



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme

END OF YEAR REPORT FOR 2011

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1. Executive Summary

2011 was the penultimate year of the Programme. Twenty-two of the 75 awards completed during this year, and the main focus was on supporting award holders, disseminating the growing body of findings at Programme level, and planning for the end of the Programme, its legacy and impact within and beyond the academy.

For this reason, the year was very busy with conferences and workshops. Many of the latter ('impact events') were organised by awardholders in co-operation with the Programme (we helped administer, fund and run them). We also organised a number of events ourselves, including two very successful training events for PhDs and early career researchers. The Director also travelled extensively in the UK and abroad in 2011 in order to publicise the Programme and emerging findings.

It was also a year of planning and preparation for 2012, the final year of the Programme, in which we will bring everything to a conclusion in a series of high-profile events. Arrangements were put in place for:

- Westminster Faith Debates – six or seven public debates between researchers and prominent public figures to be held in Spring 2012
- Closing findings conference – 'Sacred Practices of Everyday Life' to be held in May 2012
- Closing findings conference – 'New Forms of Public Religion' to be held in September 2012

Part of the year was devoted to completing the Programme book, *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, which was submitted to Routledge in the autumn for publication in early 2012.

2011 also saw the launch of the new Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society book series. This will publish Programme (and related) work, and provides a particularly good opportunity for the publication of edited collections and specialist monographs which are not always easy to place with larger presses. Woodhead and Catto are the series editors.

The website was developed (new front page, new content) throughout this year, and is now established as a very important portal for the Programme, with total hits up from 648,000 in 2010 to 990,820 in 2011. Radicalisationresearch.org was also developed successfully by Mat Francis.

Staffing was unchanged.

Research Councils

The Programme continues to be well supported at the AHRC with Katherine Warren as our main point of contact, and Chris Wyatt keeps in touch at the ESRC. We continue to work closely with the AHRC comms team, Philip Pothen and Jake Gilmore.

Budget

The budget statements for 2011 are appended (Annex 1). There are three separate budgets for the Programme, since it is composed of three separate awards.

Main R&S Budget: overspends under some budget heads were compensated for by underspends in others, and overall there was an actual spend of £38,701 against a budget of £48,699. Main spends were on conferences and impact events. Total underspend of £9,998.

Phase II (Youth) Budget: The expenditure from this budget was on workshops and impact events. Total underspend of £9,569.

Youth Impact Budget: unlike the other budgets this budget is for the duration of the Programme. Last year we deliberately spent only £46,932 of £170,000, knowing that 2011 would require larger expenditures. This year we spent £78,553 on workshops, impact events, radicalization website, the youth impact competition and podcasts.

The total surplus on the year as a whole (£17,150) will be useful for 2012 when we are running several costly events, and investing in publicity materials and legacy.

Problems/Issues at Programme Level

There were no significant problems, and last year's aims were achieved.

2. Report of Programme Activities

2.1 Programme Management and Delivery

The Programme Director's Activities in 2011 have included the following (many of them as a team, in partnership with the RA and Administrator):

Strategic planning and prioritizing at Programme level. Plans are now in place up to Programme end in December 2012, and all remaining planned activities are in train. See 2.3 for details.

Overseeing the preparation of publications, conferences, and impact activities. See 2.3 for details of activities in 2011.

Evaluation. Ongoing collection of data for annual and final evaluation of the Programme, with the Administrator, Peta Ainsworth, doing much of the collation.

Overseeing the budget and liaising with AHRC and Lancaster University finance department (the budget is maintained day-to-day by the Administrator).

Liaison with Projects and PIs. The Director spoke personally with all PIs about the progress of their research over the last 12 months, assisted with queries, and put relevant people in touch with one another. Both Director and RA attend selected project events. In addition, the Director worked closely with a number of PIs in organizing joint events.

Dissemination. The Director travelled extensively in the UK and abroad in order to speak about the Programme and emerging findings. There was a particularly important opportunity in the USA, where the Director was invited to give a plenary lecture, and organize a panel of 4 award holders, on the Programme at the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. There were also invitations from S.Africa, Canada and several European countries. See Appendix 2, Programme Director's Activities, for details.

Public Face of the Programme. Responding to regular enquiries, requests for information (from e.g. journalists, academics), requests from the Research Councils for information etc. Making connections between various parties.

Identifying Opportunities and Challenges. The most important of these in 2011 was the opportunity to build a small team consisting of the Religion and Society staff plus the Rt Hon Charles Clarke (Visiting Professor at Lancaster University) and Elizabeth Hunter (Director, Theos Think Tank) to collaborate in organising the Westminster Faith Debates for dissemination of Programme findings to the policy world and media in 2012.

The Research Associate's Activities Rebecca Catto continues to work closely with the Director and Administrator delivering the activities listed in this report, as well on activities related to her particular focus on communications.

She maintains the Programme website, keeping it up to date with promotion of activities, findings and events, and liaising with the AHRC and ESRC to ensure the best promotion of the research. In 2011 she has overseen improvements to the site in preparation for the Programme's final year and continued to work with radio producer Norman Winter, including in commissioning of podcasts about *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*.

The RA is active within the team in the development of many of the Programme events and outputs. In 2011 she wrote the reports for the conferences 'Young People and Religion' and 'Young, British and Muslim', both available on the website.

She has overseen the second round of the Youth Impact Competition. Applications were sought by September 2011 and reviewed by the Steering Committee. The successful applicants are Anne Haour (for work teaching about Hausa identity through connecting schools in the UK and Niger), Kim Knott (on religious transmission amongst young British Sikhs), Gordon Lynch (training student journalists about the Palestine-Israel conflict), and Jonathan Scourfield (on digital storytelling and Muslim childhood).

The RA attends end of project events as and when appropriate, and in 2011 these included 'Imagining Islamism', FaithXChange and *Faerie Queene Now!* projects. She edited with the Director *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*. This also required production of the content for the companion website and liaising with Routledge and contributors.

The RA has helped establish and co-edit with the Director the Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society series. The work includes commissioning and developing book proposals, particularly from award holders. She continues to compose accessible summaries ('building blocks') of completed projects for the website and other purposes. She has been involved in planning the Westminster Faith Debates.

2.2 List of completed awards 2011

Grant Type	PI	Project Title
Phase I Large	James Conroy	Does Religious Education Work? : An analysis of the Aims, Practices & Models of Effectiveness in Religious Education across the UK
Phase I Collaborative Studentship	Elaine Graham	Study and evaluation of a process of Biblical translation and its impact on community identity: a case-study in contextual hermeneutics
Phase I Small	David Mosse	Religion, development and the rights of subordinated people: Christianity and Dalit social action in India.
Phase I Research & Network	Kamal Salhi	Performance, Politics, Piety: Music and Debate in Muslim Societies of North Africa, West Asia, South Asia and their Diasporas

