



RELIGION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN CROSS-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE
Co-sponsored by American University's Center for Latin American & Latino Studies (CLALS)
and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), with support from the Henry Luce Foundation
December 8-9, 2016

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Day 1: Thursday, December 8th

9:30am-10:00am Arrival and Registration

Observer Research Foundation, Conference Hall

10:00am-11:15am Welcomes

J. M. Mauskar (Member PM's Council on Climate Change and Advisor, ORF)

Eric Hershberg, Robert Albro, and Evan Berry (American University)

11:15am-11:30am Tea/Coffee break

11:30am-1:00pm Panel Discussion 1: Religious conceptions of the environment and for conservation

How are religious/cultural actors and beliefs currently informing understandings of the environment and community responses to environmental hazards and climate change?

Moderator: J. M. Mauskar (ORF)

Panelists:

Kelly Alley (Auburn University)

Kiran Shinde (Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune)



Nanditha Krishna (C. P. R. Environmental Education Centre)

Maya Mirchandani (Journalist, NDTV)

1:00pm-2:30pm Lunch

2:30pm-4:00pm Panel Discussion 2: Religion, public discourse, and climate change

What is the role of religion/culture in public discourse and policy concerned with climate change?

Moderator: Robert Albro (American University)

Panelists:

Evan Berry (American University)

Natasha Kuruppu (UN University)

Ken Conca (American University)

Vikrom Mathur (ORF)

4:00pm-4:15pm Tea/Coffee Break

4:15pm-4:45pm Preliminary Observations and Conclusions

Moderator: Eric Hershberg (American University)

7:30pm-8:00pm Transport to Dinner

8:00pm-10:30pm Dinner

Soda Bottle Opener Wala

(Near Building on 8 Gurgaon and Shop 73B Khan Market)



Day 2: Friday, December 9th

10:00am-11:30am Panel Discussion 3: Religious and environmental change

What are some of the ways that environmental or climate change also drives religious/cultural change?

Moderator: Vikrom Mathur (ORF)

Panelists:

Georgina Drew (University of Adelaide)

Karsten Paerregaard (University of Gothenburg)

Marjo de Theije (Vrije University-Amsterdam)

11:30am-11:45am Tea/Coffee Break

11:45am-12:45pm Conclusions and Next Steps

Moderator: Evan Berry (American University)

12:45pm-1:00pm Closing Remarks and Thanks

J. M. Mauskar (ORF)

Eric Hershberg (American University)

1:00pm-2:00pm Lunch

Workshop adjourns



PUBLIC POLICY FORUM

Civil Society's Role in the Response to Climate Change: Perspectives from India and the United States

Friday, December 9
3:00pm – 5:00pm
The American Center New Delhi

This public event, hosted by the American Center New Delhi, is intended to complement and conclude a two-day workshop on “Religion and Climate Change in Cross-Regional Comparison,” co-sponsored by the Observer Research Foundation and American University's Center for Latin American & Latino Studies (Washington, DC).

Event description: The proposed public event focuses on the role of civil society in shaping policy responses to climate change and other pressing environmental issues in the United States and India. In both nations, civil society advocates have served as important catalysts for action, drawing on diverse frames of reference, including religious perspectives, market orientations, and grassroots mobilization. Discussion will consider the variety of ways that civil society groups engage climate and environment related policy issues in the US and India. How have civil society advocates framed the need to address climate and environmental concerns as a moral call to action? What approaches do civil society actors employ? How do civil society groups reach out to policy decision makers to address specific environmental concerns—about air pollution, access to water, or renewable energy—and how might this work differently in the US and India? Speakers will be asked in particular to comment on areas where they anticipate constructive civil society engagement going forward, and where civil society might most helpfully promote bilateral cooperation around climate and environmental policy in the US and India.

This will be a panel discussion featuring scholars, policy makers and former diplomats engaged in climate negotiations from the US, India and elsewhere, participating in an academic workshop on “Religion and Climate Change in Cross Regional Comparison.” Open discussion between the audience and panelists will conclude the program.

Location: The American Center New Delhi, 24 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Near Barakhamba Metro Station.



