1 Introduction

Sociology of religion represents the various theories and methodologies through which the relationship between religion and social science is explicated. Although relatively new in the academy, the field came to prominence through the work of Durkheim and Weber as they sought to account for the role and meaning of the church in producing and sustaining social networks, social relations as well as norms related to beliefs. Most commentators in religion, theology and sociology today will trace the sociology of religion to the early 1900s, with specific reference to the social theories that saw religion as shared symbols that informs and shapes the moral order within society. Despite the fact that much of sociology of religion, historically rests on sociological theories about protestant Christian orthodoxy, people’s affiliation and participation in the church as a social institution, the relation of social science to religion’s companion discipline, theology, has generally been marked by suspicion and ambivalence. In the same year that Durkheim published his *Elementary Forms of Religion*, American theologian Guy Talbot (1915) published an essay titled “the relation between sociology and theology” that was driven by one basic questions: What level of sociological knowledge is required to shape Christian practice? Talbot’s reticence is palpable and signals the ambivalence and suspicion that would for the next 100 years characterize the relationship between theology and sociology. Despite some laudable attempts to see what sociology has to offer theology (Gill 1978; Marty 1981; Martin, Mills, and Pickering 2003), theologians, have largely remained cautious about permitting sociological knowledge too much space in determining Christian social practice.

Notwithstanding theology’s apparent ambivalence towards social science, faith communities have generally relied on sociological analysis to craft political, environmental, and developmental theologies – such as black theology in the USA and South Africa, liberation theology in South America, and dalit theology in India. Although these Christian traditions operate within a neo-Weberian paradigm in that it imagines religion as coupled with national moral interests, they nonetheless represent a break with theology’s suspicion of social science insofar as they significantly rely on Marxian analysis to show that God is on the side of the poor. Recently, practical theology has assumed similarly reflexive and critical postures as a discipline (Osmer 2011; Larney 2012), and increasingly look toward sociology of religion as a sub-discipline to collaborate with. If practical theology draws on sociology of religion for expanding its theoretical and methodological repertoires, it cannot rely on traditional sociological assumption about religion as either in decline or thriving in late modernity. As a postcolonial scholar, doing sociology of religion starts with
the lived patterns from everyday life and embodied practices of religious persons, which in turn promises to potentially free practical theology from primarily caring about communities of believers, to caring for communities in need, wherever they are located regardless of their beliefs, practices, and relationship to institutional religion.

2 Origins and Disciplinary Horizons of Sociology of Religion

For more than 100 years, sociology of religion has been concerned with the study of religious institutions, beliefs, and practice – a largely a western academic enterprise concerned questions such as: How do people live religious lives? What do religious people do? Ad why do religious people do what they do? Why do they do what they do, in the way that they do it?

Sociology of religion is a field of inquiry concerned with the social formations of religion – through examining its manifestations of religious organizations or faith communities, as well as with how such faith communities give expression to their belief. Sociologists of religion are also concerned with how religious beliefs effect behaviors and decisions, as well as people’s orientations towards society. Historically, these questions have been pursued through social science methods such as quantitative surveys that give indications of social trends and patterns in religious affiliation and preferences, while through more qualitative studies sociologist offer insights into motivation and behaviors related to religious beliefs. Thus, we can see that in general sociologists measure religiosity by asking people about their religious beliefs, their membership to religious organizations, and attendance at religious services, and then measure how such patterns inform social behavior. Regardless of whether one takes a quantitative or qualitative approach, the sociology of religion is generally interested in the following questions:

- How are religious institutions organized?
- What is the nature and extent of religious affiliation in a society?
- How does religion affect social change? And how does social change effect religious behavior?
- What influence does religion have on social institutions, such as political or educational institutions?
- How are religious beliefs and factors related to other social factors like race, age, gender, and class?

There is widespread agreement that modern sociology, and by association sociology of religion, has its origins in Emile Durkheim’s 1897 *The Study of Suicide* wherein he explored the differing suicide rates among Protestants and Catholics. About the same time, Karl Marx and Max Weber, in their attempts to offer social scientific accounts of
social life, also looked at religion and its influence in other social institutions and norms. While the continuing relevance of these early classical accounts are contested, most sociologists regard this heritage as a valued resource insofar as it provides an archaeology of the prevailing ideas about the relationship between religion and sociology. As such I will briefly introduce their respective views on the relationship between religion and social science.