Phase II Large	Nicola Madge	Negotiating Identity: young people's perspectives on faith values, community norms and social cohesion
Phase II Large	Betsy Olson	Marginalized Spiritualities: faith and religion among young people in socially deprived Britain
Phase II Large	Isabel Rivers	Dissenting academy libraries and their readers, 1720-1860
Phase II Large	Andrew Yip	Religion, Youth, and Sexuality: a Multi-Faith Exploration
Phase II Research Network	Gordon Lynch	Belief as cultural performance: towards a new framework for studying the religious and secular life-worlds of young people
Phase II Collaborative	Kim Knott	Sikh identity and the formation and transmission of "Sikhism" in Britain: Young Sikhs (18-30 years)
Phase II Collaborative	Simon Robinson	Deriving meaning in transition: the role of religion for young refugees and asylum seekers
Phase II Small	Pete Ward	Migration and Visual Culture: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Catholic Imagery and Popular culture among Polish Young
Phase II Small	Jenny Russell/Karen McPhillips	The Production of Religious Architecture in a Diverse World
Phase III Large	David Fergusson	Understanding the Encounter between Christianity, Psychotherapy and Spirituality in Scotland (1945-2000) in Theory and Practice
Phase III Small	Peter Coleman	Marking Transitions and Meaning across the Life Course: Older People's Memories of Religious and Secular Ceremonies in Eastern & Western Europe
Phase III Small	Gillian Douglas	Social Cohesion and Civil Law: The Family and Religious Courts
Phase III Small	Ewan Fernie	*The Faerie Queene* Now: remaking religious poetry for today's world

Phase III Small	Emma Hornby	Compositional Planning, Musical Grammar and Theology in Old Hispanic Chant
Phase III Small	Reina Lewis	Modest Dressing: faith-based fashion and internet retail
Phase III Small	Avril Maddrell	Landscape aesthetics, meaning and experience in Christian pilgrimage
Phase III Small	Lyndsey Moore	Islamism in Arab Fiction and Film, 1947 to the Present
Phase III Small	Chris Philo	The everyday urban spiritual: placing spiritual practices in context

2.3 Programme Communication and Outreach Activities

Books and Special Issues

A special issue of the journal *Religion, State and Society* (2011, vol. 39, nos 2/3) on 'Muslim Young People in Britain and Russia' based upon a series of workshops sponsored by the Programme and New Eurasia Foundation. Edited by Marat Shterin and Basia Spalek.

Ashgate AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme book series launched in June. The first book contracted in this series is *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* by Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Stephen Pattison and Mansur Ali, based upon their Programme project. Kim Knott and Peter Coleman have also had proposals for books from their projects accepted.

Religion and Change in Modern Britain (Routledge). Edited by Woodhead and Catto. In press.

Innovative Methods in the Study of Religion. All contributions received and submitted to OUP. Edited by Woodhead.

Public Programme events (academic)

Everyday Lived Islam, Copenhagen and Madrid. (5 UK and 25 international attendees, including 15 early career researchers and 3 PhD students). A book *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe* is in preparation.

New Spiritualities (workshop with Chris Philo's Programme project The Everyday Urban Spiritual), Glasgow (25 UK attendees)

Advanced Research Methods for the Study of Religion, a week's training course for 25 PhD students, UK and European, organised by Professor Gordon Lynch and assisted by the Programme. The course is now available online at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/religionmethods/index.html>

Religion and European Law (with Norman Doe, Cardiff), Oxford. (30 international attendees, 6 UK)

Plenary and Panel Session at the Society for the Social Scientific Study of Religion annual conference (with award holders Terry Biddington, Gill Valentine, Kim Knott and David Voas), Milwaukee, USA

Getting Published, Funded and Employed (with Abby Day, Kent), London (65 UK and 2 international attendees, including 18 early career researchers and 47 PhD students)

Public Programme events (beyond the academy)

Spiritual Progression in Economic Recession (with the William Temple Foundation, Leverhulme Trust and University of Kent), Chester. (50 UK attendees including 3 PhD students)

Young People and Religion (with Pete Ward, King's College London), London (101 UK and 3 international attendees including 8 early career researchers and 15 PhD students)

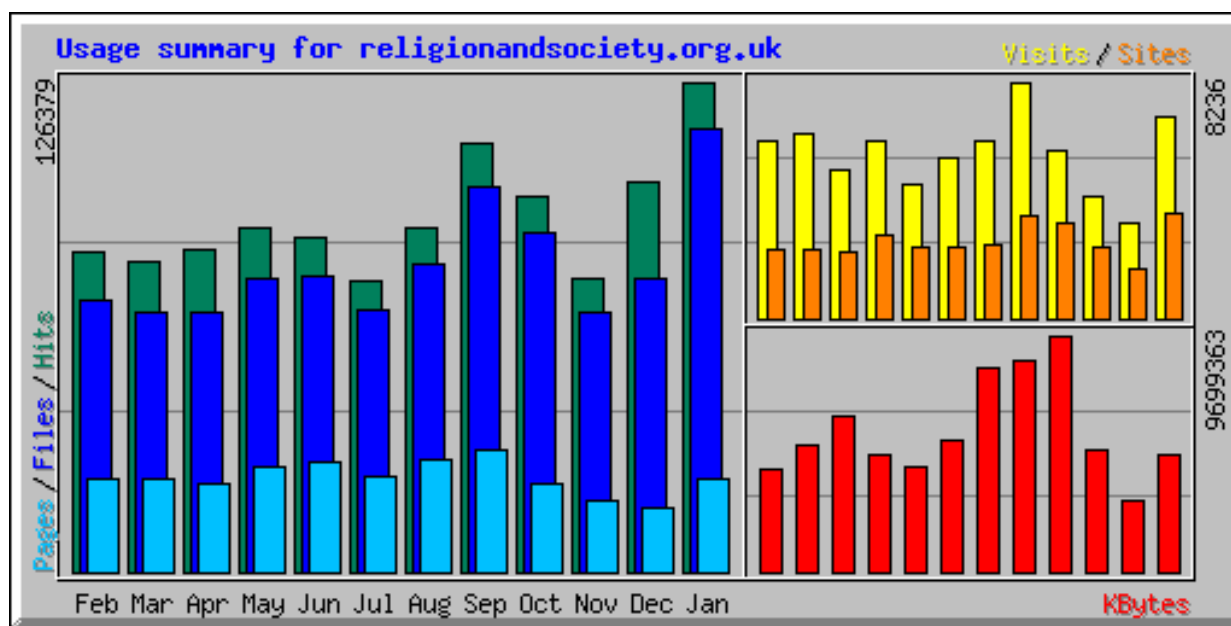
Mediating Modesty (with Reina Lewis' Programme project Modest Dressing), London. (60 UK and 3 international attendees, including 7 early career researchers and 11 PhD students)

Religion in Education (with Robert Jackson and Elizabeth Arweck, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit), Warwick (90 UK and 6 international attendees)

Religion and Health colloquium (with Heythrop College), London (30 UK attendees)

Young British and Muslim (with Sadek Hamid), Manchester (89 UK attendees, including 4 early career researchers and 18 PhD students) A book from the event is in preparation for the Ashgate series.

Website



Data Religionandsociety.org.uk 2011

The number of visits to the Programme website increased from a peak of 5881 unique visits per month in 2010 to 8236 in 2011. In December the redesigned homepage and new Faith Debates tab went live. The website is now set up for the final year of the Programme. The homepage now showcases the two final conferences, the book *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, and the companion website radicalisationresearch.org. The usability of the research and podcast areas of the website was also improved earlier in the year.

Traffic has climbed rapidly since the Westminster Faith Debates were announced. Spikes in interest have occurred when particular new material has been posted, such as the Mediating Modesty event podcasts. Project reports are popular, especially that from Jonathan Scourfield's project about Muslim childhood (see Annex 4).

