

# Religious imaginations of political belonging: counterculturalism in Islam and Christianity

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The concept of counterculturalism has emerged amongst religious groups in Europe and the United States as an alternative concept of belonging to that of the nation state. Counterculturalism tends to revolve around norms by which religious groups might seek to differentiate themselves for theological, cultural and/or political reasons. Counterculturalism may present as a comprehensive dissociation from the political community or as post-liberal or anti-liberal resistance to political content.

What is the significance of countercultural imaginations among Muslim and Christian groups? Do such discourses arise from feelings and experiences of political exclusion? Do they arise from critiques of liberal values and norms, or as resistance to post-/colonialism and oppression/marginalisation? What is the relationship between counterculturalism and radical ideas, openness to the far-right and potentially the willingness to engage in violence? Can counterculturalisms be understood as confident affirmations of otherness within political communities, thus adding constructively to the formation of self-understanding in plural societies? How can liberal democracies accommodate countercultures and recognise religious minorities' rights to include them in society? And what is the significance of countercultural theologies and rhetoric in groups which are part of the religious majority?

This workshop brings together scholars from philosophy, theology, politics, law, sociology and anthropology to provide a convening space for comparative and generative *conversations* about the place of religious (and ethnic) imaginaries of counterculture within contemporary democracies. Participants in the workshop will be invited to submit their work for possible inclusion in a special journal issue.

To apply for a place, please submit a title and 300-word description and CV to ([hossein.dabbagh@conted.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hossein.dabbagh@conted.ox.ac.uk)) by 30 November 2022. Decisions will be released by December 15th. Conference briefs of 1500-2500 words are due by May 10th, 2023. A limited

number of bursaries are available for those with demonstrable need. For more information on funding, please email [marietta.vandertol@bsg.ox.ac.uk](mailto:marietta.vandertol@bsg.ox.ac.uk).

### **Covid-19**

We intend to hold the workshop in person at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge. Depending on the situation with Covid-19, the organisers reserve the right to postpone the workshop up until the end of May 2023. Please bear this in mind if you decide to make travel arrangements at an earlier stage as there are no funds available to reimburse travel or accommodation costs in the event of cancellation. We recommend that those travelling to the workshop ensure they have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and take out travel insurance as necessary.

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