

Beyond Insider Outsider Binaries: New Approaches in the Study of Religion

(working title)

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Call for Chapters

Volume Abstract

It has become clear that binary notions of religious belonging, based upon narrow views of religion as a monolithic category of participation, are no longer tenable within the Study of Religion. Similarly, recent scholarship has emphasised a relational approach to engagement with religious communities and individuals, critiquing previous conceptions of scholastic objectivity and participation. However, much pedagogy and research about religion and religions still uses insider and outsider categories uncritically. As methodology within the study of religion - and particularly the study of everyday religion - has developed in the last decade, a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be an insider or outsider is needed. Indeed, this focus upon the performance of everyday religious lives must lead to a re-evaluation of 'what religion is', thus complicating issues of situation and approach to religion and religious communities. In so doing, we complicate the associated relationships religious practitioners and scholars have with these religious individuals and communities. Quite simply, when we re-negotiate 'what religion is' and 'what religious people do', with the subsequent challenging of sacred/profane dichotomies, we create a landscape where structured and restrictive notions of 'insiderness' or 'outsiderness' may no longer apply. If this is indeed the case, we need to re-focus upon performed everyday narratives and malleable, often complicated and contested, religious identities at the overlaps and edges between researchers, individuals and religious hierarchies, communities and worldviews.

Call for Chapters

The editors seek high quality original scholarship from a variety of international and multi-thematic and multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of religion in contemporary contexts. Chapters may be

related to a particular religious community or tradition, or may focus upon a particular issue or methodological approach. Chapters should be 8,000-10,000 words in length. Examples of particular issues relevant to insider/outsider debate may include, *but are not limited to*:

- Teaching and researching religion ‘after the world religions paradigm’
- Sociological approaches to membership of religious communities
- Ethnographic issues for researchers in relation to religious communities
- Particular issues in researching controversial or problematic host communities
- Contested religious identities within and between religious movements
- Complicated processes of joining or leaving religious communities – converts, seekers, leavers and apostates.
- Theoretical and methodological approaches within the Study of Religion
- Public discourse on religious belonging and identity

Deadline: Potential contributors should email GDChryssides@religion21.com or s.gregg@wlv.ac.uk with a title, 250 word abstract, and 250 word personal profile, including institution affiliation and research profile, before **1st November 2014**. It is anticipated that final chapter submissions will be required by **1st September 2015**.