In 2011 a Twitter account was set up for the Programme. This currently has 162 followers, with the number growing daily. Followers include the *Church Times*, *The Times'* religion correspondent Ruth Gledhill, think tanks, academic publishers and The Rt Hon Conor Burns. The Programme has been added to the British Embassy, to the Holy See's faith and politics list, plus eight other Twitter public lists. Posts have been reTweeted by Professor Kocku von Stuckrad of the University of Groningen and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, amongst others, and each Tweet brings between 13 and 145 hits to new items posted on the Religion and Society site.

Radicalisationresearch.org

The website has now been live for a year and traffic is increasing from around the world, including Russia, US, Australia, Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. The data show that users are spending sustained periods on the site accessing numerous pages. Matthew Francis has been employed on a part-time basis to edit the site. He continues to add short summaries of new publications, to write and post discussion pieces, and has commissioned experts to produce pieces for the site, such as Mark Sedgwick's essay on New Radicalisation in Scandinavia posted in November. Matthew has overseen an improvement to the site's design and accessibility which goes live in early 2012. He has also created a Twitter account to publicise new material. He will be speaking at the Westminster Faith Debate on radicalisation on 7th March 2012, which will be combined with a launch for the website.

2.4 Postgraduate Involvement and Activities

In 2011 there were 32 early-career researchers employed on the Programme and 16 PhD students.

The successful workshop on 'getting published, funded and employed' was held for 67 early career researchers in December.

2.5 Programme Linkages, UK and International

The Director (and Grace Davie from the SC) have worked closely with the Swedish Linnaeus research programme: 'The Impact of Religion: Challenges for Society, Law, and Democracy' (2009-2018), to build a platform for regular collaboration between the many research programmes on religion taking place across Europe. A first meeting of their directors was held in Uppsala in 2010, and a second one was held in 2011. A third is planned for 2013, and this initiative will continue for another ten years.

The Director is on the Advisory Board of the cross-council 'Global Uncertainties' Programme.

The Director is on the Advisory Boards of several European programmes on religion, including the EU project RELIGARE, PluRel in Norway, PCCR in Finland, and 'Religious Diversity' in Canada.

The Programme has close ties with the major Canadian 'sister' programme on religious diversity. The conference 'New Forms of Public Religion' in 2012 will be held in collaboration with the Canadian research programme 'Religious Diversity' led by Professor Lori Beaman in Ottawa.

3. Timetable and Milestones

3.1 Timetable and Milestones set for 2011

Phase I: Religion and Society

- Monitor completion of final projects and attend events **done**
- Write up and present findings on website ('building blocks') **ongoing**

Phase II: Religion and Society: Youth

- Monitor ongoing awards **done**
- Speak with all award holders who complete in 2011; attend selected project events **done**
- Write-up and present findings on website ('building blocks') **ongoing**
- Disburse more impact awards **done**

Phase III: Religion and Society

- Monitor ongoing awards **done**
- Speak with all award holders who complete in 2011 **done**
- Write-up and present findings on website ('building blocks') **ongoing**

Publications

- Submit *Innovative Methods* and *Religion and Change* to publishers **done**

Programme Publicity

- Update website on ongoing basis **done**
- Produce small Programme brochure **done**
- Plan other printed publicity materials **still under consideration**

Impact Events (for non-academic audiences)

Hold day conferences in collaboration with award holders on:

- Spiritual Progression in Economic Recession? New Agendas for Faith and Social Action **done**
- Young People and Religion: Findings from the Latest Research and its Practical Implications **done**
- Religion and Education **done**
- Religion and Fashion **done**
- Religious Discrimination Law: Comparative European Perspectives **done**
- Young, British and Muslim: Academic Research and Real Lives **done**

Academic Events

- Hold workshop on Lived Islam (for early career researchers) **done**
- Plan the major closing conferences of the Programme (2012): **done**
 - 1.Sacred Practices of Everyday Life
 - 2.New Forms of Public Religion

International

- Collaborate with Swedish Impact programme in co-ordinating European programmes on research **ongoing**
- More outreach into N.America **done (SSSR presentations)**

National

- Consider how best to interface with TRS in the UK **ongoing**

Data

- Continue to collect KPI data on an ongoing basis **done**

3.2 Timetable and Milestones for 2012Phases II-III Religion and Society awards

- Monitor completion of remaining awards and attend some end of award events
- Speak with all award holders who complete in 2012; attend selected project events
- Write up and present remaining award findings on website ('building blocks')

Publications

- Publication of *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (coed. Woodhead and Catto) and launch at final Faith Debate and BSA conference
- See *Innovative Methods* (ed. Woodhead) to publication
- See *Everyday Lived Islam in Europe* (co-ed. Woodhead) to publication

Programme Publicity

- Update website on ongoing basis and leave in a complete form
- Produce Programme publicity materials
- Proactive engagement with a wide range of media (print and broadcast) to disseminate Programme findings

Events

- Six Westminster Faith Debates (Feb-May), (London)
- Three day conference 'Sacred Practices of Everyday Life' (Edinburgh)
- Workshop 'Non-Religious Identities in Policy and Practice' (London)
- Three day conference 'New Forms of Public Religion' (Cambridge)
- Workshop: Programme Findings and Theology

International

- Continue to collaborate with Swedish Impact programme in co-ordinating European programmes on research

Data and Evaluation

- Finalise collection of KPI data and work with AHRC on evaluation of Programme

Wrapping up

- Monitor and close budgets
- Archive website
- Prepare final report and evaluation report
- Presentation to AHRC/ESRC?
- Final event for Steering Committee

Annex 2: Programme Director's External Activities 2011

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITIES – 1.1.2011 – 31.12.2011

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COST</u>
January 2011			
11 th January	Olson Project Workshop	Edinburgh University	Rail £11.40
18 th January	Wilde Lecture Series (LW presenting)	Oxford University	Refunded
21 st -22 nd January	Seminar on Religion in Public Life	Oxford University	Rail £81.20
26 th January	Pete Ward Project Exhibition	King's College, London	Rail £72
31 st January	Global Uncertainties Advisory Board Meeting	London	Refunded
February 2011			
9 th February	Meeting with Charles Clarke Maude Royden Club Dinner	London Lambeth Palace, London	Rail £50.50 Hotel £138
12 th February	Imagining Islamism Day	Storey Centre, Lancaster	None
17 th February	TRS Main Panel Meeting	London	Refunded
25 th February	Yip Project Findings Launch	Nottingham University	Rail £48.40
March 2011			
1 st March	Conroy Project Findings Launch	University of Glasgow	Rail £38.30
3/4 th March	Everyday Lived Islam Conference	Copenhagen University	Flight £164 Transfer £5.30
8 th March	Rivers Project Findings Day	University of Oxford	Rail £81.20 Meal £5.69
11 th March	8 th Trialogue Conference	Broadway, Worcs	Rail £71.70 Conference fee/

