

## **Reassembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource (REDO)**

### **1. Relevance of project**

Ritual acts and performances construct, reveal and mobilize pervasive cultural resources. Within the complex set of people's language, forms of expression, norms, values, ideas and behaviours, ritual is a privileged medium in the articulation of memory, expression of identity and response to change. Yet, ritual is not merely a mobilizer, constructed by the social; as a precondition to the construction of society, it is able to contribute to change. Creative responses to crises triggered by the dynamics of contemporary global transformation commonly involve culturally and religiously informed ritualized actions. As people engage in such activities, they build new conditions for engagement and action, acquire and demonstrate novel competencies, and continuously renegotiate social identities, thereby transforming the democratic processes that constitute society. This project studies selected rituals as performances that arise out of and inspire social and environmental activism and grassroots political change, helping to shape the future, create community, and restructure society in a global context. The thesis to be tested is that rituals may contribute importantly to a deepening democratic process that is both reshaping society and providing the grounds for responding to local and global crises.

### **2. Aspects relating to the research project**

#### **2.1 Background, research questions and theoretical perspectives**

People and society are currently faced with complex crises and changes pertaining to culture, nature, religion, language, media, economy, and technology. It is our thesis that in dealing with these transformations, they mobilize cultural resources that may be drawn from varied and competing knowledge and experience bases. As individuals participate in this way in their societies and other assemblages, interactions between persons, communities and environments mobilize larger social fields. While potentially enriching democratic processes, this development may also bring about challenges to existing political structures. In cases of innovation and contestation, ritual behaviours habituated by previous cultural repertoires seem to be utilised — deliberately or casually, by explicit design or by responsive borrowing. In turn, these behaviours are disseminated and adapted in other contexts, shaping participants and societies as they too are shaped by varying circumstances, conditions and contexts. Cultural resources become visible in ritual acts, which in turn become new cultural resources, assembling and re-assembling people and societies at once as actors and as acted-upon. Hence, our research will ask: Are ritual gestures and modes of organization and expression merely effective mobilizers for social change (or stability), or are they constitutive of how society changes and develops? How can we know the difference? What models and theories can best explain ritual resourcefulness? Is ritual agency gendered? Researching selected ritual activities will contribute to our understanding of these questions.

The theoretical position of this project is informed by Ritual Studies approaches and debates. For instance, it builds on Bruce Kapferer's recognition that rituals are 'not merely representative of changes, they effect them' (2004: 43), but also on Bradshaw and Melloh's claim that 'ritual facilitates meaningful social change by focusing on society's general conceptions of the order of existence with the actual circumstances of its daily life' (Bradshaw and Melloh 2007: 168). Implicit here is a tension that has generated considerable debate among scholars interested in the category of "ritual": ritual activity constitutes a mechanism both for stability and for sudden and radical change. It is in light of this dynamic that we propose to undertake research on the ways in which ritual acts mobilize cultural resources in order to better understand society and its constituent assemblages as well as contemporary responses to (perceived) crises. Yet, whereas Kapferer has theorized ritual efficacy by analysing strongly framed, magical rites in which change mainly is measured individually

(social status) or therapeutically (personal wellbeing), we propose to interrogate the new ritualizing forms emerging in non-magical global society and varied popular contexts.

The project also arises from and addresses our shared interests in the nature and enactment of embodied society and culture — that is, on what those “cultural resources” and “responses to crises” might be. In this context we draw on Bruno Latour’s “actor network theory” and its application to “reassembling the social” (2005). We propose that cultural or religious ritual is not only representative of the social but integral to its embodied constitution and reconstitution. This analytical stance is also supported by Richard Sennett, who argues that ritual may play a key role in developing peaceful co-habitation in multicultural society exactly because it installs in its participants more than goodwill and vision, it installs skills (2012). However, as religious pluralization becomes one of the most characteristic features of the cultural conditions driving societal change today, ritual will embody pluralism in its own right and design new inclusive arenas for dialogue and collaboration on the one hand and tribal, identity-focused initiatives on the other. Increased ritual pluralization seems to be occurring simultaneously with an increased bifurcation and politicization of religious traditions. This ambiguous state of affairs was made cruelly evident on July 22, 2011. Yet, a terrorist’s totalitarian interpretation of Christian and Pagan sacrificial battle was counteracted by 200,000 people by means of ritual, both as single gestures and over many weeks.