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WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Robert Albro is Research Associate Professor at American University's Center for Latin American & Latino Studies. He received his PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology from the University of Chicago, and has conducted ethnographic research and published widely on popular and indigenous politics along Bolivia's urban periphery, including resource wars over water and extractive resources. Much of this work is presented in his book, *Roosters at Midnight: Indigenous Signs and Stigma in Local Bolivian Politics* (SAR Press, 2010). Dr. Albro's research and writing have been supported by the National Science Foundation, Mellon and Rockefeller foundations, and the American Council for Learned Societies, among others. He has been a Fulbright scholar, and held fellowships at the Carnegie Council, Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, and Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Albro currently serves as co-PI on the Henry Luce Foundation-funded project, "Religion and Climate Change in Cross-Regional Perspective." Email: robert.d.albro@gmail.com

Kelly D. Alley is Alma Holladay Professor of Anthropology at Auburn University. She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Alley has carried out research in northern India for over twenty years, focusing on public culture and environmental questions. Her book, *On the Banks of the Ganga: When Wastewater Meets a Sacred River* (University of Michigan Press, 2002), explores Hindu interpretations of the sacred river Ganga in light of current environmental problems. Dr. Alley has worked with the World Water Forum and UNESCO to incorporate understanding of cultural diversity into water management. In collaboration with colleagues and students, she created an interactive website on hydropower and wastewater infrastructure in South Asia. She is currently researching decentralized approaches to wastewater management in a project funded by the National Science Foundation. Email: alleykd@auburn.edu

Evan Berry is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at American University and Co-Director of the Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs master's program. He received his PhD in Religious Studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research examines the intersections among religion, globalization, and climate change, and seeks to advance knowledge about the role of religious actors in contemporary environmental contestations. His recent book, *Devoted to Nature: The Religious Roots of American Environmentalism* (University of California Press, 2015) explores the religious sources of the environmental imagination in the United States. His current work combines ethnographic research with philosophical reflection to address the study of religious civil society groups actively engaged with the challenge of climate change. He currently serves as Principal Investigator on the Henry Luce Foundation



funded project, "Religion and Climate Change in Cross-Regional Perspective." Email: berry@american.edu

Ken Conca is Professor of International Relations in the School of International Service at American University. He received his PhD from the Energy and Resources Group at the University of California, Berkeley. His research and teaching are concerned with global environmental governance, environmental peacebuilding in war-torn societies, environmental politics and policy in the UN system, and water governance. Dr. Conca is author or editor of several books, including *An Unfinished Foundation: The United Nations and Global Environmental Governance* (Oxford University Press, 2015). He is a two-time recipient of the International Studies Association's Harold and Margaret Sprout Award for best book on international environmental affairs and a recipient of the Chadwick Alger Prize for best book in the field of International Organization. Dr. Conca is a member of the United Nations Environment Programme's Expert Advisory Group on Conflict and Peacebuilding. Email: conca@american.edu

Marjo De Theije is Associate professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Currently she is at the Research Centre for Responsible Mining (Núcleo de Pesquisa para a Mineração Responsável) of São Paulo where she is collaborating on a national inventory of small scale mining (2016-2017). She received her PhD in Social Sciences at Utrecht University. During 2010–2016 she acted as the research leader of the Wotro (CoCooN) funded GOMIAM project at CEDLA on the cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects of small-scale gold mining in the Amazon region. She has worked on (transnational) religion, social movements, and migration in Brazil and Suriname and small scale gold mining, borders and identity in the Guianas and Brazil. In addition to peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, her publications include the co-edited volume *Local Battles, Global Stakes. The Globalization of Local Conflicts and the Localization of Global Interests*. Email: Marjo.de.theije@vu.nl

Georgina Drew is a Senior Lecturer of Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Adelaide. She received her PhD in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research combines environmental anthropology with foci on water, gender, sustainable resource management, climate change, and the relationship between religion and ecology. In multiple peer-reviewed articles and a soon-to-appear book, *River Dialogues: Hindu Faith and the Political Ecology of Dams on the Sacred Ganga* (University of Arizona Press, 2017), her work explores the consequences of ecological turmoil, the disruption of livelihoods, the continuity of cultural-religious practices amid climatic changes and, more recently, indigenous water rights. Dr. Drew received a 2016-2019 Discovery Early Career Researcher Award through the Australian Research Council for the project, "Urban Rainwater Harvesting and the Cultural Politics of Resource Equity." Email: georgina.drew@adelaide.edu.au

