

# RELIGION & GENDER

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## Editorial

This eighteenth issue of *Religion and Gender* marks the start of the eight years existence of the journal. It presents the long awaited special issue 'Religion, Gender, Sexuality and the Law in Latin America'. As the guest editors of the special issue, Macarena Sáez and José Manuel Morán Faúndes, point out in their introduction, issues of gender and sexuality have gained a strong public presence in Latin America in recent years. The successful expansion of sexual and reproductive rights on the basis of feminist and LGBTQ agendas, however, meets ongoing and often public controversy in which religious actors are active protagonists. The special issue deepens our understanding of how gender, sexual and Catholic and Pentecostal politics are intertwined in complex ways across Latin America. This issue is the first one in *Religion and Gender* that focuses on a single continent, including specific geographical and socio-political contexts. The journal editors believe that in an Anglo-Saxon dominated academic setting – often largely separated from discussions taking place in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking academia – the examination of Latin America has the additional relevance of further encouraging the transnational conversations about gender, religion and sexuality that are so important for our contemporary times.

The current special issue can be thematically connected to the special issue 'Habemus Gender! The Catholic Church and "Gender Ideology"' we presented in 2016. Guest edited by Sarah Bracke and David Paternotte, it explored the rise of 'gender ideology' and considered in particular the Catholic Church and the role of the Vatican in the construction of this cultural and political movement that opposes same-sex marriage and sexual education. As the journal editors, we therefore encourage readers to read these two special issues in tandem, since this invites further reflections on the manifold ways in which the Catholic Church and conservative Catholic actors today play similar but also different roles across transnational and regional contexts in debates about gender, sexuality and reproductive rights.

The breadth of the scope of *Religion and Gender* and the many intersections that the journal seeks to explore become further visible in the book review section that once again presents a long list of reviews of recently published books related to the field. You are encouraged not only to read these reviews but also to suggest titles of new books deserving review in the journal and/or to volunteer reviewing a book for the journal yourself. Please do not hesitate to contact the book review editors, Jelle Wiering (j.o.wiering@rug.nl) and An Van Raemdonck (an.vanraemdonck@gmail.com).

Launched over seven years ago, *Religion and Gender* has in the meantime further established itself at the intersection of the study of religion(s) and gender studies. We were at the time full of expectation and excitement, and entirely convinced of the need for a new academic journal dedicated to the systematic study of gender and religion in an interdisciplinary perspective. We can now look back and say that, indeed, the journal addressed a niche but thriving area of scholarship and provided in the needs of a multi- and inter-disciplinary readership. The website statistics tell their own story about the journal's growing international reach and importance: article submissions over the last couple of years have come from all five continents. The top-4 of the most viewed articles of 2011–2017 immediately provides a glimpse of the variety of themes and approaches that are being appreciated: the most popular is Claudia Schippert's 2011 article 'Implications of Queer Theory for the Study of Religion and Gender: Entering the Third Decade' with 4380 views; the second place is for the 2011 editorial 'Openings: A Genealogical Introduction to Religion and Gender' by Anne-Marie Korte with 3639 views; the third most viewed is the 2012 article 'Digital Multiculturalism in the Netherlands: Religious, Ethnic, and Gender Positioning by Moroccan-Dutch Youth' by Koen Leurs, Eva Midden and Sandra Ponzanesi with 3415 views; and finally, the fourth most viewed is Colette Harris' 2012 article 'Masculinities and Religion in Kaduna, Nigeria: A Struggle for Continuity at a Time of Change' with 3310 views. Even though the above mentioned number of visits cannot be taken as the number of downloads, these statistics clearly show that publications in *Religion and Gender* find a wide readership.

Furthermore, the increase of the number and the quality of independent submissions attests to the journal being an increasingly attractive venue for scholars from various geopolitical contexts and disciplinary backgrounds. Of course, we continue to encourage the submission of your original research articles, literature surveys and concise discussion papers to the journal through the online submission system on the website, [www.religionandgender.org](http://www.religionandgender.org). We are also always open to receive innovative proposals for special issues on topical themes or theoretical questions, for which you can contact the managing editor, Nella van den Brandt ([h.p.vandenbrandt@uu.nl](mailto:h.p.vandenbrandt@uu.nl)).

These first successful years could not have been achieved without the enthusiastic and dedicated support of the members of our editorial and advisory boards, whose names are listed on the journal website. As from 2019 on, these boards will merge in one Editorial Advisory Board. *Religion and Gender* acknowledges the contribution of various board members who have contributed to the establishment of the journal and have now terminated their service. Among them are Chia Longman, who has served as one of the executive editors from the start of the journal, and made over the years a significant contribution to discussions about the journal's content and editorial strategy. Fortunately, she moved to the Editorial Advisory Board, which means that *Religion and Gender* is still able to draw from her expertise. The following editorial and advisory board members terminating their service have as well greatly contributed to the successful first years of *Religion and Gender*: Mieke Bal, Angela Berlis, Rosi Braidotti, Willy Jansen, Morny Joy, Catherine Keller, Ursula King, Birgit Meyer, Judith Plaskow, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Susan Sered, Teresa Toldy, Graham Ward, and Pnina Werbner.

As much as we are dedicated to the open access formulae (for reasons outlined in the editorial in the first issue of the journal), *Religion and Gender* has been forced to reconsider its publishing strategy. The field of Open Access publishing is complex, especially in the Humanities, and from an international perspective developments in this field have been far from uniform. Our top priority is to further develop *Religion and Gender* as an internationally recognised, peer refereed academic journal publishing the highest quality of original and innovative scholarship in the field. During 2015–2018 we discussed what publishing policy and infrastructure is needed to facilitate this for the longer term and explored various options. We will update our readers on the outcomes in the next volume. As for now, we can say that we are dedicated to start a long-lasting and productive collaboration with Brill, a high quality academic publishing house with a rich history, broad expertise in various subject areas in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and a strong international focus.

A final announcement relates to our continuous efforts into further building an academic community supporting *Religion and Gender*. In 2015, the International Association for the Study of Religion and Gender (IARG) was launched at the 'Religion, Gender and Body Politics' conference that took place at Utrecht University (the Netherlands). The 2017 special issue 'Religion, Gender and Body Politics', guest edited by Mariecke van den Berg, Kathrine van den Bogert, and Anne-Marie Korte, was the outcome of this conference. The upcoming IARG international conference, entitled 'Sexual and Gendered Moralities' will take place in Ghent (Belgium) from 26–27 November 2018. For more information about this conference and the association, please check the websites <https://ecso.be/index.php/conferences-and-talks/call-for-papers/> and [www.projectreligionandgender.org](http://www.projectreligionandgender.org). We look forward to meeting (again!) many of our readers of *Religion and Gender* at what certainly will be an exciting conference.

But for now, we trust you will enjoy reading the content presented in the current issue.