In Oslo, sacrifice and assembly manifested as conflicting traditions, referring to two different modes of “religion” (symbolised historically by temple and synagogue). Whereas sacrifice requires the destruction of life (plant, animal or human) for the sake of community well-being, the focus of the assembly is not sacrificial but affirmative of the assembly itself and its larger cause. The core purpose of an assembly may in fact be open, and defined on the spot by the assembly itself. There are also indications that sacrifice and assembly have different gender implications in terms of who controls the rites (male priesthood in sacrificial rites), design the boundaries, and are entitled to eat what (cf. Carter 2003). Judith Butler, however, has reformulated the question of gender in ritualized action by attending to how public practices continuously bring about ritual and space. In her Foucauldian inspired interpretation, critique, resistance, exclusion, or refusal to participate in hegemonic ritual traditions are practices that shift the structure of power (2011). This is an important perspective for the project, not least in order to understand the contemporary capacity for democratic ritual self-organizing as well as to what it involves (cf. also Gene Sharp 2012). Gender will be employed as analytical perspective throughout the project, and researchers will be sensitive to recognising women as ritual agents.

The aim of *Reassembling Democracy* is the comparative scholarly analysis of how accelerating ritual pluralization and ritual mobilization among new stakeholders are creating new cultural conditions for community building, multicultural co-habitation, public mourning, direct democracy and religious dialogue, but also for confrontation. The investigation of these processes will involve detailed studies of local ritual pluralization strategies and ritual responses to social and environmental crisis in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

## **2.2 Analytical approaches and methods**

In Talal Assad’s famous genealogy of ritual he demonstrates how ritual (in daily speech) is a deeply embedded historical category, in fact, a new conceptual invention of the renaissance. It developed as a boundary making hermeneutical device between Protestant Christianity and its other, staging antagonism between “outer” obedience to ceremonial piety and “inner” heartfelt faith. In times of marked social change prospects, latent inherited cultural contradictions come to the fore, also in regard to the category of ritual. Established practices and attitudes are no longer taken for granted and new patterns of behaviour, of skilling, and ways of thinking arise. The widespread emergence of popular democratic initiatives in response to unsettling events, deteriorating environmental conditions and social impasses, as well as the ways these

initiatives call forth new collective values, notions of identity and modes of association, attest both to the challenges and to the creative potential to be found in these transformations. At such junctures of recomposition and recontextualisation, people mobilize their cultural resources, and one of the principle ways they do so turn out to be through ritual. It is indeed noteworthy but hardly surprising that these “spontaneous” or organized manifestations of grass-root participation, regardless of whether or not they are religious, are highly ritualized: conduct is guided by what rapidly become recurrent forms in which pre-existing cultural routines and innovative ways of thinking and acting are closely joined. One of the inherent qualities of ritual is that it brings into being synthetic events and modes of action in which the participants’ personal, social and political concerns are systematically reconfigured and made accessible, to them and to others, as interconnected wholes. The distinctive experiences such ritualized events and modes of activity afford thus become the privileged, emotionally and intentionally laden touchstones in reference to which participants re-evaluate themselves and the world in which they live. In this light, the study of emerging ritualized practices – in the form of popular assemblies of witnessing and mourning, festivals, pilgrimages, performative displays, and activities around the production and consumption of food – can provide crucial insights not only into the issues being faced, but also into the ways in which old and new cultural competences are being mobilized to meet them.

As an interdisciplinary group of researchers with interconnected research questions on ritual, democracy, ecology and religion, we will tap our rich experiences through the use of different research methods. All sub-projects will entail (at least an element of) fieldwork involving participant observation and structured or semi-structured interviews with members of selected communities, movements, assemblages and/or church groups. The practices of reflexivity, dialogue and collaborative comparison of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork make the performance, utilization and production of ethnography most suited to careful data collection, analysis and theorization about the rapidly changing world order. Audiovisual recordings will be utilised, and 3 documentary films produced. A *charette* will be organised to gather unusually large data on the effects of 22 July during an intensive 4 day period. Fieldwork will be supported by historical, textual, archival and media-analysis research where relevant.