			Accomm/Meals £365
17 th March	Spiritual Progression Conference	University of Chester	Rail £31.90 Hotel £71
23 rd March/3 rd April	Presentations at KwaZulu Natal and Cape Town Universities	Pietermaritzburg/ Cape Town, South Africa	Flights (x2) £926.03 Hotel £411.26
April 2011			
25/30 th April	CFP Annual Team Meeting	University of Ottawa, Canada	Refunded
May 2011			
2 nd /5 th May	International Programme Directors Meeting	University of Uppsala, Sweden	Flight £104.60 Hotel/meals £558 (4 nights) Transfers £63
8 th May	Ewan Fernie Project "Redcrosse" Service	Manchester Cathedral	Rail £14
11 th May	New Spiritualities Workshop	University of Glasgow	Rail £52.60
18 th May	Young People & Religion Conference	King's College London	Rail £119.50 Hotel £130
June 2011			
15-17 th June	Reina Lewis "Modest Dressing" Conference	London College Of Fashion	Hotel £403 (3 nights) Train £99.50 Meals £27.60 Taxis £13.50
22-24 th June	John Harper Project "Experience of Worship"	St Fagan's Church, Cardiff	Train £96.50 Taxi £12
29 th June – 4 th July	SISR Conference	Aix en Provence, France	Flight £164.70 Hotel £350
July 2011			
20 th July	Faith XChange Workshop	Goldsmiths University,	Rail £101

		London	Taxi £30 (tube closed)
25 th – 26 th July	Religion & Education Conference	Warwick University	Rail £56.50 Taxi £13
August 2011			
1 st – 8 th August	Collaboration with Prof Lori Beaman	Canada	Flight £850.45 Accommodation free
13 th – 20 th August	Religion & Media Global Seminar	University of Hyderabad	Flight/Hotel Refunded Indian Visa £167.50 Meals £226.03
September 2011			
7 th – 9 th September	Beyond Belief Conference	University of Bradford	Refunded
13 th – 16 th September	Everyday Lived Islam II Conference	Madrid	Flight £199 Hotel/meals £299
21 st – 22 nd September	Gilliat-Ray - Muslim Chaplains Conference	Cardiff	Rail £95.40 Hotel/meals £132
29 th September – 1 st October	Doe - European Law Conference	Oxford	Rail £81.20
October 2011			
19-21st October	Accommodating religion in the public space. RELIGARE	Sofia, Bulgaria	Refunded
26 th October	Steering Committee Meeting	London	Rail £76.50
28 th – 20 th October	SSSR Conference	Milwaukee, USA	Flight/transfer £527 Hotel/meals £597
November 2011			
9 th November	Religion & Health Colloquium	Heythrop College, London	Rail £96.50 Meals £15 Hotel £250 (2 nights)

15 th – 16 th November	Religion, Emotion & The Imaginary Works	Berlin	Refunded
17 th – 19 th November	Religion & Gender Conference	Leipzig	Refunded
22 nd November	Young British & Muslim Conference (Programme Event)	Manchester	Rail £14 Hotel £108
December 2011			
3 rd December	Law & Minority Religions Workshop	London School of Economics	Rail £73
6 th December	Religious Literacy Programme Advisory Board	Oxford	Rail £21
7 th December	Meeting with THEOS Director	London	Hotel £144
16 th December	Getting Published, Funded & Employed (Programme event)	London	Rail £76.50 Hotel £132

Annex 3: Evaluation of the Programme 2011

Summarising the Programme's evaluation strategy, the success of the Programme will be measured by the extent to which it delivers (nationally and internationally):

1. Advanced research
 - (a) new findings
 - (b) theoretical advances
 - (c) methodological contributions
2. Postgraduate and early career training and development
3. Reinvigoration of the study of religion across many disciplines
4. Improved public awareness, debate and policy on religion

This year, rather than offering a mass of data relating to each goal, we are responding to the Steering Committee's comments last year, and offering a sample of more in-depth 'cases' to exemplify achievement in relation to each target.

1. Advanced research - findings and theoretical advances

The Programme is now sufficiently well advanced that we can start to see a number of areas in which new findings and theoretical advances are being made. For example:

Normalising Islam

A number of Programme-supported awards and co-ordinating activities are now beginning, cumulatively, to contribute to growing knowledge about British Islam and Muslims in Britain.

Projects and publications in this area include:

- Sophie Gilliat-Ray's on Muslim chaplaincy, which included a major conference in 2011 attended by numerous practitioners and featured by BBC Wales. *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy*, Gilliat-Ray, S. Pattison, S., and Ali, M.M., will be published by Ashgate 2013
- Jonathan Scourfield's on Muslim nurture, which included a family fun day in Cardiff and seminars for education and welfare professionals and has led to an article just published in *Sociology* (see Annex 4)
- The special issue of *Religion, State and Society* edited by Basia Spalek and Marat Shterin
- The June 2011 Guardian article 'Faith-based fashion takes off online' about Reina Lewis' project *Mediating Modesty* (see Annex 4), which was also featured on the Today Programme

The cumulative effect of this work is a gradual 'normalisation' of Islam in Britain. This counters a tendency within a number of disciplines, and in relation to a number of different issues, to treat Islam as exceptional and requiring entirely unique frames of reference.

The Programme research has helped normalise Islam in a number of different areas, for example:

1. In relation to youth studies – developing existing tools and approaches, Programme research has helped disaggregate and differentiate ‘young Muslims’, and ask questions about sub-cultures, cohort and generational characteristics, relations with non-Muslim young people, and common, everyday concerns such as relationships and education, rather than focusing merely on alienation and radicalisation (as in Scourfield’s project, and Gilliat-Ray’s project).
2. In relation to wider studies of social identity and ethnicity, including majority-minority relations, a number of Programme studies have helped to clarify, for example, the diversity of social identities in Britain, and position Muslims as normal rather than exceptional in having a complex relation to ‘Britishness’ and ‘British values’ (which are themselves policy constructs as much as lived identities). Recent work on the ‘super-diversity’ of identity (no longer contained in simple sets of ethnic categories) also re-positions young Muslims as non-exceptional.
3. In relation to the study of religion. Treating Islam as a ‘lived religion’ (as in a forthcoming edited collection from the Programme), for example, yields very different perspectives from treating it more monolithically, or solely in terms of its legal and political dimensions. Similarly, recent approaches to Islamism as a form of religious ‘revivalism’ or as a ‘new religious movement’ illuminate by drawing parallels with other familiar religious phenomena (as in Shterin and Spalek’s edited special issue on young Muslims).
4. In relation to religious violence, terrorism and ‘violent extremism’. Here too comparisons with existing forms of terrorism and non-state violence are proving illuminating, as is made clear in much of the research presented on the [‘radicalisationresearch.org’](http://radicalisationresearch.org) website sponsored by the Religion and Society Programme, and in Basia Spalek’s research.
5. The Programme has also been successful in opening up entirely new topics and approaches, e.g. Reina Lewis’s project on Muslim online fashion.

The Programme’s Young, British and Muslim conference reinforced and consolidated this ‘normalising’ approach (title of a keynote speech by the Programme Director), and has given rise to a volume being prepared by Sadek Hamid and Sophie Gilliat-Ray.

Auditing Religious Education

The Programme has sponsored the single largest body of research ever carried out on religious education in the UK, with large projects by Conroy et al and by Jackson et al, and smaller ones by Pike and others.

Much of this work was brought together and presented to an audience of academics, teachers and educational managers and professionals at the Programme's conference on Religion in Education (with Robert Jackson and Elizabeth Arweck, Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit), Warwick (90 UK and 6 international attendees).

Cumulatively, this research has revealed some very serious problems with the current provision of RE in the UK. These problems had not previously been articulated with such clarity, nor documented with such a large body of evidence. The research also has conclusions about good practice, and makes recommendations about how to improve RE provision in the UK.