Emile Durkheim advocated a functionalist perspective of society because for him religion was a cohering force in society insofar as it provided an explanatory frame around which people organized and formed collective beliefs and practices. It is through building a sense of belonging (affect) and collective consciousness (belief) that, for Durkheim, religion produces a sense of cohesion. Max Weber, on the other hand, saw religion as a resource that upheld and sustained other social institutions. In this regard, religious beliefs are seen to provide a cultural and explanatory framework that supported the legitimacy and function other social institutions, such as the family, church, or economy as the base units of society. Unlike, Durkheim and Weber who focused on the various ways that religion contributes to the cohesion of society or social institutions, Karl Marx saw religion as a social force that sustained class division in industrial societies – through ritually dissolving conflict and resistance to oppression. Marx saw religion not simply as a tool for class oppression, but as an imaginative field that blinded people to unequal social stratification, which religion and religious authorities explained as divinely sanctioned.

What these classical sociological approaches to religion have in common, is their concerns with the patterns of power and status in European religious contexts of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and how these related to and reinforced social organization. Now, while the field of sociology is hugely indebted to these classical thinkers, sociology has become increasingly preoccupied with processes by which people become religious, as well as the historical and contextual forces that frame the making, and practices of religion. As such most sociologists agree that religious beliefs and practices emerge in different social and historical contexts, and in this sense Durkheim, Weber and Marx were products of their context, but they nonetheless charted the development of a field concerned with understanding of religious institutions, belief, and practices as socially constructed, and provoked critical questions about the relationship between religion and other social institutions and practices.

3 (Religion / Theology and the) Conceptions of Social and Public Life

Since the 1960s sociology of religion has been particularly concerned with deepening sociological knowledge about religious affiliation and conversion, changing rates of church attendance, religiously inspired political activism, the emergence of new religions, and secularization – epitomized by the work of David Martin, Robert Wuth-
now, Robert Bellah and Peter Berger. Their work marked a return to prominence for
the sociology of religion by using religion as a lens through which to understand
modernity. These scholars like their predecessor were confident about the decline
of religion, and out of this scholarship developed into two main approaches in the
sociology of religion: secularization approach, and market approach. Although
both traditions have a history of being focused on North American or European
Christian-centered notions of religion, the former relies on large empirical studies re-
lated to the apparent decline in affiliation and participation in churches, while the
latter is more focused on the motivation and rates of conversion from one Christian
tradition to another, or the proliferation of congregational forms, patterns, and prac-
tices. While the first takes the institutional church and levels of participation as a
measure of stable belief and its inevitable decline, the second take satisfaction, affect
and belonging as a measure of the persistence of religious beliefs despite the appa-
rent fracturing of broad-based religious institutions, or national churches into locally
organized and led, faith communities.

With respect to Berger who has made a substantial scholarly contribution to the
secularization approach, Linda Woodhead noted that “under the pressure of the plu-
ralizing force of modernity the ‘sacred canopy’ becomes precarious vision. A central
conclusion was that pluralism leads inevitably to secularization. Berger’s vision of
secularization theory endorsed the view that there is an intrinsic link between mod-
ernization and secularization” (Woodhead 2001, 2). While Berger in the later part of
his academic career held to the view that pluralism has a corrosive effect of western
social organization, he offers a qualifying note on the relationship between pluralism
and secularization and writes that “I would now say that pluralism affects the how of
religious belief, but not necessarily the what.” (Berger 2001, 194) In this regard, Berg-
er is not unlike his peers in offering some qualification to early secularization theses,
and thus conceded that the decline of institutional religion or the state church, as is
the case of much of Northern Europe, does not necessarily translate into people not
being religious. Religious authority and taken-for-granted religious values have been
supplanted with new ways of being religious and new ways of expressing religious
beliefs.