### **2.3 Objectives**

Principle goal: Interrogate how new public events and grassroots movements use (religious) ritual to mobilize cultural resources in response to social and environmental crises; how ritual in itself is a cultural resource in order to labour forth new prospects; how new ritual action is gendered; how ritual may contribute to a deepening democratic process and social development.

Sub goals: 1. Develop a conceptual and methodological framework that allows comparisons across time and space, between selected case studies, and between texts and empirical realities; 2. Conduct fieldwork and textual studies in selected sites that can inform comparative analysis of responses to crises pertaining to the following areas of current unease: a) public religion, ritual and renewal of collective identity, b) the “deep democracy” of new ritualizing social movements, c) environmental and performative renewal of individual identity. 3. Use the framework and comparative data as a perspective to generate new insights on Norwegian political, cultural and religious practices in relation to 22 July, new practices of relating to “Christian” and “Pagan” landscape, and new forms of multicultural co-habitation. 4. Provide a new conceptual background for understanding the diverse, emerging political field of grassroots assembly and ritual activism that can restructure the public debates on political and communal potentialities globally and nationally.

### **2.4 Research plan and subprojects**

Three specific research teams have been established to work on three strongly interrelated

projects, each specified with a main focus project, followed by a list of joint subprojects. The research teams will work out a common conceptual and methodological frame and will work in parallel at each site throughout the period of fieldwork. Each research team will be led by one senior researcher and will include local junior researchers (PhD and masters students).

The project is led by Prof. Jone Salomonsen (Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo) in cooperation with senior researchers Ass. Prof. Sidsel Roalkvam (Sum - Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo) and Prof. Michael Houseman (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes). They constitute the core group together with Graham Harvey (Open University), Sarah M. Pike (University of California – Chico), Marion Grau (Graduate Theological Union), Donna L. Seamone (University of Acadia) and Jens Kreinath (Wichita State University). They cooperate with a larger research group of 7 scholars and 2 PhDs (already funded). Coordination of individual researchers and between the three research groups will be crucial to ensure a link between the different levels and components of studies, and to ensure a rigorous comparison across the case studies. The core project group will arrange two workshops annually hosted by 8 different collaborating partner institutions in order to develop conceptual and methodological frame, workshop to present preliminary finding and to ensure publications of research findings.

The core group in this project have already worked together for more than 10 years in the “Ritual Studies Group” of the *American Academy of Religion*’s, and have comprehensive knowledge of the research field. Some have participated in earlier, smaller projects funded with seed money from the inter-faculty research programs PLUREL and LEVE at the University of Oslo between 2007-2011. The research questions, topics, framing and objectives for this particular proposal was finalised in a workshop held at UiO March 22-25, 2012, where the prospective researchers participated. All participants in the research group are therefore well suited to work together, including to engage with each others’ subprojects – in field as well as in analysis – and to ensure the integration of the overall research topics.

### **Project I: Inflating ritual, minimizing religion, renewing collective identity (led by Prof Jone Salomonsen)**

The subprojects of this group are directly concerned with public ritual sites in times of crisis and prospects of renewal, and the role of minimized religion in negotiating national and other collective identities We also ask: In what ways do collective ritual actions constitute an efficient, appropriate response to terror, financial and social insecurity and environmental unease, and to what extent do such actions foster participation in what Appadurai (2001) calls “democracy from below”?

The focus study for this group, **22. July: Performance violence and public ritual response (1)**, is to analyse how and why religious institutions in Norway became ritual arenas for protest and grief in response to Anders Behring Breivik’s violent attacks, and what it does to politics. Both Breivik’s terrorism and people’s ritualized reactions involved issues of national identity, national values and visions of how Norway can become more true to its “roots”, be it in terms of opening up boundaries or closing them off “to us”. In response to the 22 July terrorism, the Church of Norway played a leading hyper-ceremonial role. Also new collaborations between Muslim, Hindu and other Christian institutions took place. This focus study aims to explore why religious sites, including streets and open plazas, served as popular venues in this emergency situation, giving rise to open assemblies of mourning rather than rigid communities of separation. A related aim is to understand the new ritual competence that became manifest in a population unused to gathering in congregations on a regular basis, that suddenly began to perform new ritual gestures. What roles did women and youth play? What roles do religious institutions play in the development and undertaking of public ritual actions, and what do these roles reveal about “religion” in contemporary Norwegian society? What is