Drawing on these findings the Programme Director briefed the Bishop of Blackburn who raised a question on this issue in the House of Lords. A meeting with the Secretary of State for Education is being planned, as is a debate in Westminster on the topic.

Analysing Religious Change in post-war Britain

One of the most significant intellectual and theoretical advances made by the Programme is in researching, describing, analysing and explaining how religion has changed in the post-war period.

Not only has a vast body of new research data which has been gathered on this topic by Programme research, some of it has been consolidated and made available in the new Programme book *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*.

Advances in knowledge are apparent in a number of areas, including:

- comparative study of how all the minority religions have achieved cultural and political 'settlements' in post-war Britain
- comprehensive analysis of changing media coverage of religion
- new data on how religions are being transmitted and reinterpreted by younger generations
- consolidation of knowledge on how government policy on religion (in welfare, education, public life etc) has changed under different administrations since 1979
- new reflection and analysis of the changing, and varied, faces of secularism and secularity in post-war Britain

- a new account of how images and articulations of God have changed within both the majority Christian (and post-Christian) and minority Muslim communities in Britain

Overall, *RCMB* offers a new theoretical framework for religion in modern Britain, which displaces the existing lens (secularisation theory) by viewing secularism as an active ideological force which competes with various forms of religiosity in the post-war period. The importance of 'welfare secularism' and its rise and fall for understanding the post-war period is particularly emphasised.

New forms of ritual and sacred practice

Many projects have uncovered, documented and analysed the ways in which religious ritual and practice have been changing and 'secularising'. These represent a major new empirical advance, and will be brought together at the Programme conference 'Sacred Practices of Everyday Life' planned for May 2012.

New Forms of Public Religion

After a long period in which religion was considered to be something 'private', academics have tried to understand the return of religion to public life in rather narrow ways, chiefly by focusing on the state's relations with religion in rather abstract terms (e.g. are religious reasons admissible in political debate), and/or on religion in 'civil society'.

Many projects on the Programme suggest a much richer conceptual and theoretical approach to public religion, by documenting its continuing presence in a whole range of social domains, including law, education, the workplace, leisure and tourism, fashion, and so on. This suggests a much richer theoretical framework for thinking about public religion, as well as filling in missing information about changing forms of public religion.

The planned conference on 'New Forms of Public Religion' in September 2012 will present findings from projects which have contributed in this area, and offer some overarching theoretical frameworks for advancing the study of public religion in a cross-disciplinary way.

Advanced Research - Methodological Advances

By drawing together over 50 studies – many from the Programme – at a conference on methods held in London in 2010, it became clear that the research being carried out is often innovative in terms of particular methods being used to study religion and, overall, by highlighting how important the combination of methods (in various ways) is for the study of the multi-faceted phenomenon of 'religion'. These insights have been developed in the book *Innovative Methods in the Study of Religion*, which is currently under consideration by OUP. With publication, these contributions will be able to influence the study of religion more widely.

2. Postgraduate and early career training and development

As the first cohort of PhD students on the Programme start to complete their doctorates, it is becoming clear how much they have gained by being part of the Programme rather than 'lone' PhD researchers.

Isabel Rivers' doctoral students, for example, have spoken of how they benefitted greatly from being part of a team working on religious dissent in Britain, both in terms of the intellectual stimulation, encouragement and support they received from one another, and in terms of their ability to work collaboratively on various aspects of their research. All have completed on time and gone into paid research posts.

It is worth documenting the case of another Programme PhD student in more detail. This illustrates how Kim Knott's collaborative research student, Jasjit Singh, has benefitted from his membership of the Programme.

Programme events attending during studentship:

- Workshop for Doctoral Students: PhD Research in Religion: Six Steps to Success' PG workshop, London, December 2008, co-organised by Knott, attended by Knott and Singh
- 'Innovative Methods in the Study of Religion', London, March 2010, attended by Singh
- 'Doctoral Methods Training Course', Oxford, September 2010, attended by Singh
- 'Religion and Society Programme Phase 2 Follow Up Conference', University of Lancaster, November 2010, attended by Singh
- 'Religion, Youth and Sexuality Conference', University of Nottingham, February 2011, attended by Singh
- 'Young, British and Muslim: Academic Research and Real Lives', Manchester Town Hall, November 11, attended by Singh

Papers presented (and feedback received) at Programme events:

- May 2009, University of Lancaster, Religion and Society Phase 2 Launch conference
- July 2010, University of Leeds, FaithXChange: Building up Research Capacity in "Religion and Youth" conference
- July 2010, St Catherine's College, University of Oxford, 'Young People and the Cultural Performance of Belief' conference
- November 2010, University of Lancaster, Religion and Society Phase 2 Follow Up conference
- April 2011, University of Ottawa, Religion and Diversity and Religion and Society Project Team Meeting 2011
- May 2011, Kings College London, University of London, Young People and Religion conference
- July 2011, University of Warwick, Religion in Education conference

By way of the Programme, which has publicised his research, Singh has made a number of media appearances, including:

- Numerous appearances on BBC Radio 2 'Pause for Thought'
- Two appearances on the panel of BBC Radio 4 'Beyond Belief'
- Appearances in the Sikh media on Panjab Radio and the Sikh Channel

Other opportunities arising from the Programme have led to Singh's appointment as:

- Member of advisory group for the 'Religion, Youth and Sexuality' project, University of Nottingham
- Invited contributor to events held as part of the 'Religious Literacy Leadership in Higher Education' programme
- Invited facilitator of an 'Internet Survey Workshop' at the Religion and Diversity Project Canada Team Meeting, University of Ottawa, 2011

In the last youth impact competition, Knott and Singh were awarded 'impact funding' to disseminate their research findings to the Sikh community – this will support Singh after completion of his PhD.

Singh writes: 'My experience as a member of the programme has allowed me to develop a number of skills and make many contacts beyond those which I would have been able to make as a lone research student. In addition, the collaborative nature of the project means that I will be well placed to apply for posts that feature innovation, impact and knowledge transfer, as well as research and teaching. Having secured Impact funding to disseminate my findings to the Sikh community over 2012, I wish to ensure completion of my thesis before these workshops begin.'

3. Stimulating the study of religion across many disciplines

A useful performance indicator is the range of journals in which Programme research has been published. At end 2011 articles had appeared in the following:

Journal Title

1. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*
2. *Annual Magazine of the ESRC*
3. *AVEK: Journal of the Promotion Centre of Audiovisual Culture*
4. *British Journal for Religious Education*
5. *British Museum Journal*
6. *Childhood*
7. *Children & Society*
8. *China Quarterly*
9. *Contemporary Buddhism*
10. *Critical Social Policy*
11. *Crucible*
12. *Discourse & Society*

13. *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*
 14. *Evangelical Review of Theology*
 15. *Finnish Yearbook of Media Criticism*
 16. *Geoforum*
 17. *Homo Oeconomicus*
 18. *International Journal of Public Theology*
 19. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*
 20. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*
 21. *Journal of Design History*
 22. *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
 23. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*
 24. *Journal of Fieldwork in Religion*
 25. *Journal of Pragmatics*
 26. *Journal of Refugee Studies*
 27. *Journal of Research in Character Education*
 28. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
 29. *Journal of Scottish Education*
 30. *Journal of Social Policy*
 31. *Journal of the Constructed Environment*
 32. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*
 33. *London Journal*
 34. *Management in Education*
 35. *Oxford Review of Education*
 36. *Policing & Society*
 37. *Practical Theology*
 38. *Prison Service Journal*
 39. *Qualitative Research*
 40. *Religion State & Society*
 41. *Res Publica*
 42. *Rylands Bulletin*
 43. *Social Action New Delhi*
 44. *Social Policy & Society*
 45. *Sociology of Religion*
 46. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions Journal*
 47. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*
 48. *Welsh History Review*
 49. *Women's Studies International Forum*
-

In 2011 the book *Survival and Success on Medieval Borders* by Emilia Jamroziak based upon her Religion and Society-funded project was published by OUP. OUP also published in 2011 *Dissenting Praise* edited by Religion and Society-funded Principal Investigator Isabel Rivers and her co-investigator David Wykes. Basia Spalek's *Counter-Terrorism: Community-Based Approaches to Preventing Terror Crime* is to be published by Palgrave Macmillan June 2012 and *Muslim Childhood*, based upon Jonathan Scourfield's project has been accepted for publication by OUP.

