

## Social Significance of Religion Implementation Group

### Summary and Action Points

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 13:00-15:00

**In attendance:** Leslie Francis (Chair, CES), Adam Swift (PAIS), Andy Mason (PAIS), Steve Kettell (PAIS), Helen Spencer-Oatey (CAL) Judith Everington (CES), Elisabeth Arweck (CES), Richard Sutcliffe (CES)

**Apologies:** Matthew Clayton (PAIS), Tania ap Sion (CES), David Lankshear (CES), Ursula McKenna (CES), Julia Ipgrave (CES), Alex Smith (Sociology)

### Discussion Points:

- Steve Kettell's work around non-religion is centred on the Atheist Movement, looking at how atheist groups intersect with existing political structures, and on the internal politics among organisations. Such questions cannot be examined with political science alone. Steve is increasingly interested in cognitive science of religion (and the key debate about whether people have a pre-disposition to religion). This is a label that can be used with particular funders (e.g. JTF in the US) and can be quite successful.
  - Research interests in CES on non-religious worldviews (teacher's teaching of non-religion) and
  - Several PhD Students in CES whose theses are concerned with non-religion
  - Conceptual and Empirical problems where further conversations between Steve and WRERU would be beneficial
- Andy Mason – interested in a strand of critique of multiculturalism that says that policies aimed at promoting it have undermined integration
  - CES research suggests young people are less concerned with integration and that could be explored further
  - Interesting to explore this question from an empirical standpoint
- Adam Swift – Developed normative theory of the family of parents rights over children. Three scholars in PAIS interested in this question, but all have different views. Debate has policy implications for state regulation of schools. Have recently applied to the Spencer Foundation for a three year project on Faith schooling.
  - Clarified that this debate doesn't emerge from case law in family courts, which is often messy
  - Would be useful to introduce an empirical element into the debate
- Various points of synergy in CAL. i) discourse ii) own interest is around intercultural differences (within which religion is one type of intercultural difference) and how these translate into relationships. CAL's MA programme provides examples of how intercultural communication plays out in an academic environment in terms of overcoming adversity and building resilience, and Helen is interested in the role that religion plays in this process.
  - Interesting area to explore are the differences between people's religious practice changes in family settings compared to practice with the campus environment

- Parallels to work on self-disclosure of beliefs (and therefore to work on Teacher's own views of religion)
- Also additional questions on Student Barometer highlighting student's concerns regarding ethnic diversity on campus
- Faith Schooling was of mutual interest to the group and further conversations would be useful to explore match contextual and empirical approaches offered by different individual researchers. A report by the Runnymede Trust was pertinent to this mutual interest.
- Currently a group of researchers in social sciences is coming together to explore issues of migration, there could / should be a religious element that can be represented / explored

**Action Points:**

1. Steve Kettell and WRERU to explore further links around atheism and non-religious worldviews and around cognitive science of religion
2. Leslie Francis to distribute Runnymede Trust report to the group
3. CES and Andy Mason to explore empirical aspects of multiculturalism and integration questions
4. Empirical elements of Adam Swifts work to be explored further
5. WRERU staff to discuss further with Helen Spencer-Oatey i) religion's role in intercultural communication ii) religious views and practice on higher education campuses
6. Find out more information about Migration (GRP) – R Sutcliffe