Unlike the pessimistic orientation of the secularization approach to religion, the
market approach offers an account of religious vitality in the modern era. It is often
presented as a remedial theory to the failure of secularizations theorists to account
for the persistence of religion. Primarily located in the North American context, this
approach challenges secularization theory’s argument that religion is a poor fit in the
modern world, and advocates argue that it is not so much that religion has declined,
but that the nature of belief and religious affiliation has changed – particularly in
those non-European contexts where national churches have been intimately em-
broiled with the state and national identity, such as was the case in Germany or Nor-
way, until very recently. In explaining the market approach to religion, Edgell posits
that modernity “creates the conditions that foster religious privatization, pluralism,
and voluntarism, causing religion to thrive—and, ironically, to retain much of its pub-
lic significance” (Edgell 2012, 249). In this approach, the *market* was used as a metaphor for the choice and patterns of self-organization, initially seen to be occurring in American religious life, but later also included those societies where religious authorities are uncoupled from the nation-state, and where religious affiliation is largely voluntary. For example, instead of simply relying on church membership and participation as the primary measure of religious solidarity, changing religious patterns and organization could be said to be as much the result of “soft city-dwelling life that reduces group feeling” (Spickard 2000) or the inability of faith communities to adapt to the changing family patterns and needs among its constituents (Smith et al. 2013).

Obviously, this particular approach to religious life applies equally to religious life beyond America, such as in countries like Brazil, the Philippines or Uganda – where religion has been thriving for decades but received little attention from sociologists of religion. The North American focus of market theory was born out of attempts to explain the seemingly changing fortunes of institutional religion, not as a decline, but as a failure to supply the religious goods required by the market – and in so doing, like secularization approaches, it fails to consider sociological theories of religion in transnational context, thus re-producing theories about the religious behaviors and practices of North America and Europe, as if universally applicable.

Numerous efforts have been advanced to theoretically expand the field through developing, for example, critical sociology of religion (Smith et al. 2013), feminist sociology of religion (Nason-Clark and Neitz 2001; Neitz 2014), lived religion (Ammerman 2012) and non-western perspectives in the sociology of religion (Spickard 2017). Despite the enormous contribution of the field to understanding of religion, life choice and behaviours, it is now widely agreed that much of sociology of religion has developed through privileging “empirical studies of [European and] American Protestantism, especially White evangelicalism, to the relative neglect of non-Western, Catholic, and non-Christian religious experiences and practices” (Edgell 2012). The point here is that social science entanglement with religion is not innocent, and more often than not it is deployed in the promotion of very clear ideological ideas related to human life, diversity, and freedom.

For example, social scientific surveys such as the 2010 report of Pew Research Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* offered some interesting comparative national data. David Chidester and I noted that despite 74% of South Africans reporting that religion is very important in their lives, the survey nonetheless showed a high rate of religious illiteracy. For example, in this survey, 76% of Christians in South Africa say that they do not know very much or nothing at all about Islam and yet 63% of Christians say that despite not knowing much about Islam, they can conclude that Christianity and Islam are “very different.” What we found was that while ignorance does not entail prejudice, it does not preclude respondents from drawing conclusions about other religions (Chidester and Settler 2010). In order to fully understand and present the data, we aggregated the Pew results against several local studies regarding the intersection of religion with race and gender, leading us to conclude (a) that working with
religion in the South African context means working in a context where people care intensely about religion, (b) that social science approaches must be oriented to elaborating the lived experience of religious persons, (c) that studies in religion cannot be divorced from political and material histories of racial and gender exclusion.

Similarly, while Bertelsmann’s 2013 survey on religion and cohesion in Germany reported a steady decline in religiosity – with only 25% of Christians reporting religion as important in their public lives – when coupled with a changing religious demography due to the recent influx of migrants from more religious regions such as North Africa, and the Middle East, a change of public culture and policies related to religion may be necessary. Neighboring countries, such as France and Switzerland, saw it necessary to respectively, introduce legislation regarding Muslim women’s choice to wear the niqab in public, and the building of minarets in a seeming regulation of religious architecture and life. What this example shows is the changing nature and landscape of the sociology of religion – a departure from North American and European parochial studies being treated as universally relevant and a move towards a sociology of religion that takes seriously issues of race, class, gender and sexual diversity in both design and analyses.

The transnational migration of people has had a tangible impact on religious mapping of the world, as well as expanded ideas about religion, and orthodoxies within religious traditions. While on the one hand, Israel is contending with African Jews and how their claims to settlement disrupt ideas of Zionism, and on the other hand, the centers of Pentecostalism are seen to be located in Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa – and yet religion and theology continue to look to Europe and North America when it comes to resolving questions about the nature, definition, and classification of religiosity. Asad (1993), Adogame and Spickard (2010), Huwelmeier and Krause (2011) have argued and illustrated how when people move transnationally, they take their religions, belief, and practices with them. Firstly, this suggests that the transnational movement of people, not only enhance religious diversity but that it potentially reforms the ideas about and taxonomies of religion. Secondly, it necessitates a shift in social reception and recognition of religion as not so much in decline but rather variously as privatized (Jose Casanova), commodified (Talal Asad) and / or vicarious (Grace Davie).

