

# **Religion and Society Research Centre**



## **Religion, Nation(alism) and Transnationalism Symposium**

**9<sup>th</sup> of July 2014**

**Venue – Building 5,  
Lecture Theatre 15,  
UWS Bankstown Campus**

With the permeability of borders and the greatly increased speed and volume of international communication and transportation, we have entered a new era of transnationalism. In this post-Westphalian world, religions are taking part in a network society that cuts across borders. If world religions have dominated the global sphere for centuries, today we are faced with a plethora of new religious recompositions. This symposium will explore the impact of globalisation on the relationship between religion and nation, religion and nationalism, and the changes that transnationalism has brought on religious groups (and vice versa).

This is an open and free event.

For catering purposes, please RSVP  
to [j.fishman@uws.edu.au](mailto:j.fishman@uws.edu.au)  
by Wednesday, 2 July 2014

(please indicate any special dietary requirements)



9:00 – 9:15

## Opening

9:15 – 9:30

Welcome by Professor Kevin Dunn, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Psychology

9:30 – 11:00

## Session 1: Religion and Nations

Chair: Greg Noble, University of Western Sydney

### “The Shape-Shifting Ummah as Rival And Buffer for National Loyalty in Islamic Asia”

*Julia Day Howell, University of Western Sydney*

Towards the middle of the twentieth century, while European countries were disentangling church-and state, in many other parts of the later-developing, post-colonial world, nation-building commonly made use of religious commitments to inspire the loyalty of peoples of diverse ethnic communities to the new nation-states. More recently, however, transnational Islamist movements, rapidly grown influential, have intensified their rhetoric of rivalry between religion and nation. This paper looks at the differing ways that the institutionalisation of religion in the state in two of Southeast Asia's largest Muslim-heritage countries buffers those states against the erosion of national loyalties. It contrasts Malaysia's strategy for limiting diversity within the *ummah* to Indonesia's greater (but perhaps shrinking) scope for diverse forms of both glocalised Islam, and commodified and hybridised Islam that draws on transnational secular culture.

### Elements of a Socio-History of the Relation Between Nation and Religion – the Case of Catholicism

*Patrick Michel, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*

The Nation has been key to the modernisation process in the social and the political spheres. Especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Nation paradoxically became itself an object of sacralisation, as well as creating a new type of enchantment. This led to the homogenisation of its social diversity which in turn produced a sense of ‘sameness’. Today, the reality of pluralism makes the fiction of ‘sameness’ untenable at the global level (it has not, however, quelled all forms of resistance against this global process). In this, we see a reaffirmation of a sense of ‘sameness’, and, at the same time, of some absolute beliefs. To explore these issues, this paper will focus on the paradoxical relations between the Catholic Church and the Nation and how these have led to complex contemporary dispositions in the organisation of the religious.

11:30 – 13:00

## Session 2: Pentecostalism and Transnationalism

Chair: Alphia Possamai-Inesedy, University of Western Sydney

### The Public Face and the Social Function of Sufism: the case study of the Nimatullahiya and Naqshbandiya Sufi Orders in Australia

*Adam Possamai and Milad Milani, University of Western Sydney*

This article is a comparative study of two well-known Sufi orders, the Khaniqahi (Nimatullahi) and Haqqani (Naqshbandi). This is a preliminary work that draws on in-depth qualitative interviews to examine the process of self-representation and localization of Sufism in Australia. Despite the fact that these Sufi orders each have established transnational networks and cyberspace presence, they also demonstrate strong local identities and indications of adaptation and appropriation. Recognised Sufi orders have historically operated through a complex local social network, often with links into local politics. This initial study, based on fieldwork analysis across Sydney and Melbourne, offers insight into the changing attitude of two contemporary Sufi orders of Australia on issues to do with religion, spirituality, consumerism and transnationalism.