Eric Hershberg is Director of the Center for Latin American & Latino Studies and Professor of Government at American University. He received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His most recent publications include two co-edited volumes, one with Maxwell A. Cameron, entitled *Latin American Left Turns: Politics, Policies, and Trajectories of Change* (Lynne



Rienner, 2010) and the second, *New Institutions for Participatory Democracy in Latin America: Voice and Consequence* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), with Maxwell A. Cameron and Kenneth E. Sharpe. Dr. Hershberg has taught at New York University, Southern Illinois University, Columbia, Princeton, and The New School. He also served for fifteen years as a Program Director at the Social Science Research Council in New York City. He currently also serves as co-PI on the Henry Luce Foundation-funded project, “Religion and Climate Change in Cross-Regional Perspective.” Email: hershber@american.edu

Nanditha Krishna is a historian, environmentalist and writer based in Chennai. She has a Ph.D. in Ancient Indian Culture from Bombay University, where she also was a Heras scholar. She has been a Professor and a Research Guide for the Ph.D. programme of the University of Madras. She was the Honorary Director from 1981 of the C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation and was elected President in 2013. She is the Founder-Director of its many constituents, including C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre (a Centre of Excellence of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Govt. of India). She is the author of various works, including *Sacred Plants of India* (Penguin India), *Sacred Animals of India* (Penguin India), *Madras Then... Chennai Now* (Roli Books) and *Madras-Chennai, Its History and Environment* (New Horizon Media). She is currently writing a book on “Hinduism and Nature” for Penguin India. Email: nankrishna18@gmail.com

Natasha Kuruppu is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the United Nations University-International Institute for Global Health based in Malaysia, and is part of the Planetary Change and Health programme. Dr. Kuruppu received her PhD in Geography and Climate Change Adaptation from Oxford University. She is a climate change adaptation specialist, with a particular focus on the interactions between water management, development and climate adaptation in small island developing nations in the Pacific. Previously, she was a Senior Researcher at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia where she led several national adaptation research projects related to cross scale governance, community adaptation, small business sector, and disaster management and human health in the Pacific Islands. Email: kuruppu@unu.edu

Vikrom Mathur is a Senior Fellow at ORF. He received his PhD from Oxford University, Institute for Science, Society and Innovation. His research explores how “myths of nature” frame plural narratives about adaptation to climate change in Cambodia. His diverse research interests include: political, cultural and social influences on the production and use of scientific knowledge about nature/environment; dynamics between science and public policy (e.g., in the context of climate change); social and cultural determinants of technological change; governance of emerging technologies; governance of transboundary natural resources; and cultural theory. As researcher at the Stockholm Environment Institute (1997-2012), he initiated and directed numerous research and consultancy projects in over ten different countries and led the establishment of SEI's Asia Centre in Thailand. He is among the lead authors of the vulnerability chapter of United Nations Environment Programs Global Environmental Outlook 2004. Email: vikrom@orfonline.org

J. M. Mauskar is an ORF Advisor, and has more than 34 years of experience as a Public Servant of the Indian Administrative Service working on such topics as international trade, investment promotion, overseas investments, international contracts, dynamics of petroleum sector and environmental issues, and



especially climate change. Having occupied key positions in the Ministries of Commerce, Petroleum & Natural Gas and Environment & Forests, he has been closely associated with major policy and regulatory initiatives in the domain of trade, energy and environment. He has also been Chairman of the Central Pollution Control Board. He has spent over five years as Director on the Board of major Public Sector Undertakings. Following his retirement, he has been involved with climate change negotiations and was a member of several Central Government Committees. He is a Permanent Invitee to the Governing Council of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, for the period 2012-2017. From July 2013 onwards, he is an Independent Director on the Board of Directors of SAIL, a premier Central Public Sector Enterprise. Email: jmmauskar@orfonline.org

Maya Mirchandani is Senior Anchor and Senior Editor in Foreign Affairs at NDTV in New Delhi Area, India. She focuses on current affairs, world politics and diplomacy, as well as socio-political fault lines within India, including climate change. She completed her studies at The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She has received several awards, including the Ramnath Goenka award for Excellence in Journalism (in 2010 as well as 2012), and the Exchange for Media award for best International News Reporting (Broadcast) in 2010. She also mentors young reporters. Email: maya@ndtv.com