What I suggest here is that the sociology of religion offers insights and information that are used to make determinations about the extent of religiosity in a general population, affinity to religious authority, the degrees of secularizations in a society but also significantly, that it has emerged as a field that helps us expand the definitional boundaries and contestations over what constitutes religion, about who possess religious authority especially with respect to the embodied experiences of religion, and the activation of religion in the everyday life. It is precisely because of my location as a scholar of color from the global South that questions of authority, the material and the embodied are coupled with issues of religious belonging and practice. In contexts outside North America and Europe, concerns with the religiosity, and people’s material struggles are generally inseparable.
4 Theoretical Orientations in the Sociology of Religion

The changing landscape and orientation in the sociology of religion necessitate new ways to imagine of sociology of religion in response to criticism leveled at it. In seeking to move beyond the imaginative regimes of secularization and market approaches, I will now proceed to a discussion where sociology of religion is framed as concerned with (1) institutions, behaviors, and beliefs; (2) embodied and intersectional experiences of religion; and (3) religion in everyday life. This schema is an attempt to present nuanced ways in which sociological practice are already entangled in the fields of religion and theology, as well as to point to the interesting ways that it might be deployed to better understand religion as institutional, embodied, and mundane.

4.1 Institutions, Beliefs, and Practices

Notwithstanding the range of critiques that have been leveled at both the secularization and market approaches for their privileging of institutional religion, the practice of taking people’s contact with religious institutions as a basic measure of religiosity remains widespread and useful. Thus, despite disagreement about the ontological orientation towards religion in society, most sociologists view survey data about relations to institutional religion, changing practices and beliefs as critical for understanding the link between religion and societal patterns. For example, in 2008 Berger, Hunter and Schlemmer published a study, *Under the Radar*, with the Centre for Development and Enterprise in South Africa, which sought to ascertain the relation between Pentecostal teaching and economic behavior, and what impact this might have on socio-economic development in the society at large. Despite the innovative nature of this study, it too relied on a series of assumptions that proximity to religious authority and participation in the life of the religious community is a reliable measure of religiosity. Elsewhere, Grace Davie (2010) has demonstrated that while data might indicate low religious participation in the activities of a religious organization, that this does not necessarily reflect an equivalence in the strength of connectedness. She argues that despite declining number, the relatively small number of active members are religious on behalf of an absent but invested majority. What is very useful about Davie’s work is that she separates belief from belonging and in so doing she decenters institution of religions as the center of inquiry, to focus our attention instead on the relation to, and the strength of our connections (affect) related to institutional religion. Thus, there continues to be value in thinking through the relationship between membership and affiliation, especially where it is done in conjunction with the changing nature of people’s relation to institutional religion.
In addition to the narrow, often congregational focus of sociology of religion, the field has for some time been under pressure to respond changing religious geographies and religious diversities, both within the West and transnationally. Talal Asad’s critique of the supposedly universalist assumptions about religion in social science approaches noted that “what appears to [social scientists] today to be self-evident, namely that religion is essentially a matter of symbolic meaning linked to ideas of general order [...] is, in fact, a view that has a specific Christian history. From being a concrete set of practical rules attached to specific processes and power, religion has come to be abstracted and universalised” (Asad 1993, 29). Thus, new inflections in traditional sociology of religion have also been borne out of interreligious contact and diversity, as well as incorporating different models of social organization. One such example is Spickard’s recent book, *Alternative Sociologies of Religion: Through Non-Western Eyes* (Spickard 2017, 26) in which he elaborates non-western approaches, such as ritual and communal virtue (Confucian) and group feeling (Ibn Khaldun) as principles of social organization and social change that might point to different of ways measuring religiosity.

Thus, sociology of religion today seeks to do more than understand how religious beliefs, practices, and institutions operate as forces of social change, but also represent those religious practices, innovation, and beliefs that occur outside of, and independent of religious authorities. Further, critical examinations of religious institutions not only map trajectories of the sacred in society but it also shows how religious organizations connect with the felt needs and beliefs of people regardless of their connection, or of the strength of their connection to institutional religion.