the potential political significance of taking ritual to the streets, and of people demanding sacred space within church atmospheres, other than debating “true” (state) and “false” (terrorist) Christianities? Based on film analysis, field work, archival studies of the public rituals and their remains, in-depth interviews and accredited court observations from the trial of Anders Behring Breivik, this study will be conducted by **Jone Salomonsen** (University of Oslo) together with **Ida Marie Høeg** (KIFO, Centre for Church Research) and **Cora Alexa Døving**, (The Holocaust Center at UiO). An important framing contribution will be the use of a new unorthodox methodology to gather data on the impact of 22 July on Oslo’s population two years after the fact: *Charette (Plansmie* in Norwegian, <http://www.sodalarkitekter.no/plansmier.html>). This is a way of organizing ideas from experts and users in an unrestricted yet structured fashion that has proved to be conducive to creativity and the development of multiple scenarios. The project will recruit a PhD, and the person is expected to contribute to project I, and to bring forth new knowledge on feminist ritual (and/or liturgical) renewal at multicultural intersections in contemporary Norway.

A conceptual, historical case study will aid this focus study in understanding terrorism’s multilayered frames of reference. In his subproject, **Contesting evil: developing theological understandings of resistance (2)**, Kjetil Hafstad (University of Oslo) will look at some of the theological underpinnings of grass-roots reactions against evil, oppression and terror, in a historical perspective, going back both to Martin Luther and Karl Barth. A contemporary comparative case is the **Ritualized food and national identity in the Church of Denmark (3)** study undertaken by Gitte Buch-Hansen (University of Copenhagen). It critically explores national identities at risk in the Church of Denmark, proceeding from the idea that the dining table has become the *site* where national identity is performed and negotiated in church. Within this framework, Buch-Hansen proposes to study the Eucharist – not primarily as a symbol, but as a ritualized meal. She will explore the changes that take place in the ritual and in participants’ attitudes and experiences when the host is replaced by bread, and when old rules of exclusion are transgressed. Opposite concerns underlie the research of Grzegorz Brzozowski (PhD at University of Warsaw, Poland), who in **e ritualised public sphere of the Polish Woodstock festival (4)**, will explore how traditional religious ritual and modern, youth-driven secular rites can coexist within the same festival frame. *Woodstock* is the biggest annual festival in Polen, with 800,000 participants. How can ritual pluralization and radical inclusiveness be maintained without excessive polarization? The case study to be undertaken by Graham Harvey (Open University), **Ritualising Diaspora and re-occupying Kåfjord (5)**, explore the permeable boundaries between ritual and performance, indigeneity and non-indigeneity, communal assemblage and individualisation, by comparing practices at the annual Sami Riddu Riddu festival in Northern Norway with rituals conducted among Maori and Pacific Islander diaspora groups in London, UK. Indigenous communities worldwide are currently drawing on established but ever-evolving cultural resources for new purposes. Presented as stages in cultural revitalisation and/or celebrated as resources for cultural resilience and community well-being, public performances rooted in “traditional” ritual forms and knowledge allow indigenous participants to seek relevant ways of relating to new locations and diverse assemblies. In doing so, the subproject seek to enrich understandings of ritual as a privileged medium in the mobilization of cultural resources.

### **Project II: Ritual, democracy and new social movements (led by Prof Sidsel Roalkvam)**

The subprojects of this group are directly concerned with the emergence of a new range of transnational social movements, networks, and organizations seeking to promote a more just and equitable global order. A generally overlooked feature of these movements is the role played therein by ritualized political commemoration (Pfaff and Yang 2001). Through

comparative research this group seeks to trace and analyze the deepening democratic potential of new social movements through the lens of ritual theory. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler (2011) on the persistence of the body and of the co-constitution of public space, these projects also aim to understand the role of emotion in embodied protests. A special concern of this group is to understand the specific connectivities that are culturally and religiously inflected and globally articulated through the transformation of public spaces.

The focus study for this subgroup is **‘Citizenship without borders’: An ethnographic study of the Peoples Health Movement (6)** undertaken by Sidsel Roalkvam, University of Oslo. **People's Health Movement** is a global network of grassroots health activists (dominated by women), civil organizations and academic institutions that has its origin in the Jan Swathya Abhiyan, a grassroots movement in rural India. The study focuses on ritual as a device for mobilizing grassroots sentiment in India and as a tool for global collective action when relating to national and global policy institutions. It asks the question: what language and imagery, what kinds of histories and frames are deployed to promote global mobilization for change? More generally, what symbols work as worldwide political emblems to unite and sustain action? Can self-organizational practices in the people's health movement in India be compared with permacultural, slow food movements in the West?