Sonali Mitra is an Associate Fellow at ORF. She has an MS in Environmental Impact Assessment and Management from University of Manchester. Her recent work has focused on the nexus between energy-water security, specifically transboundary water management and diplomacy, hydropower, and environmental security. She has been the principal manager for ORF's flagship water initiatives. Her recent project "Attitudes Around Water" offered an analysis of policy makers, academicians, media, lawyers and the hydrocracy, with respect to myths and misconceptions regarding water management in India. Her co-edited book, *Perspectives on Water: Constructing Alternative Narratives* (Academic Foundation, 2012), offered case studies from South Asia assessing present socio-economic realities that surround water management. She has authored policy reports and academic papers on the Ganga and Indus basins. Her research interests include national water governance strategies, participatory approaches to water management, political sociology of water, water diplomacy, the energy-water nexus and climate change. Email: sonalimitra@orfonline.org

Aniruddh Mohan is a Junior Fellow with ORF's Climate Change and Growth Initiative, where he engages with themes related to climate change, Indian energy policy, nuclear power and technology innovation. He holds a bachelor's degree in Nuclear Engineering from the University of Manchester and an MPhil in Nuclear Energy from the University of Cambridge. At Cambridge, his thesis was titled "Climate Change in India and the Contribution Nuclear Energy Can Make Through to 2050." He has previously worked at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and in the area of management consulting at Aon UK. Email: aniruddh.mohan@orfonline.org

Karsten Paerregaard is Professor of Anthropology in the School of Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. He received his PhD in Anthropology from the University of Copenhagen. Dr. Paerregaard's long-term research has focused on rural-urban migration and transnational migration in



Peru. His current research is concerned with the effects of climate change on Peru's rural and urban populations, including how growing water scarcity is leading to new conflicts, and the local, regional, and national responses to these conflicts. Dr. Paerregaard's work also explores the development of new strategies and alliances to adapt to the changing environment. Plans for future research include work on a comparative anthropology of adaption and mobility of mountain peoples to climate change.

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Kiran Shinde is a unique combination of an academician and a professional practitioner with wide ranging experience across consulting projects, research, and teaching. He holds a Ph.D. from Monash University, Australia, and has obtained an MA in Urban Management from the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand, and in Urban Planning from CEPT University, India. He has taught at several institutions in Australia, Thailand, Cambodia and India, and currently heads the College of Architecture at Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Pune, India. He has multidisciplinary research interests spanning sacred landscapes, spatiality of tourism, urban planning, and religious and cultural heritage. Currently he is investigating urban planning in six pilgrimage sites in Maharashtra in India. In another project he is working on cultural landscapes in the Kullu valley in northern India. Besides authoring a book, he has published over forty scholarly papers on various aspects related to religious tourism, sacred landscapes, and environmental issues in pilgrimage sites. Email: kiranshindebvp@gmail.com



APPENDIX 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

RELIGION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN CROSS-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

We are excited to be partnering with the Observer Research Foundation, a leading Indian think tank and research center, as both co-sponsor and host for this workshop in New Delhi. OSF is particularly well-suited to this role, with multiple program areas of relevance, including on: climate, energy and resources; climate change and growth; ecology and resource management; and climate food, and environment, among others.

This workshop convenes researchers from India, Latin America, the US, and elsewhere, to focus on religious/cultural dimensions in the response and adaptation to emerging water-related challenges made worse by climate change. This encompasses glacial melt and river health, emerging agricultural challenges, connections between climate change and the increase of rural-to-urban migration, and stresses upon urban water systems in the global South, including water conservation and wastewater management, among other possible topics, for which India offers important material for study.

From the low-lying islands of the Caribbean to the glacial regions of the Himalayas, climate change is altering the physical environment and affecting human livelihood in ways that elicit religious response. In every corner of the planet, religions are influencing how individuals and communities understand earthly problems and develop meaningful responses to them. The world that religions seek to illuminate, furthermore, appears to have entered a new geological age, often labeled the anthropocene, in which human activity is recognized to be the primary driver of environmental change. The effects of this epochal transformation are actively reshaping religious ideas and practices, even as religious groups and communities endeavor to bring their traditions to bear on mounting climate challenges. Religion is a dynamic cultural factor through which societies attend to environmental challenges. At the same time, climate change may also act as a powerful driver of religious transformation.