4. Improved public awareness, debate and policy on religion

Religion and Law

At Programme and project-level, there has been a significant contribution to the realm of law and religion. Most importantly, the Programme has coincided with, and contributed to, the new duty for 'Religion or Belief' assumed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in relation to new Equality legislation.

In 2009 Woodhead and Catto carried out research, including with many Programme award holders, sponsored by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. This gave rise to the EHRC report *'Religion or Belief': Identifying Issues and Priorities*. Equality and Human Rights Commission, Research Report 48. 2010. This document set the framework for the EHRC in thinking about its new responsibility for religious equality, and the research it should prioritise. Impacts include:

Subsequent commissioned research (e.g. recent report by a team at London Met, on which RA provided feedback, and which cites *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* extensively).

Recommendations taken up, e.g. concerning greater use of the principle of reasonable accommodation in legal cases dealing with clashes between different equality strands – a recommendation which may have influenced the Commission's advice to the European Court of Human Rights in September 2011 in the cases of Eweida, Chaplin, Ladele and McFarlane.

A recommendation concerning the resolution of disputes without resort to legal proceedings has also been endorsed by EHRC chair, Trevor Phillips.

In 2010 Woodhead received a further EHRC commission to carry out a review of research relevant to the EHRC's work on religion. This gave rise to the report by Linda Woodhead *Recent Research on Religion, Discrimination, and Good Relations*. Commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. 2011.

Award holder Paul Weller's report 'Religious Discrimination in Britain' commissioned on the recommendation of Woodhead and Catto's 2009 report was published in 2011, alongside the briefing paper 'Religion or Belief', which the Director and RA advised on.

The Programme's work also directly stimulated the establishment of the EHRC's Religion or Belief Network – maintained by Dr David Perfect – which now has 480 subscribers. We have worked closely with Dr Perfect on this initiative, and the Network has publicised Programme research and activities in its bulletin. For example, the October 2011 issue on 'Religion and Young People' featured brief summaries of six Phase II projects.

The Programme supported the European Consortium for Church and State Research in holding a workshop in 2011 on 'Religion and Discrimination Law in the European Union' in Oxford. It was organised by award holder Norman Doe and the keynote address was given by Sir Nicolas Bratza, President-Elect of the European Court of Human Rights. Reports from each of the 30 participating countries on equality and anti-discrimination legislation are available online and will be published in 2012.

Several projects on the Programme pertain to law and religion, such as Gillian Douglas's on religious courts in England and Wales which was completed in 2011. The project's report has been a popular download from the Religion and Society website, and issue no 41 of *Family Law* (2011) featured articles from a symposium run by the project, including by the Rt Hon Lord Justice McFarlane.

As well as the examples mentioned above, effort has been invested this year in organising a series of high profile 'Westminster Faith Debates' for 2012. These will showcase Programme research which has a bearing on controversial issues to do with religion in Britain today. Prominent public figures will respond to the findings, and an audience of politicians, policy-makers, researchers, members of religious bodies and the voluntary sector, and academics will participate. The series will be captured in a range of media, including video and podcast, will be presented for media uptake, and will issue in one or more on-line and hardcopy publications.

Annex 4: Sample of Projects Completed in 2011

How do British Muslims transmit the faith to their children?

Award Title

Religious nurture in Muslim families

Team

Principal Investigator: Dr Jonathan Scourfield (Cardiff); Co-Investigator: Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray (Cardiff); Research Assistants: Asma Khan (Cardiff), Sameh Otri (Cardiff)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant



Muslims in Britain are amongst the most successful of religious groups in transmitting their religion to the next generation. Over 77% of adult Muslims say they practice the religion they were brought up in compared to 29% of Christians. This research finds that far from relying on schools and the state to nurture religious knowledge, Muslims actively take things into their own hands. Parents and grandparents work together to make sure their children learn about the faith in the home and special classes.

Jonathan Scourfield and his team at Cardiff University, in a project funded by the Religion and Society Programme, came to these findings by analyzing the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey and working with Muslim families in Cardiff. They interviewed 60 families, including 99 parents and 120 children aged twelve and under, from a range of Islamic schools of thought and ethnic backgrounds. In 24 families children also kept a mix of oral and video diaries, and the team observed Islamic education classes.

They found that all but one of the families who had children arranged for them to learn to read the Qur'an in Arabic (starting as young as five years old). Many children attend religious education classes at least three times a week, and are generally very knowledgeable about Islam. The children describe learning to be a Muslim as learning a set of rules, and they focus on concrete details and dramatic stories. Within families, mothers are typically the main teachers, with some fathers' work making it very difficult to spend time with their children. In some mixed ethnicity families and smaller ethnic groups, parents have to work out religious nurture for themselves. TV, DVDs, Internet and Islamic songs help support children's learning about Islam.

Both parents and children appreciate Qur'an, Arabic and Islamic studies classes which are 'fun'. They tend to prefer schools with a good mix of ethnicities and

religions, plus a number of Muslim children. State primary schools are perceived as involving quite a lot of Christian content and Christmas is described as a particularly challenging time of year for the families. Parents appreciate the lack of harassment in Cardiff overall and the increase in facilities available for Muslims since their own childhoods. All the families interviewed shared a commitment to Islam, though some criticised particular mosques, especially for lack of facilities for women.

The project suggests that if religion is central to children's routines, and they spend their time in Islamic places (including home), then their faith is likely to become central to their identity. Strong social networks seem to reinforce Muslims' identification with Islam. Being in a minority, with hostility coming from the media and elsewhere, might also strengthen a Muslim identity. The frequent repetition of religious terms and texts makes for effective transmission of religion.

The project ran a series of innovative dissemination and 'thank you' events for the families who participated, and for the wider community, including a Family Fun Day. It also offered some practical suggestions arising from the research, such as mosques making themselves more accessible to women and girls, and provision of homework clubs after school integrating some religious education.

Does 'Changeless' Shari'a Change?

Award Title

**Network of British
Researchers and Practitioners
of Islamic Law**

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY *for* ISLAMIC LEGAL STUDIES

Team

Principal Investigator: Professor Robert Gleave (Exeter)

Award Type

Phase I Research Network

Is Islamic Law changing or changeless? Most Muslims believe it is both, for whilst the divine, unchanging, ideal Law does not change, the law as it is actually practised in Muslim communities is more mutable. With regard to the latter, it is therefore legitimate to ask how it has changed over time. This unique research network was interested in this question and, above all, in how the traditional schools or madhhabs which mediate the law have changed in the modern period. They found that there has been both more and less change than previously imagined.