A comparative case study is **The Rites of Citizenship (7)**, undertaken by **Paul-François Tremlett** (Open University) that also explores collective rituals in public spaces by analyzing the on-going Occupy protests in London and Hong Kong as attempts to re-enchant, however fleetingly, the material spaces most associated with financial markets. Significantly, a potent combination of religio-moral and radical political elements can be discerned in these attempts. Through comparative research at these two sites, he will attempt to read Occupy as a rite of citizenship (Isin & Nielson 2008). Similar concerns underlie the case study to be undertaken by Jens Kreinath (Wichita State University): **Occupying Soundscapes: The Impact of Musical Performances on Interreligious Dynamics in Hatay, Turkey (8)**. The case study explores to what extent interreligious musical performances shape a public space consisting of a number of different religious and ethnic groups and impacts and transforms the interactions between local religious communities. The comparative case study to be undertaken by Sarah M. Pike (California State University, Chico), **Internal revolution: collective ritualizing and youth conversion to radical environmentalism (9)**, will investigate the processes by which young Americans become committed to environmental activism through protest rituals. This case study aims to identify the kinds of cultural resources young people draw on that shape and inform adult ritual performances within the framework of the environmental protest movement in the United States.

### **Topic project III: Ritual, environment and performative renewal of individual identity (led by Prof Michael Houseman)**

The subprojects of this group are concerned with ritualized activities relating to the revitalization of land and its products. They explore the ways innovative, environmentally aware ritual performances – the revival of ancient pilgrimage routes, eco-tourism ventures, reforestation initiatives and sacred dance – provide the grounds for new forms of relationship between human and more-than-human agents and assemblages.

The focus study for this group, **Pilgrimage as Earthbound Ritual Re-traditioning: Exploring Nidaros and Selje (10)**, to be undertaken by Marion Grau (Graduate Theological Union) with assistance from Jone Salomonsen (University of Oslo) examines the significance of the recent increase in pilgrimage travel in Europe as a reengagement with national Christian heritages, allowing for a renewed connection to nature, and a means of exploring spiritual and cultural roots. Pilgrimages to Nidaros and to Selje will be envisaged as ritual travels that help recapture cultural identities and ground communal practices open to ethnic

and religious diversity (Davidsson-Bremborg, 2010, Mikaelsson 2005, Grau 2010). The subproject will investigate how and if pilgrims restage self, community, society and cultural belonging by exploring practices at these two sites of particular historical significance to Norwegian religio-national identity. As islands marking transformations of identity, a connection will be made between Selje and Utøya, which has become a site of memorial and ritual, indexing the need to rethink Norway's pagan and Christian heritages in the aftermath of Breivik's problematic engagement with both.