### 4.2 Embodied and Lived-Experience

While sociology of religion has traditionally focused on religious institutions as sites of inquiry, the accompanying religious practices have often been viewed as those embodied performances related to institutions and beliefs. Jonkers and Sarot suggest “the human body is always involved in the concepts and practices of religions” (Jonkers and Sarot 2013, 2), and although this focus on the body for many signaled the privileging of lived religious experiences, it still relies on assumptions about the neutrality and universality of religious experience. While social science approaches to religion have strong explanatory potential, both market and secularization approaches to the study of religion are inclined to de-historicize and decontextualize social phenomena, and in so doing offer accounts of embodied religion, without ever referencing issues of gender, race, class, and sexual diversity.

Acutely aware of the implicit assumptions of the supposed gender-neutrality that has accompanied sociology of religion, Linda Woodhead (2009) and Mary Jo Neitz (2014) among others, variously problematized the inadequate ways that issues of gender and sexuality have been attended to in sociology of religion. While drawing
on church membership and participation data; they respectively highlight the gender variables related to affiliation and participation (institutions), shifting attitudes in religious education as well as factors that inform women's participation in faith communities. Neitz reminds us of the implicit patriarchal bias in traditional approaches to the sociology of religion, and suggest that although "survey research in North America and Europe repeatedly shows that women are more likely to be members of and participants in religious groups [...] and that [...] women use religion as a resource for acting in their own behalf, and women also more frequently the object of regulation by religions" (Neitz 2014, 513) such data is seldom utilized as meaningful in explanatory accounts of significant religious change in society.

As such, I argue that when engaging embodied or lived religious experiences, we must be vigilant of the tendency to uncoupled it from critical discourses related to gender, race, class, and sexuality. Similarly, Anthony Pinn (2010) argues that black theological thought has been intimately connected with embodied black experiences through history, especially in the United States. For example, in comparing two (one white and one black) evangelical Christian congregations’ narratives of stewardship and God’s sovereignty, Peifer, Ecklund, and Fullerton (2014, 373) found that while there was little “evidence to suggest that religious beliefs foster different environmental attitudes across the two congregations,” they found that race coupled with socio-economic status do impact on the degree of environmental apathy. Thus, to simply present or extract information about religious change in society based simply on people’s religious affiliation and participation without due recognition of people’s subjectivity regarding gender, race, sexuality, and class would likely present an incomplete and skewed picture of social and religious life.

What these examples point to is the manner in which embodied accounts of religion, or encounters with religion help us better understand, and hopefully incorporate a more diverse range of religious experiences in the general population. Embodied accounts of religion, when not obscured by presumed religious normativity in Europe and North America, enables as to ask such questions as: What does the embodied or lived experience Muslim women migrants reveal about protestant practices of reception and hospitality in Norway? By centering the embodied and lived experience, sociology of religion opens the possibility of disrupting and expanding normative modes of religious being, organization, and exchange.

4.3 Everyday Life

This brings me to the third orientation in the sociology of religion, namely the engagement with everyday life. Everyday religion was brought to prominence through the work of Nancy Ammerman (Everyday Religion 2006) and Meredith McGuire (Lived Religion 2008), and it has since enjoyed much attention in the sociology of religion because of its exploration of religion in outside religious institutions, privileging of everyday life as site of religious knowledge and experience, and engaging religious
work and expressions in popular and material culture – such as music, painting, dance, and film (Flanagan 2007; Morgan 2010).

Religion and theology scholars like Ammerman, McGuire, Houtman, and Meyer have sought to explain the relationship between everyday life, routines practices and the changing nature of spirituality. Nancy Ammerman (2006, 4) writes that “If the strength of religion is measured by orthodoxy of belief, regularity of attendance, and the ability of traditional religious institutions to enforce their norms, much of the world is very secular indeed.” She goes on to argue that an exploration of the everyday reveals of more widespread and diffused engagement with religion and spirituality through popular culture. Similarly, Vanhoozer, Anderson, and Sleasman (2007) in *Everyday Theology* argue that all person possesses a degree of cultural literacy that enables them to read and interpret the world through their faith. In this text, scholars explore popular cultural phenomenon as wide-ranging as fantasy funerals, volunteerism, megachurch architecture, the internet, music, and movies.

