

Greetings from the ISA Research Committee on the Sociology of Religion!

Report from the Mid-Term RC22 Conference on “Re-thinking Religion in the Public Sphere in the 21st Century Global South”

University of Ghana, Accra, November 2019

We the Local Organizing Committee have had the privilege of pulling off what many have described as a very successful RC22 Mid-Term Conference. As a prelude to the main conference a two-day Research Design Training was offered to 28 mainly University of Ghana graduate students. This training was entirely sponsored by the School of Arts, University of Ghana, while the main conference received sponsorship from RC22 and the College of Humanities, University of Ghana.

The President of the International Sociological Association (ISA), Sari Hanafi, who attended the conference, praised this model of training graduate students before the RC22 Conference. In his December 2019 Letter from the President to ISA Members he stated: “... I would like to highlight the extraordinary AWW and methodology workshop conducted by Jim Spickard, Anna Halafoff, Afe Adogame, and Michael Okyerefo for early-career African sociologists, on the occasion of the mid-term conference of the Research Committee on Sociology of Religion (RC22) in Accra, Ghana ... I hope other RCs will do the same as a side event at their conferences.”

Conference participants came from Australia, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Greece/UAE, India, Nigeria, South Korea, Spain, The Philippines, and the USA and presented a wide range of high- quality papers related to the theme of the conference.

The two high points of the conference were the keynote address by Professor Sari Hanafi on “Sociology of Religion in Post-Secular Societies” and the Plenary of Professor William Emmanuel Abraham on “What Did Jesus Do? Some Theological Reflections”. Professor Abraham, a renowned Ghanaian philosopher who now lives in the United States of America, is well known for his book *The Mind of Africa*. He has dedicated his retirement to writing theological works.

Social and cultural aspects of the program included an excursion to the Shai Hills Resource Reserve and the conference dinner that showcased sumptuous Ghanaian culinary skills, which participants said they very much enjoyed.

It is remarkable that all RC22 executive members attended the conference (Afe Adogame, President; Mar Griera, Vice-President; Anna Halaffof, Secretary/Treasurer), and the indefatigable Jim Spickard, former RC22 President!

We are grateful to all participants for attending and our sponsors for making the programme possible.

Michael Okyerefo
Rose Mary Amenga-Etego
Genevieve Nrenzah



Sari Hanafi & Afe Adogame



ISA President Sari Hanafi, flanked by RC22 Officers & LOC Chair

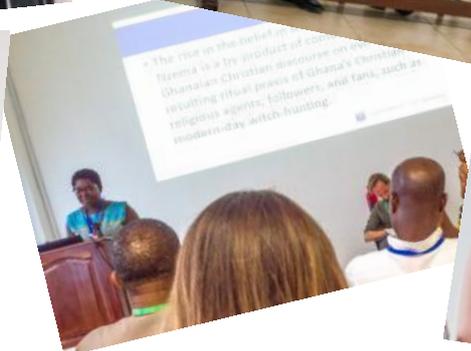
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Professor William Abraham

Photos from the Mid-Term RC22 Conference

(more photos at <http://bit.ly/39rTTwn>)





Workshop Participants

About the Pre-Conference Research Design Workshop for University of Ghana PhD Students and others

Jim Spickard and Anna Halafoff co-facilitated the Workshop with the help of RC President Afe Adogame and the LOC members.

The Workshop was based on Spickard's Research Basics: From Design to Data Analysis in Six Steps (Sage 2017). The first morning covered the six-step process:

1. Develop a good research question
2. Choose a logical structure for your research
3. Identify the type of data you need
4. Pick a data collection method
5. Choose your data collection site
6. Pick a method of data analysis



Step #3 is key: you need to know the kind of thing you are looking for before you choose a method of finding it. Surveys, in-depth interviews, detached observation, participant observation, etc. each produce different kinds of data. The workshop gave participants resources for choosing which method is appropriate.

The first afternoon's session focused on interview and survey research and on ethnography. Halafoff described several of her own interview and survey projects, and Spickard described two of his ethnographic studies. Participants were given time to practice interview techniques and were able to post questions to the workshop leaders and to other faculty present.

The second day's morning and early afternoon sessions focused on quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The workshop leaders identified free software to help scholars carry out both.

The workshop ended with a session entitled "Your Research Project". Participants briefly described their current work and where they were having trouble. RC22 President Afe Adogame and the three members of the local organizing committee joined the two workshop leaders to make suggestions about how to solve the problems that participants raised. Spickard commented about that part of the session: "Everyone learns from each other's research issues. Supportive discussion helps everyone make progress."

You can download the workshop materials at <http://bit.ly/32M9S5A>

Here is one participant's description of the Workshop:

I found the research workshop to be very helpful in a number of ways. I would in a few paragraphs below share my experiences at the research workshop.

Firstly, the workshop was well organised. Though I wish we had enough time to delve deeper into the issues presented, I was glad that the key areas of concern for me, with regards to research were touched on.