The starting-point of the network was to bring together scholars and practitioners of Shari'a – two groups who might not otherwise interact. The conversations took place under the leadership of Professor Robert Gleave. Each of the four network sessions examined change and continuity in a different tradition of legal interpretation (madhhab).

In the premodern period, most legal activity in the Muslim world – be it teaching, writing, judging or legislating – took place within a particular madhab. These often took very different positions on fundamental legal questions due to differences in interpretation of the sources and in the views of the madhhabs' founders. There is a widespread perception that the modern period was corrosive of the influence of the madhhabs, and that they lost their authority as Islamic law was modernised under the influence of Western models. Yet the network confirmed that in some parts of the world, both in Muslim majority and minority contexts, the madhhab has in fact retained its importance, even when it has changed in order to respond to challenges posed by modernising societies. Despite the perception that the madhhab lost its significance, laws which serve as substitutes for madhhab rulings can still almost always be traced back to opinions within one of the schools.

How the traditional structures of the Hanafi and Shafii schools had developed over time, and whether they could survive the pressures on religion and law in the contemporary period, was also discussed. With their history of both competition and interaction, the traditions have dynamic structures which allow them to adapt, survive and even thrive. However, they demand intellectual training, and the breakdown of traditional authority structures makes this more difficult. The almost universal respect they once enjoyed has diminished as a result of many factors, and their main rivals remain secular lawyers. The network noted that current research has focused far more on the Maliki than Hanbali school, which may indicate the growing influence of Salafism and Wahhabism on the traditional territory of the Hanbali school. Meetings also covered developments in Shi'ite jurisprudence and on Islamic Law in minority contexts.

The network has led to several new initiatives, including the composition of an Islamic inheritance guide for practitioners, and requests for academic members to give advice on various commercial law disputes and to serve as expert witnesses in some legal cases. It has also spurred the establishment of HEFCE's special interest group on Islamic Law, a connection with the International Society for Islamic Legal Studies, and a collaboration with SOAS.

Religious rituals continue to mark the life course, even in ex-communist countries

Award Title

Marking Transitions and Meaning across the Life Course: Older People's Memories of Religious and Secular Ceremonies in Eastern and Western Europe



Team

Principal Investigator: Professor Peter G. Coleman (University of Southampton)

Consultant: Professor Joanna Bornat (Emeritus, Open University)

Consultant and Coordinator: Dr Daniela Koleva (University of Sofia)

Research Assistants: Dr Hilary Young (Museum of London); Dr John Spreadbury (University of Southampton)

Interviewers and Researchers: Dr Teodora Karamelska (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences); Dr Galina Goncharova (University of Sofia); Vanya Elenkova (University of Sofia); Dr Ignat Petrov (Medical University, Sofia); Dr Sidonia Grama (University of Cluj-Napoca); Dr Ileana Benga (Folklore Archive of the Romanian Academy); Simina Badica (Romania Peasant Museum); Anamaria Iuga (University of the West of England)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant

This project set out to compare life-course rituals in Bulgaria, Romania and England by interviewing older people who have lived through the social, political and religious transitions which have affected these countries during and after the Second World War. The three countries were selected because they represent a highly secularised country (Bulgaria), a more actively Orthodox one (Romania), and a Protestant and somewhat secularized one (UK). In Bulgaria and Romania, during the Soviet Era, the atheistic communist regimes worked hard to replace religious rituals (national and personal) with secular ones.

Surprisingly, however, the research team of Peter Coleman, Joanna Bornat, Daniela Koleva and European researchers, found that religious rituals remained important to people in all countries throughout their lives, and were never supplanted by secular ones. In this respect, there was much less difference between Bulgaria and Romania than was predicted. It was in fact in Britain that there has been greater (recent) uptake of secular options for marking the key transitions of birth, marriage and death.

The team has found remarkable constancy in experience of religious ritual over the course of participants' lives, despite official disapproval and some consequent fear in Bulgaria and Romania. Individuals merely adapted their ritual practice to the context, conducting baptisms and marriages covertly in the home rather than church. Grandmothers were found to have been important in ensuring ritual continuity, and communal religious rituals give older women social presence and power that they might otherwise lack.

Using life history interviews with people aged 75 and over, the project answered an urgent need to capture these living memories through a unique combination of oral history, gerontology and the study of religion.

Religious courts are not in competition with secular ones

Award Title

Social Cohesion and Civil Law: Marriage, Divorce and Religious Courts

Team

Principal Investigator: Professor Gillian Douglas (Cardiff University)
Co-Investigators: Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray

(the Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK), Professor Norman Doe (the Director of the Centre for Law and Religion), Dr Russell Sandberg (a lecturer in law at Cardiff)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant



London Beth Din
Court of the Chief Rabbi

The Archbishop of Canterbury's lecture in 2008 on 'Civil and Religious Law in England' raised a storm of protest about the existence of 'competing' forms of religious law in Britain. Yet Gillian Douglas's in-depth study of the working of three kinds of religious court in the UK, suggests that there is no ground for alarm. Such 'law' does not compete with British law, its 'courts' are not adversarial in the same way, and they are not seeking recognition by the state.

Between 2010 and 2011, Gillian Douglas, Professor of Law at Cardiff University, led a year-long project funded by the Religion and Society Programme investigating the operations of three courts in relation to marriage and divorce. These were the Orthodox Jewish court the London Beth Din, the Roman Catholic matrimonial tribunal for Wales, and the Muslim Shariah Council of the Birmingham Central Mosque. Interviews with staff were complemented by workshops, observation, and analysis of statistics.

The project found that none of these courts undertakes binding arbitration on marital issues. They tend to offer guidance to individual parties. They are flexible and relatively autonomous in their decision-making, drawing upon religious law, but not tightly bound by precedents. Applicants freely choose to seek the guidance of these courts, and Jewish and Muslim litigants often 'shop around' for a court or judge who is known to be reliable, sympathetic or well-recognised by the community. They can also have recourse to normal British law if they chose, and in all these respects they have more choice than the majority population.

Decision making takes place in different ways in the three different courts. Divorce constitutes roughly 20% of the Beth Din's activities and it fulfils a supervisory role, witnessing the correct procedure for the document signifying a divorce (the *get*). The *get* certificate is not issued until a civil Decree Absolute has been obtained, helping Jewish women avoid becoming an *agunah* (chained wife), which can happen if a husband will not agree to a civil divorce. The Shariah Council's applicants are almost always wives as men can divorce unilaterally under Islamic law. The Council spends about 90% of its time on matrimonial issues, with over half the marriages not recognised under English law. There is a mandatory mediation stage before the court can be satisfied that there are valid grounds for declaring the marriage over. A civil divorce is considered sufficient, meaning a religious divorce is not also required for the parties to remarry under Islamic law. All the work of the Catholic National Tribunal concerns marriage. A civil divorce is required before seeking an annulment. The approach is inquisitorial, and a marriage can only be annulled if there are grounds for considering that it was not genuinely sacramental. The staff in all three courts work part-time and many are voluntary. Applicants pay a fee. All the courts advise that only civil courts may give binding rulings in relation to the consequences of the divorce.