This two-year project seeks to deepen our understanding of the relationship between religion and climate change across multiple regions of the world. It builds upon a previous research project focused on forms of religious engagement with environmental conflict in contemporary Latin American democracies. The present project advances previous work by incorporating a comparative perspective across regions and religions beyond just Latin America, in order to enhance understanding of religious responses to the transboundary effects of climate change. In so doing this project focuses on the interactions between transnational religious influences and local cultural contexts, and the ways religion mediates the global and the local, as a source for the varieties of religious response to the planet-wide challenges of climate change.



We plan to give three distinct if interrelated levels of analysis particular attention: 1) the role of religion as a key part of ongoing public discourse on climate change; 2) specifically religious sources of environmental knowledge, as this knowledge informs community responses to climate change; 3) and the ways that climate change is also driving religious change. In turn, these comparisons across regions and religions will focus on three features of climate change: the effects of glacial melt in the Andes and Himalayas, the vulnerabilities of small island archipelagoes in the Caribbean and South Pacific, climate-related stress upon urban water systems in South America and South Asia. The shared focus of regional comparisons on understandings of climate change through the lens of water-related crises enables exploration of the ways different religions engage with a broadly similar set of concerns while also foregrounding the interrelated effects of features of climate change.

Moving beyond a previous focus on Latin America, this research project seeks to describe the range of religious responses to climate change comparatively across regions and religions, and at different scales. Of particular concern will be analysis of similarities and differences in the exercise of religious agency to mediate the relationship between the global and the local. Religion, both as a type of social institution and as a resource for cultural norms, is a key nexus of globalization. It is an arena within which global challenges are locally instantiated, and within which local concerns seek international attention. The selection of particular cases across regional comparative frames will be guided by the following understanding of our three interrelated levels of analysis:

1) Public religion and climate politics

This area of inquiry focuses upon the responses of religious institutions and organizations to climate change, such as the recent papal encyclical, including their active involvement in international and national climate change politics and policy. Our approach will be comparative across regions and religious traditions and adopts a broad appreciation of religion encompassing world-historical religions like Christianity, Hinduism and Islam but also indigenous cosmologies. The comparative frame we employ answers the call for empirically robust analyses of religion that capture the markedly different ways that religion operates in the political economy of contemporary nations. We will also be attentive to the diversity of religious responses and their impacts, ranging from religious advocacy for carbon mitigation and climate adaptation to theologically motivated obstructionism and climate skepticism.

2) Religious sources of environmental knowledge

Building on previous efforts to document how religion shapes conceptions of the natural world and the position of human beings within it, the proposed project identifies a second priority area focused on the religious frames through which different societies come to grips with climate change. Global discourse about climate change generally invokes thin, broadly applicable value claims, but seldom grounds these in the cultural contexts and moral reasoning of the particular communities affected by climate change. In contrast to the utilitarianism typifying international discourse, societies understand and respond to changing environmental conditions according to a diverse array of ideas, practices, values and moral positions about nature. Problems of climate change are not understood in the same ways across cultural and geographic frontiers and communities. With attention to the movement between the global



and the local, this component of the proposed project seeks to trace the ways that religion informs moral, cultural and political positions relating to the challenges of climate change in communities across different regions.

3) Climate change as religious change

Religions are not static. They are not fixed and immutable sources of morality that reactively respond to the changing features of the modern world. Instead, religions are dynamic and evolve together with the world they inhabit. Religious institutions are beginning to address the ways that climate change is affecting how they go about their work, in the process actively re-evaluating some theological positions and developing new kinds of social and spiritual practices attentive to the realities of environmental change. Our work in this third priority area seeks to contribute to a newly emerging frontier of research on the role of religion in international affairs, selecting cases that bring to the fore the implications of climate change for the transformation of contemporary religious life.

Core Objectives

This project seeks to deepen our comparative regional understanding of the relationships between religion and climate change. We pay particular attention to interactions between different religious traditions and organizations, on the one hand, with national and municipal governments, civil society actors, advocacy networks, and local communities, on the other. With this project we are concerned with identifying similarities and differences in religious engagement across regions, and at three distinct levels of analysis, as a basis for constructively addressing climate change as a growing transboundary and planetary crisis. This includes sustained attention to the following:

- Systematic cross-regional comparisons of the relationship between religious belief, practices, and groups, and state or community actions regarding climate change.
- An improved appreciation of differences in the scale of religious engagements with climate change, including at international, regional, national, and local levels.
- A detailed understanding of the various ways religion mediates the relationship of the global to the local in the production of responses to climate change.
- Particular attention to: i. the role of religion as a key part of ongoing public discourse on climate change; ii. Specifically religious sources of environmental knowledge, as this knowledge informs community responses to climate change; iii. The ways that various features of climate change also drive religious change.
- Comparisons across regions focused on specific features of climate change, initially including: i. the effects of glacial melt in the Andes and Himalayas, ii. The vulnerabilities of small island archipelagoes in the Caribbean and South Pacific, iii. And climate-related stress upon urban water systems in South America and South Asia.