However, when material religion outside Europe or North America is discussed, it is often coupled with histories of animism and totem (Harvey 2014), or superstition and gullibility (Settler 2018) or trauma and violence (Boesak 1984; Gebara 1999; Rajkumar 2011) – the latter being most persistent in Christian liberation theologies. Privileging the traumatic and dramatic as a basis for political theologies obscures everyday life and the accompanying religious experiences among the vulnerable. Through drawing our attention to religion and everyday life, the late Marcella Althauss-Reid reminded us that political theologies such as black and liberation theology (with its adamant critique of material relations), rose to prominence at the expense of sexuality, and everyday life experiences in the global South. Althauss-Reid in *Indecent Theology* (2000) suggests that liberation theology had become domesticated, and she uses the figure of the woman lemon vendor from Peru – women who do not wear underwear under their skirts – to show how the examination of an everyday life situation can simultaneously make visible what cannot ordinarily be seen and reveal what is expected to be hidden. The image of the lemon vendor – a convergence of sexuality and economics – brings us back to those ‘other’ everyday realities that have not enjoyed the attention of religion and liberation theology scholars, by virtue of those everyday life realities being regarded indecent, illicit, and deviant.

Thus, this focus on everyday life helps us to better understand religion wherever it happens and in whatever way that it manifests, instead of trying to explain why it no longer occurs in the places and ways that we had become accustomed to, or inherited. As sociology of religion looks to new sites of religious meaning-making we begin to ask questions such as: What are the things around which the religious self-organize? This opens new registers for measuring religious feeling and participation, through an uptake in new modalities of the sacred such as collective action to public tragedy (e.g., terror attacks) or social campaigns such as #arabspring, #blacklivesmatter or #metoo.
4.4 Conclusion and Implications for Practical Theology

One of the questions posed at the start of this essay was: What level of sociological knowledge is required to shape Christian practice? This question queries the relationship between practical theology and the sociology of religion, and social sciences more generally. While Kieran Flanagan (2007) in his *Sociology into Theology* argues for critical reflexivity as a way to lessen the distance between the two fields, and Richard Osmer (2008) in his *Practical Theology: An Introduction* proposes four tasks (empirical, interpretative, normative and pragmatic) both rely heavily on social sciences competencies in order that practical theology, despite its Christian particularity, might contribute to the common good in society. In a similar vein, Emmanuel Lartey’s *Postcolonializing God: New Perspectives in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (2012) further asserts the need for taking sincere accounts of socio-economic and historical realities of faith communities. Taking the lived reality of Africa as his point of departure, Lartey calls for religious actors to assume a counter-hegemonic posture in relation to the coloniality of knowledge, power and religious practice in religion and theology.

Edgell (2012) has argued that for the relationship between sociology of religion and practical theology to be fruitful, we must proceed from fundamentally different ideas about religious authority, affinity and changing participation in religion in the late modern world. While market and secularization approaches have dominated in the sociology of religion, both approaches have become insufficient as accounts or theories related to the changing global map of religion and theology. The changing religious landscape as well as salient critiques from critical feminist, race, and queer studies, has disrupted ideas about what schemas are suitable for understanding religion in society.

While the relationship between sociology of religion and practical theology has been one marked by suspicion, these fields are both oriented to giving account (sociology) and offering meaning (practical theology) that rely on ‘real’ accounts of various life worlds. While new social scientific accounts of religious life outside faith organizations threaten to decenter the church or religious authorities more generally, it offers religious stakeholders (faith leaders and laity) access to whole new fields of sociological inquiry, self-description, and religious practice. It challenges faith communities to engage people, not as redeemable subjects – requiring that people be a certain kind of subject, as a prerequisite to benefit from practical theological or Christian social practice. Instead, it promises to open the possibility for care across religious beliefs, as well as to produce religious discourses of accompaniment, where religion is visible in the embodied, everyday lives of people.

From my perspective as a scholar shaped by traditions of decoloniality, this privileging of the body and the everyday, with its apparent decentering of the church and religious authority, also demands that we let go of the idea of faith organizations as stable communities into which new members are incorporated, but rather to move to a self-understanding a precarious communities defined by postures of discomfort.
This produces the possibility of redeeming religion through disruption, discomfort and queering to open the category of religious belief, work, and practice beyond the normative, to disrupt our ideas what we regard as the center of religious knowledge and practice by looking to everyday life, and to privilege the body in religious scholarship and reflection, work, and practice. Thus, the encounter between practical theology and sociology of religion, where it takes seriously the embodied experiences of power in everyday life, as much as it does the institutional, allows precarity, ambivalence and discomfort to emerge as a meaningful analytical and theological resources for understanding affinity, affect and meaning related to religion in the general population.

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