Modesty is in Fashion

Award Title

Modest Dressing: faith-based fashion and internet retail

Team

Principal Investigator: Professor Reina Lewis
(London College of Fashion)

Co-Investigator: Dr Emma Tarlo (Goldsmiths)

Research Associate: Dr Jane Cameron
(London College of Fashion)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant



This project, led by Reina Lewis at the London College of Fashion, offers a very different view of religion by looking at it in relation to consumer culture rather than the state or religious institutions, by focusing on women not men, and by looking at fashion rather than sacred texts or established institutions.

It is well known that various religious groups require female members to dress modestly, including Islam, Mormonism, orthodox Judaism, and various forms of conservative Christianity. What is less well recognised, but highlighted by this research, is that religious women also like to look fashionable, that there is money to be made by catering to that need, and that the internet has proved a powerful vehicle for retailing modest fashion across religious boundaries.

Between 2010 and 2011 Reina Lewish, assisted by Emma Tarlo (Goldsmiths) and Jane Cameron (LCF), and funded by the Religion and Society Programme, conducted visual and textual analysis of brand websites, blogs and discussion fora as well as carrying out interviews with brand representatives, designers, marketers, retailers, bloggers and consumers. The team also carried out research and observation in Salt Lake City, Brooklyn, Manhattan and London. What they found was a booming online, international industry catering for a market ignored by mainstream fashion.

Whereas previous generations had had to make their own clothes and modify high-street items, women in the age of the internet have much more choice. Some of the founders of the most successful online modest-dressing brands started their enterprise to help their daughters dress modestly with style. The web provided an ideal means of expanding their business. More recently, associated blogs, discussion fora, e-zines, and tie-ins with retailers have become an important part of the 'industry'.

Overall, the project found that the internet has created deterritorialized and safe spaces where women can interact within and across faiths in ways which few religious scholars had imagined possible.

Modern Pilgrims in Ancient Landscapes

Award Title

Meanings of Christian pilgrimage

Today

Team

Principal Investigator: Dr Avril Maddrell
(University of the West of England)

Co-Investigator: Dr Veronica Della Dora
(Bristol)

Co-Investigator: Dr Alessandro Scafi
(University of London)

Co-Investigator: Dr Heather Walton
(University of Glasgow)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant



Christian pilgrimage is often thought of as something which lies in the past. This project, led by Avril Maddrell, studied contemporary forms of pilgrimage to Christian sites, and asked about the meanings for participants today.

Three sites were selected for study: Metéora in Greece, a complex of Orthodox monasteries and shrines; the Subiaco monastery in Italy which encloses the cave

(Sacro Speco) where St Benedict lived as a hermit; and the Keeils (early Christian buildings, mostly ruined) around the Isle of Man. The researchers observed at the sites, conducted interviews with visitors, organisers, clergy and locals and consulted archives and other materials, such as visitors' books and souvenirs on sale. A questionnaire had been planned, but there were concerns from organisers that this method would be too intrusive. Instead, the project innovated by distributing self-addressed postcards to visitors which they could then complete and return at their leisure.

A major focus of the project (led by a Geographer) was on the space of landscape and its importance. The striking beauty of all the sites suggests that landscape 'aesthetics' have always been important in pilgrimage. In both past and present this may be overlaid with other sacred meanings, including national ones (still found to be important in relation to all the sites), religious and personal ones. A spirituality focused around relics and saints and traditional rituals is still important for some, but in the contemporary context a reverence for 'nature', and resonances with personal spiritual beliefs, are equally or more important for some visitors and pilgrims.

The dimension of time and history also emerged as very important in the pilgrimage experience, with the sites serving as a bridge between the past and the present. An assumed continuity of spiritual experience was important for some pilgrims, as was a sense of learning from the past, and engaging with national heritages.

In short, these modern Christian pilgrimage experiences are shaped by the landscape, the religious milieu, the locality and its history, as well as individuals' expectations and beliefs.

Yoga and meditation offer stillness in the midst of busy urban lives

Award Title

**The everyday urban spiritual:
placing spiritual practices in context**

Team

Principal Investigator: Professor Chris Philo (University of Glasgow)

Research Associate: Dr Louisa Cadman

External Consultant: Dr Jennifer Lea (Loughborough University)

Award Type

Phase III Small Grant



Modern urban British life is fast-paced, and supposedly secular. Numerous surveys suggest that institutional frameworks of religion are less important to individuals than they used to be. We also know that more people are turning to new spiritual practices

– which often draw upon elements of what are very old spiritualities in other parts of the world. Yet the significance of these spiritual practices is disputed. In a one-year project funded by Religion and Society, Chris Philo, Louisa Cadman and Jennifer Lea set out to advance this debate by investigating what place yoga and meditation actually have in ordinary people's daily lives in Brighton and Hove.

Yoga and meditation were found to be offered in a variety of places in the local area. There are dedicated studios and Buddhist and other meditation centres. Gyms, dance studios, church halls, schools and shops and cafes all rent rooms to yoga teachers, and some to meditation groups. Postural yoga tends to be offered in commercial centres and seated meditation in Buddhist or secular therapy contexts. There is evidently a lot of choice and demand. Between 2010 and 2011 the team asked 26 people to keep intensive 'time-space' diaries of their daily spiritual practices in relation to the rest of their lives. They subsequently interviewed 22 diarists, alongside 15 yoga and meditation teachers and centre managers/administrators.

Although often characterised as shallow and consumerist, findings from the project suggest that these forms of contemporary spirituality involve some depth of engagement, and tend to be of quite considerable significance in people's lives. There is variation: some participants are purist in their affiliations and deliberately refuse to 'pick 'n' mix' practices and beliefs; others readily acknowledge and even reproach themselves for a lack of religious-spiritual constancy – but all were found to be genuine in their *own* sense of seeking an elusive form of well-being which is embodied, mindful and, to that end, 'spiritual' (usually with a lower-case s). Such well-being is considered by all of them a very important aspect, or antidote, to their busy lives, and a counterbalance to constant pressures to earn, perform, achieve, and spend. The practices are felt to give some perspective on life.

Often people had taken up yoga/meditation during a period in their life of transition or crisis, especially related to mental or physical health. They appreciate the relaxation and stillness, the absence of a goal orientation and the integration of mind and body (though some can feel body-conscious and competitive in class). The project found that for some people these practices become meaningful opportunities for 'truth-telling' by oneself to oneself (and to others). Such 'truth-telling' is understood less in terms of grand accounts of religious 'Truth', and more as situated conversations (again with oneself and/or others) about possible conditions for attaining a meaningful perspective on things. These accounts are bound up in respondents' narratives with talk about the absolute centrality of learning to be 'present' in (and 'mindful' of) the immediate here-and-now.

The importance of consumer capitalism, and its attendant inequalities, as a milieu for these practices was also confirmed. Yoga and meditation are not equally open to all – classes cost (and a certain degree of physical mobility is required for yoga). Some interviewees spoke of competition between providers and even 'yoga wars'. What is

interesting is that late capitalism simultaneously creates the space for this thriving spiritual market to develop, and the practices provide users with space to question and escape some of its demands. By such means retreat is being found in the heart of the city as well as in rural idylls, and fast-paced consumers are attempting to break engrained patterns of life in order to become somewhat slower, more reflective, participants in 21st century urban life.