'secular' celebrity. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the prevalence of religious themes and symbolism in the music of Judas Priest and Ozzy Osbourne, both major representatives of the heavy metal genre. Brian Froese's exploration of the Christian themes and symbolism in the musical production of Judas Priest simply provides what can only be described as a very general and highly speculative interpretation of the content of some of the band's lyrics. The chapter also completely

fails to engage with the by now quite extensive body of previous scholarship on the relationship between religion and heavy metal music. Michael J. Gilmour's exploration of the religious themes encountered in the solo production of Ozzy Osbourne follows a largely similar path. Almost completely devoid of any real analysis, the chapter reads more like a fragmented collection of personal musings than a scholarly text.

The second part, about 'fans', opens with Eloísa Martín's genuinely original and engaging account and analysis of the highly devoted fan culture surrounding the late Argentinian cumbia singer Gilda. However, while the chapter undoubtedly makes a valuable contribution to music fandom research, it only deals in passing with issues related to religion/spirituality. Chapter 6, by Sabina Hadzibulic, explores Nick Cave fandom in Serbia. The chapter illustrates how Serbian fans often perceive Nick Cave as a religious 'educator', and how his treatment of religion-related issues provides them with a valuable source of inspiration for personal religious reflection. However, while the title of the chapter might suggest that it is based on more extensive ethnographic fieldwork among Serbian Nick Cave fans, it emerges that it is based on Skype interviews with just five informants. Chapter 7, by Carla Schriever, brings us to what is termed the 'para-religiosity' of Prince fandom. In light of the views of a small number of European Prince fans, Schriever sets out to

explain fandom as a 'para-religious and secular practice in a world centered around the fulfillment of individual needs' (p. 108). This results in an account that engages in (sometimes highly) confusing conceptual acrobatics as part of a more general effort to render fandom an essentially religious or 'religion-like' practice. For example, Schriever both unproblematically and uncritically approaches fandom as a type of 'worship' and 'devotion', fans as 'believers' and 'devotees', and Prince as their 'para-religious' or 'spiritual' 'leader', and even 'Messiah' (p. 111). The author's un-reflexive employment of such concepts and categories results in an analysis that is far from convincing from a study of religions perspective.

The opening chapter of the 'cultures' part by David-Emil Wickström provides an interesting and focused discussion of the main ways in which a particular type of Russian rock music has come to intersect with Russian Orthodoxy and the current Russian political establishment. Through his analysis of the production of Russkii rok artist Konstantin Kinchev, Wickström persuasively shows that popular music can develop into a powerful medium for communicating and bolstering a particular brand of religion-infused nationalist sentiment and 'restorative nostalgia'. Chapter 9, by Thomas Bossius, turns to the presence of religious themes in Swedish country music. While this is a truly original and promising choice of genre and context, the

chapter mainly focuses on the ambivalent stance of Swedish country music artists towards the inclusion of religious themes in their lyrics. As such, the chapter arguably provides more of an analysis of artists than it does of 'cultures'. Somewhat strangely, however, the analysis focuses almost exclusively on examples from lyrics, reviews, and artist biographies from the early to mid-1980s. While the chapter contains some interesting observations, one can certainly question their validity for the present.

In Chapter 10 Jim Donaghey offers an excellently and engagingly written analysis of the intersection between the punk scene and religion in Indonesia. The chapter is based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in several locations throughout the country. Donaghey provides a solid account of the sustained and frequently religiously motivated repression to which the genre of punk has been subjected over a long period. Against this backdrop, he proceeds to account for Indonesian punks' attitudes towards religion, including punks who, in spite of the widespread religiously motivated persecution of the genre, continue to self-identify as Muslim. Chapter 11, by Andreas Häger, explores the use of Bob Dylan's music in the context of Protestant church services in Sweden and the United States. As such, it provides the volume's only exploration of the appropriation of popular music in an established institutional religious setting. The analysis covers both the services in

and of themselves and the broader discourses surrounding them, both justifying and critical. Chapter 12, by Melanie Takahashi, finally brings us to the topic of religion and electronic dance music. The chapter devotes much space to a discussion of the changing character of the DJ following the mainstreaming of EDM and the increasing democratization of access to music production technology. However, apart from a brief discussion of EDM and 'possession trance', the chapter contains few if any references to issues specifically related to religion. The chapter therefore seems a little misplaced and would have been better suited to another kind of volume.

Taken as a whole, the volume can be described as a highly uneven collection of essays that diverge greatly from one another with respect to originality, sufficient grounding in previous literatures in the field, and stringency and sophistication with regards to the employment of key analytical concepts and categories. Where the themes and contexts covered are concerned, the volume contains a few welcome contributions focusing on hitherto largely unexplored artists, genres, and cultural and religious contexts. However, it also contains several contributions that rather dully choose to go down some old and well-trodden paths in terms of both focus and analysis. Readers more solidly acquainted with the field will probably therefore be just as impressed by the volume's stronger contributions as they are disappointed by the weaker ones. A

volume of this kind should ideally strive to both advance the research in the field and provide a useful resource for teaching and instruction purposes. In spite of some strong contributions, the overall verdict must be that this volume falls a little short in both these respects.

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