



EXPLORING THE POST-SECULAR

April 3 & 4, 2009

Yale University - Henry R. Luce Hall - 34 Hillhouse Avenue

There has been a great deal of talk in recent years suggesting that we have entered a "post-secular" age. Much of this is a response to the resurgence of politicized religion on the world scene. But what, if anything, does the term "post-secular" even mean? Have we really entered into a post-secular age? And if so, what implications, if any, does this have for the social sciences? Do these developments imply a new approach to the study of religion? A wholesale reconstruction of social science? A shift towards social philosophy? Is there such a thing as "post-secular social science"?

This conference brings together a number of analysts of religion and its entanglements with the world in an attempt to assess these questions. We will address the possible meanings of religion and of the various terms with roots in the term "secular": secularism, secularity, secularization. Without some grappling with the question of what religion is, it is very difficult to say what secularity or secularization might entail. We will explore the extent to which the "return of religion" is a product of an actual upsurge of religiosity around the world as opposed to greater scholarly attention to religion. We will also examine the ways in which the global religious situation may compel us to reconsider how we think about both religion and social science.

Friday, April 3 - Rooms 202 & 203

Introductory Remarks 8:50am

Philip Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, and John Torpey

"What is Religion? Categorical Re-configurations in a Global Horizon" 9:00am

Richard Madsen, University of California at San Diego
discussant: Deborah Davis, Yale University

"What Comes After the Secular?" 10:00am

Aditya Nigam, Center for the Study of Developing Societies
discussant: Arvind Rajagopal, New York University

"Things in their Entanglements" 11:15am

Courtney Bender, Columbia University
discussant: Paul Lichterman, University of Southern California

"Recovered Goods: Durkheimian Sociology, Virtue Ethics, and Post-Secular Theory" 1:00pm

Philip Gorski, Yale University
discussant: Steven Lukes, New York University

"Obama's Deep Pragmatism" 2:00pm

Hent de Vries, Johns Hopkins University
discussant: Janet Jakobsen, Barnard College

"On Doing Religion: Critical Reflections on Rorty, Derrida and Vattimo with Special Reference to 'Asian Religions'" 3:15pm

Bryan S. Turner, Wellesley College
discussant: Fred Dallmayr, University of Notre Dame

"Secular Liturgies and the Prospects for a 'Post-Secular' Age" 4:15pm

James K.A. Smith, Calvin College
discussant: Pericles Lewis, Yale University

"Religion and Knowledge in the Post-Secular Academy" 5:30pm

John Schmalzbauer, Missouri State University
discussant: Peter Steinfels, Fordham University

Saturday, April 4 - Luce Hall Auditorium

"Religion as Cultural Repertoire, or, the Post-Secular as Scholarly Turning Point" 8:30am

Penny Edgell, University of Minnesota
discussant: Tomoko Masuzawa, University of Michigan

"Probing the Post-Secular Turn: Bridging Grandiose Claims and Lived Realities" 9:30am

Michele Dillon, University of New Hampshire
discussant: David Little, Harvard University

"A (Post-)Secular Age? Religion and the Two Exceptionalisms" 10:45am

John Torpey, The Graduate Center, City University of New York
discussant: David Morgan, Duke University

"Spiritual Politics and Post-secular Authenticity: Foucault and Habermas on Post-Metaphysical Religion" 11:45am

Eduardo Mendieta, Stony Brook University
discussant: Ludger Viefhues-Bailey, Yale University

Concluding Roundtable 1:30pm

Craig Calhoun, SSRC & New York University
José Casanova, Georgetown University
David Kyuman Kim, SSRC & Connecticut College

Conveners: Philip Gorski, John Torpey, David Kyuman Kim

Conference Sponsors: The MacMillan Center Initiative on Religion, Politics, and Society; The Center for Comparative Research at Yale University; Social Science Research Council; co-sponsored by The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

The conference is free and open to the public. No registration is required. For information, contact the conference coordinator, Ateş Altınordu, at ates.altinordu@yale.edu.

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