

BSA SocRel Chair's Response Day

Wednesday 21st November 2018, 10am – 4pm Imperial Wharf, London

Doing Diversity: 'Decolonising' the Social Scientific Study of Religion

Keynote speakers:

Professor Abby Day (Goldsmiths) & Dr Lois Lee (University of Kent), editors (with Professor Jim Spickard) - *Doing Diversity in Writing, Teaching and Research*, forthcoming 2020.

The social scientific study of religion and the programmes of study associated with it, have emerged in relation to a particular set of narratives, contexts, and assumptions. There is a danger that the 'elite few' have had a disproportionate influence on the shape of the discipline that can directly or indirectly 'exclude' the voices of minorities.

The work of everyone in the field of sociology of religion (and sociology more widely) is shaped by these dynamics and their significance is not only ethical and economic, but epistemic too, since they channel and ultimately distort knowledge in our field. In summary, biases towards elite actors impacts the comprehensiveness and therefore the quality of research and teaching, again, both within and outside academia.

To date, responses to issues of elitism in the academy have been to offer popular and scholarly critique, as well as initiatives aiming to revise curricula to better reflect non-elite perspectives. These interventions have been productive, but often ad hoc and potentially unsystematic in so far as various markers of difference are considered in isolation from one another, for example. In the study of religion, this can include a dismissive attitude towards the academic rigour of confessional religious curricula, rather than appreciating this as one among many 'ways of knowing'.

This one-day event intends to examine our discipline critically and constructively. We would like to consider ways in which our teaching and research can reflect the interests and voices of individuals and constituencies that have been, or are in danger of, being marginalised. As well as connecting to broader conversations about elitism and the production of academic knowledge, the growing incorporation of sociologists of religion from a range of minority faith communities is a topic of

particular interest. How are they responding to the dominant theories and vocabulary of the discipline, and perhaps transforming it to reflect the multi-faith nature of our society?

We welcome papers that address these issues, and enable scholarly reflection on the future shape of our field.

Please submit your abstract for consideration to Rachael Shillitoe rachael.shillitoe@york.ac.uk

Key Dates

- Registration open: Friday 28th September
- CfP deadline: Friday 12th October
- Notification of abstract: Friday 19th October
- Registration deadline Monday 14th November