A comparative case study is Donna L. Seamone's **Farmers and Pilgrims: Ritualizing New Relationships, Negotiating Cultural and Natural Pluralism (11)**, in which pilgrimage-like activities are closely linked with issues of environment and food. Ethnographic research on eco/agri-tourist ventures in eastern Canada will focus on the ritualized practices they entail: farm vacations, farm markets and festivals, slow-food activities and permaculture. The study aims to show how such ritualized intersections create new modes of sociality amongst humans and with the more-than-human (nature/place), and how these experiments in sustainability create new cultural conditions for identity, habitation and community building (Badone & Roseman 2004). Similar concerns are implied in the subproject undertaken by Tony Balcomb and assistant S. Chirongoma (University of Kwazulu-Natal), **Dressing Mother Nature. Earth keeping rituals and democracy in Southern Zimbabwe (12)**. Extensive fieldwork and archival research will be used to investigate a reforestation and conservation initiative taking place in the Masvingo Province of Southern Zimbabwe. The "war of the trees", as it has become known, is seen as part of the liberation from oppression, injustice, and exploitation and as part of a broader grassroots democratic movement (Chirongoma 2012) involving both Christians and practitioners of Indigenous Religion. Tree planting is accompanied by a number of elaborate rituals that illustrate its fundamentally ecumenical nature (cf. Daneel 1999): ceremonies undertaken by female spirit mediums; "green eucharists" performed by members of the Christian clergy, rituals of purification and forgiveness during which confessions are made for the deforestation of the environment; and rituals performed for endangered species. In the subproject conducted by Samuel Etikpah (PhD at University of Oslo), **Kundum and Mother River Festivals in Rural Ghana (13)**, a similar question is addressed: How do community festivals and rituals become effective vehicles for generating inter-religious collaboration and peaceful-coexistence among Christians, Muslims and adherents of traditional religions? On the European continent, **Ceremonial dancing in emerging ritual practices (14)** is an easily accessible cultural resource in which individual bodily experience and the communication of shared ideas and aspirations are closely combined. Typically incorporating conventional movement, bodily adornment and song, dance provides participants with a particularly synthetic medium through which collective identities are negotiated and displayed. Ritualized dancing has received little attention on the part of social scientists as compared, for example, to the ceremonial use of material artefacts or the mechanics of ritual speech. This subproject, undertaken by Michael Houseman (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes), will contribute to filling this gap by studying dance empirically within the context of several Neo-pagan, New Age and Spiritual Development initiatives. This research aims to interrogate the qualities of collective dancing in contemporary contexts of ritual pluralization so as to evaluate its potential for the reconstitution of cultural patterns and for the mobilization of social change.

Morny Joy's (University of Calgary) subproject, **Changing the World (15)**, pertains to all the projects I, II and III. It aims at formulating the foundations for new insights in both philosophy of religion and theology that take into account shifts occurring in contemporary movements at the popular level of rituals and behaviour. Such movements mark a radical change in what could be called the Western symbolic universe. The goal here is to build a philosophy and theology of transformation and renewal, both informing and informed by the

empirical findings of other subprojects that presupposes a re-enchantment of the world.

### **2.5 Budget (see electronic grant application form)**

### **2.6 International cooperation,**

In order to integrate projects and give a practical form to international cooperation, we have designed 7 workshops (two every years) at partner institutions, one “22 July” conference for 20 people in Oslo spring 2014, one final conference for 30 people in fall 2016 in Oslo, 2 guest professor visits to Oslo in spring 2014 and 2 guest professor visits to Oslo in fall 2015. Jone Salomonsen has been invited to spend her sabbatical at Graduate Theological Union in spring 2016, and both Salomonsen and Roalkvam are invited for shorter exchange visits at partner institutions in order to work on 3 planned co-edited volumes from project with collaborating researchers. Such extended stays will only take place in connection with workshops.

Opening Workshop 1 March 2013: overall conceptual frame, U of KwaZulu Natal;

Workshop 2 Sept 2013: paper presentations from subprojects, U of Oslo/SUM

Workshop 3 March 2014: Conceptual project 1 and 2, U of Copenhagen

Workshop 4 Sept 2014: paper presentation from subprojects: U of California Chico

Workshop 5 April 2015: Conceptual project 3, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes

Workshop 6 Sept 2015: paper presentations from subprojects, Open University

Workshop 7 March 2016: conceptual and integrative on ritual and democracy, Graduate Theological Union

## **3. Key perspectives and compliance with strategic documents**

### **3.1 Gender issues**

Jone Salomonsen, Professor and Chair of Interdisciplinary Theological Gender Studies at the Faculty of Theology, have worked with partner Sidsel Roalkvam, social anthropologist and academic director of LEVE at SUM, University of Oslo, on related topics over many years. Both have extensive experience in project management and research leadership. Their interdisciplinary leadership has secured female management, attendance from a majority of female researchers, ethnographic work prioritized among women, topics that include gender, academic outcome of relevance to feminist scholars and concerned communities. PhD and master students will be recruited in keeping with the University of Oslo policy of encouraging female applicants.

### **3.2 Compliance with strategic documents**

The project is organized by representatives of PLUREL and LEVE. Both programs have become prioritized areas of research at the University of Oslo following a decision taken by the University Board. LEVE was developed at the initiative of the Centre of Environment and Development (SUM), also its host unit. PLUREL was developed at the initiative of the Faculty of Theology in cooperation with the Faculties of Humanities, Pedagogy, Law and Social Sciences. PLUREL and LEVE provide interdisciplinary academic environments for individual researchers, research groups and associated national and international partners. The actual research project brings forth key themes in both programs in new and innovative ways. The Faculty of Theology has a strong focus on inter-disciplinary research, and is a driving force in network activities and the co-ordination of research collaborations. Protestant religion and culture, contemporary religion and society, and inter-religious studies are prioritised fields. The project will also be linked to SUM's research area *Global and Regional Governance for Sustainable Development*, which develops conceptual frameworks for studying policy processes, governance and negotiations between states, multilateral organizations, private companies and other non state organizations.

