

SOC 8: Religion and Contentious Mobilization

Overview

- **Course Organizer:** Teije Hidde Donker, td402@cam.ac.uk
- **Lecturers:**
 - Teije Hidde Donker, td402@cam.ac.uk
 - Guest lecturer: Manali Desai, md644@cam.ac.uk ?
 - Guest lecturer: Ella McPherson, em310@cam.ac.uk ?
- **Aims and objectives of the paper:**

At the end of this paper students have the ability to critically

 - differentiate, compare and assess key debates and core concepts in A) studies on the sociology of religion and B) social movements and contentious politics. These include, but are not limited to, concepts and debates around public religion, secularism, (post-)secularization and the secular; and social movements and contentious politics.
 - relate these debates to sociological discussions on globalization, minority rights and (the social implications of) media and technology.
 - assess how the mobilization of religion intersects with the above issues through exploring historical and contemporary examples of contentious mobilization in the US, Europe, Middle East and Asia.
- **Course content:** From Narendra Modi's use of Hinduism in nationalist mobilization, Jihadist movements in the Syrian civil war and European right wing movements referring to a Christian heritage: religion is a divisive topic in contemporary societies today and a crucial component of contentious mobilization around the globe. In this course we explore the ways in which religious beliefs, practices and objects are used in contentious mobilization and how their use intersects with broader social conflicts today.

We first explore how, historically, contention regarding religion in public life emerged with the creation of modern nation states. We relate this historical exploration to analytical debates regarding social movements and the sociology of religion. We then, on the one hand, place these debates in relation to more general sociological questions related to globalization, minority rights and technology. On the other, we critically assess their utility by applying them to four contemporary cases: Religion and populism in the US; Hinduism and Anti-minority Mobilization in India; Catholicism and Nationalist Mobilization in Poland; and Transnational Jihadism in the Arab World.
- **Mode of teaching and supervision arrangements:** This course is taught in twelve two-hour lectures in Michaelmas and Lent (a total of 24 hours).
- **Mode of assessment:** The paper will be examined by a three-hour paper at the end of the year. Students taking the examination answer three questions out of twelve.