APPENDIX 2: WORKSHOP PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Kelly Alley (Auburn University): A focus on religious motivations/perspectives/ideologies of leaders in the Swatchha Bharat (“Clean India”) movement, specifically concerned with river Ganga initiatives, and giving particular attention to the views of leadership, and the ways in which movement leaders weave Hindu sentiments into assessments of water pollution and scarcity.

Evan Berry (American University): A comparative analysis of differences among governance infrastructures for how national climate policies are taken up, with attention to the politics surrounding the Pope’s recent encyclical on climate change and the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change, respectively, and as a way to examine the UN and Organization of Islamic Cooperation as different sorts of political spaces for civil society responses to climate change.

Ken Conca (American University): A specific regional focus is still to be decided. But, an organizational study exploring how religiously-inspired development and relief organizations have come to think about climate change-induced risk, in the context of water management, while treating religious NGOs as one sort of expert community alongside others in the emerging field of disaster risk reduction.

Georgina Drew (University of Adelaide): An ethnographically-driven examination of the limitations of leveraging mountain gods and goddess for inspiring climate action, and discussion of why climate justice approaches have become more useful in India. This presentation will include the role of religious leaders who help to produce new discourses about the need to reduce sin and pollution while working to protect people from climate change-related hazards.

Nanditha Krishna (C. P. R. Environmental Education Centre): The relationship between Hinduism and the environment in both the past and present, with attention to the role of Hinduism in biodiversity conservation, in such cases as sacred forests, groves, plants, and bodies of water, among others.

Natasha Kuruppu (UN University’s International Institute for Global Health): On the role of religious leaders in Pacific island politics, specifically, in their capacity as participants on local and supra-local councils responsible for setting climate change policy for the islands, which are the recipients of substantial international development aid for climate change adaptation.

Vikrom Mathur (Observer Research Foundation): An analysis of the ways policy actors in Cambodia refer to varying “myths of nature” characteristic of four types of social solidarity



which promise to be crucial for adaptation to climate change, in order to articulate policy stories, which, in turn, participate in shaping public discourse on adaptation around the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia. Emergent public discourse represents a complex terrain of agreements and disagreements over adaptation policies, linked to control and access to fisheries.

Maya Mirchandani (NDTV): A focus on the “river” as a source of power, livelihood, energy, and benevolence, and the ways that communities living along its course – in this case, the Teesta river flowing from India to Bangladesh – are not just practically dependent on this water source but have cultural and religious beliefs and rituals that are deeply entwined with the water. How these factors are brought together in the context of water sharing agreements remains a challenge for both India and Bangladesh.

Karsten Paerregaard (University of Gothenburg): On pilgrimages to, and ritual offerings at, Andean glaciers, and why some continue but others have not. This presentation also considers the growing participation of pilgrims from urban areas, as glacier melt and water scarcity in both rural and urban settings has become more acute, and examines the possible linkage between the growing participation of Peru's urban population in Andean religious practices and the climate-induced environmental crisis the country is experiencing.

Kiran Shinde (Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University-Pune): On the role of religious beliefs, rituals, and institutions in creating and maintaining the ecological-cultural landscape of the mountainous region of the Kullu Valley in Himachal Pradesh, India (near the Himalaya). This presentation also explores the ways in which religious practice creates the sacred geography, which, in turn, helps in the conservation of nature in such places and also intersects with contemporary challenges of tourism, climate change and other forms of development.

Marjo de Theije (Vrije University-Amsterdam): On the ways in which religious ideas are relevant to the formation of mining communities, including popular religious beliefs about the availability of natural riches, in this case gold, as well as how such religious notions inform miners’ understandings of the environment, including perceptions of environmental change – increasingly attributed to climate change – through the abundance, decrease, or disappearance of natural resources.