Secondly, the workshop was hands on. We had the opportunity to put into practice what we learnt through the group assignments given to us during each session. I also had the opportunity to share my ongoing research work and received constructive feedback from the instructors on what to do.

Finally, not only did the facilitators share with us their knowledge and experiences in research but went further to make available to us some online resources and the materials they used to instruct us. Prof. Spickard also permitted us to not only use his teaching materials but also to modify them for our own use. How kind of him. To have the opportunity to learn from scholars of high repute instructing us was another experience altogether.

I appreciate the organizers for putting together this insightful research workshop which came to us at no cost. My expectations were far exceeded. I have decided to become a member of the RC22. Committee on the Sociology of Religion (RC22).

Samuel Adjornor, PhD Candidate
Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon

Fourth ISA Forum of Sociology

Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 14-18, 2020

“Challenges of the 21st Century for Sociology of Religion”

Key Date

Registration deadline for presenters: 19 March 2020

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/forum2020/registration/call.cgi>

RC22 has sessions on the following themes:

- [Beyond Western Centricism of Religion: To Study Africa Inspired Religions in the 21st Century](#)
- [Civil Society and Religion](#)
- [Culture, Religion, and Gender Inequality](#)
- [Early Career Sociologists of Religion Session](#)
- [Overlapping Trajectories: Religion, Migration and Health Paths.](#)
- [Religion and Practical Ethics: Bioethics, Environmental Ethics and Legal Ethics](#)
- [Religion, Environment, and Social Movements](#)
- [Religion, Spirituality and Morality in a Post-Secular Age](#)
- [Religions, Social Movements and Politics Circulation, Production and Politics of Knowledge in the “Christianisms of Liberation” and Its Adversaries](#)
- [Religiosity in Transition; Change of Roles Over the Time](#)
- [Religious Dynamics in the Public Sphere in Latin America](#)
- [Religious, Spiritual and/or Non-Religious Young People](#)
- [Revisiting ‘religion’ from a Gender Perspective](#)
- [The Public Role of Religion](#)
- [The Reciprocal Influence of Religion and Demography](#)
- [Where Is Religion in Popular Religion? New Approaches for an Old Debate](#)
- [Wtf? \(“What the Faith?”\) – Peering Anew into the Conceptual Domains of “Religion”, “God”, “Spirituality”, “Faith” and Related Constructs](#)

Please address your questions to any of the Program Coordinators:

- Juan Cruz Esquivel jucesquivel@gmail.com
- Roberta Bivar Carneiro robertabivar@gmail.com
- Eloísa Martín eloisamartin@hotmail.com

Forum Registration 2020



PRESENTERS REGISTRATION
Deadline March 19, 2020

Why your RC Membership Matters

1. Membership in the ISA as a whole (\$35-\$225 for 4 years, depending on your country; half that for students)
2. Membership on the Research Committees. (\$10-\$30, depending on your country)

Joining RC-22 accomplishes two things:

- **First, the number of members we have determines how many sessions we get at the World Congress and at other conferences. Your RC membership gives more people a chance to participate in these events.**
- Second, we use the money from dues to fund interim conferences, special events at the main conferences, and the Varga Prize for New Generation Scholars.

This helps build our discipline and makes our get-togethers more fun.

If you are not an RC- 22 Member, please join!

If your membership has lapsed, please renew it asap!

Officers, Board, and other Leadership, 2018-2022

The RC22 leadership team consists of three Officers and ten Board Members, plus appointees for special projects. The Board and Officers serve for four-year terms, beginning and ending with the [ISA World Congresses](#). Each major world region is represented. The Past President serves on the Board *ex officio*.



Officers:

President: Afe ADOGAME, Princeton Theological Seminary, USA

Vice-President: Mar GRIERA, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Secretary/Treasurer: Anna HALAFOFF, Deakin University, Australia

Board Members:

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Lovemore NDLOVU, Zimbabwe

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Hossein GODAZGAR, Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, UK

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Juan Cruz ESQUIVEL, National Research Council, Argentina

North America

Jualynne DODSON, Michigan State University, USA

Conrad HACKETT, Pew Research Center, USA

Past President: Jim SPICKARD, University of Redlands, USA

Contribute to Our Next Newsletter and News/Events Blog

1) Tell us about the sociology of religion in your part of the world:

We'll publish short pieces in future newsletters of 500-750 words from members. Please send them to newsletter@isa-rc22.org

2) Write a think-piece about the sociology of religion.

What direction do you think our discipline needs to go? What are the cutting-edge issues? What projects do you find most exciting? We'd like short pieces (up to 750 words) that are scholarly but also provocative. Please send them to newsletter@isa-rc22.org

3) Tell us about your books and awards. We'll publish significant news from members as space allows, and will post such news on our blog.

Send material to: newsletter@isa-rc22.org