### Paesani, Pentecostals and Politics: transnational migration and the politics of religious liberty in post-War Italy.

*Mark Hutchinson, University of Western Sydney*

The very welcome rise in interest in transnational Pentecostalism in Italy tends to focus upon refugee and migrant communities, with relatively little contextualisation in terms of the longer history of Protestantism in the country. Italy, of course, had its own very significant transnational community from as early as the 17th century. That this had a significant impact upon domestic politics in Italy can be seen through the lens of a particular event in 1952, when Italian pentecostals became the subject of legal and political wrangles between the Council of State and the Democristiano government (at question were issues of defascistisation and the legacy of the Italian liberal-democratic tradition). The vignette explored here traces the appropriation by Pentecostal communities, suppressed under the Fascist regime, of the language of human rights, the mechanisms of political power, and the broader Protestant/liberal tradition in Italy in ways which enable this functionally transnational community to re-embed itself in local community life.

14:00 – 16:15

### Session 3: Islam and Transnationalism

**Chair:** Arskal Salim, University of Western Sydney

#### Persianate Islam and its Trans-regional Spread

*Said Arjomand, State University of New York*

The civilisational area that grew in the Islamic era on the basis of the Persian language (as the *lingua franca*) centred on present day Iran but stretched far into Central Asia, as well as the Indian subcontinent. As such, its cultural and civilisational unity justifies calling it the Persianate world. With the revival of Persian, written in the Arabic alphabet in the tenth century, the major commentary of the Qur'an was translated into Persian and Imam Maturidi wrote a concise creed in Persian. Under the impact of Persian Sufi texts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a distinct Persianate variant of Islam emerged in that civilisational zone. The paper discusses its components as a topic in civilizational analysis via its spread to India in the thirteenth century, the Malay sultanate in the fifteenth century and subsequently into Indonesia and the Philippines.

#### Transnational Pentecostal Entrepreneurship: From Africa to Europe, the Challenge of a New Competitive Christianity

*Enzo Pace, University of Padua*

African Pentecostalism is not confined to Africa. As Africans move into Europe, many bring new ways of interpreting Christianity. The empirical research in Nigeria, Ghana and Italy supports the idea that African Pentecostalism has produced a world-wide socio-religious innovation. Two elements in particular emerge: high mobility in individual religious choices and the fluidity of the boundaries of religious affiliation. Migration processes have emphasised the latter to an even greater extent. The most important result of this innovation is, on the one hand, the radical change that affects the church model and, on the other, the emergence of a charismatic religious leadership. This paper deals with the idea of 'charisma' as a transnational 'company' or religious 'enterprise'. In this way, the new African churches that are transplanted in Europe contribute to the weakening of the traditional boundaries of Eurocentric Christianity and to loosening the link between national identity and belonging to a Christian denomination.

#### Bridging Islam East and West: Turkish Süleymancis as a Transnational Muslim Social Movement in Indonesia

*Firdaus Wajdi, State University of Jakarta and University of Western Sydney*

Globalisation and the communication revolution have allowed vastly increased flows of ideas and people across the Islamic world, generating new social forms. As is well known, these include transnational social movements and organisations originating in the Middle East and now stretching across the globe as far as East and Southeast Asia. What is little known is that some of the most active transnational Islamic movements in Southeast Asia are from Turkey.

This paper focuses on the lesser known of the major Turkish piety renewal movements, the Süleymancis. It looks specifically at linkages between Turkey, Indonesia and Australia, based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in those countries in 2012 and 2013. It examines what motivated the Süleymancis to grow beyond a national movement to a transnational organisation and how they selected Asian countries and cities as sites for branches. It also analyses how the organisation seeks to maintain its identity and values across the globe while at the same time adopting some local values. This paper suggests that the concept of 'opportunity structures' can help explain the kinds of adaptations the organisation makes to local conditions in new regions of the world.

16:15 – 16:30

### Conclusions

## Bios

**Saïd Amir Arjomand** (Ph.D, University of Chicago, 1980) is Distinguished Service Professor of Sociology and Director of the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies. He is founder of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies, Editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* and was Editor of *International Sociology* (1999-2005). His most recent books include *After Khomeini: Iran under his successors* (2009), *The Rule of Law, Islam and Constitutional Politics in Egypt and Iran* (edited with Nathan J. Brown, 2013) and *Social Theory and Area Studies in the Global Age* (in press 2014).

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**Julia Day Howell** is Adjunct Professor of the Sociology of Religion at the Religion and Society Research Centre in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at the University of Western Sydney. Trained in Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Stanford University, she has studied religious reform movements and marginal religions in Indonesia since the 1970s and worked on New Religious Movements of Asian origin in the Western world. Her recent work on Islam among Indonesia's cosmopolitan urbanites focuses on Sufi expressions of Islam and contributes to the comparative sociology of Islam in contemporary societies. It also addresses issues of Islam and religious pluralism in democratic states, and examines new forms of piety in modern, media saturated social settings. Her publications include articles in leading area studies journals, such as the *Journal of Asian Studies* and *Modern Asian Studies*, and those dealing with her primary disciplinary specialties like *Sociology of Religion*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Social Compass*, and the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. Her edited volume, *Sufism and the 'Modern' in Islam* (with Martin van Bruinessen), has been recently republished in paperback. She can be contacted at [j.howell@uws.edu.au](mailto:j.howell@uws.edu.au).

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**Mark Hutchinson** took a PhD in Australian intellectual History at the University of NSW (1989) and from 1990-91 was a senior researcher (with Professor Bruce Mansfield) on the Macquarie University 25 Year History Project (*Liberality of Opportunity: A History of Macquarie University 1964-1989*, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992). At the completion of that project, he took up the position as founding Director of a humanities research centre at Macquarie University. From 1998-2002, in addition, Mark was Assistant Director of the Currents in World Christianity Project at Cambridge University. From 2000-2010, he was Dean, Graduate Studies (later Dean of Academic Advancement), and Reader in History and Society, at Alphacrucis College, Sydney, and from 2011-2012 University Historian at the University of Western Sydney in preparation for the celebration of the University's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2014. The author and/or editor of 10 books and over 80 research papers, Mark has been a prolific contributor to conferences, research projects and media. He lives in Sydney with his wife, Alfonsa who has been a longsuffering witness to a life spent in front of a keyboard. Her observation of the work of historians is to say that her husband is 'good with dead people'.

**Patrick Michel** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and full professor (directeur d'études) at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris). In addition to his primary interest in Central Europe, his research focuses on the theoretical aspects of the relation between politics and religion.

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**Enzo Pace** is full professor of Sociology of Religion at the University of Padova (Italy) and a Visiting Professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. He is Past-President of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion and the co-editor of the *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion* (Brill). His recent publications include *Religião em movimento* (Estratégias Criativas, 2010, eds. with Helena Vilaça), *Le religioni pentecostali* (Carocci, 2010, with Annalisa Butticci), *Religion and Politics* (Brill, 2011, eds. with Patrick Michel), *Religion as Communication* (Ashgate, 2011), *Mapping Religion and Spirituality in the Age of Pluralism* (Brill, 2013, eds. with G. Giordan), *Le religioni nell'Italia che cambia* (Carocci, 2013, ed.) and *La comunicazione invisibile: religioni e internet* (San Paolo Editore, 2013).

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**Firdaus Wajdi** is a lecturer, currently on study leave, at the State University of Jakarta (UNJ). He is currently pursuing his PhD, sponsored by an Australia Leadership Award Scholarship, at the University of Western Sydney, Australia. As part of his postgraduate studies, Firdaus has conducted research in Indonesia, Canada, Egypt, and Turkey. His current PhD project examines Turkish Muslim transnational movements via a case study of the Süleymanis in Indonesia.

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