### **3.3 Outcome and relevance to society**

The proposed outcome of this project will contribute to move the conceptual and empirical fields of theology, religious studies and social anthropology. Ritual inflation and religious minimalism in public sphere, including using ritual to mobilize cultural resources to respond

to crisis, goes against the grain in Protestant Christian theologizing. Yet, ritualized gestures and modes of organization – together with skills in self-organisation and dynamic, multicultural co-habitation – have become integral to contemporary social and occupying movements. The interest in becoming similarly skilled is spreading from new social movements to larger assemblies. This happens in tandem with the growth of new identitarian, totalitarian and ultranationalist projects among the European radical right. Thus, political theology has again entered public space in the West; Breivik is just a brutal example hereof. Identifying the drivers of deep democratization in this coming political conflict is essential to public interest and a topic of global as well as national significance.

### **3.4 Ethical perspectives**

The project will be conducted according to ethical norms articulated in guidelines for ethical research conduct (NESH 1999), as well as the Helsinki declaration. The characteristics of ethnographic fieldwork – long duration, a holistic interest in the informants' life worlds, and long-term personal contact with informants – facilitate the development of a methodology where personal informed consent and individuals' integrity is assured. All data will be carefully made anonymous, kept in a secure place and will not be stored beyond the project's duration. Approval of the project from Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste (NSD, Norwegian Social Science Data Services), REK (Regional Ethics Committee) and from corresponding institutions in countries where research will be undertaken, will be applied for.

## **4. Dissemination and communication of results**

### **4.1 Dissemination**

We will meet the obligations of scientific publishing and also disseminate our work and findings in ways that impact both the research community and society at large. All scholars write and publish regularly are peer reviewers for professional journals. Some have considerable experience as journal editors, while particular project members have developed significant expertise in the course of publishing their respective works (see their CVs). Drawing on these competencies, we plan to publicise our research results and insights by means of multi-faceted instruments of communication, characterised by high quality and relevance to current political, cultural, social and economic conditions. These will include films, blogs, conferences, guest lectures as well as the publication of texts: edited volumes, monographs, journal articles and research papers. The project aims at communicating results with users and with policy makers relevant to the result of this project and started this dialogue process in workshop held in Oslo March 2012. The *Charette* in Oslo 2014 – which partly will be held at Litteraturhuset – is important and original, and will be introduced and supported by several newspaper articles. The project leader has broad experience as public speaker and writer in Norway, and will use her networks well to implement the dissemination plan. In addition to academic publications, the following strategies to enhance dissemination and utilization of results will be used: 1) Research finding and preliminary recommendations will be presented to relevant users before finalizing, and their participation sought in shaping the final recommendations; 2) Policy briefings will be prepared for policymakers and other stakeholders. 3) Presentations of the study and its findings at various national regional, and international meetings and conferences.

### **4.2 Communication with users**

To ensure the relevance of the project's research program we invited potential Norwegian users of our research to meet with us at our preparatory workshop in Oslo in March 2012. Some of them were in a position to influence policy, some were practitioners and some were both ("Samarbeidsrådet for tro og livssyn", "Holistisk Fornund", "Norsk Permakulturförening", "Kirkerådet", "Bymisjonen", "Pilegrimssenteret i Oslo"). We asked how they regard the spread of popular ritual performance, and if they see vernacular ritual competence as valuable or harmful to society, to community building and to the ritual projects

of their organization in particular. We also discussed how research may be better disseminated to users and to groups with power to influence. The outcome was enriching and we plan another meeting with an extension of the same group midway in project.

### 5. Bibliography

- Alexander, Jeffrey, Giesen Bernhard and Mast Jason L., *Social Performance. Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics and Ritual*, Cambridge University Press, 2006
- Appadurai, Arjun. "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the rise of Politics." *Environment and Urbanization* 13 (October 2001): 23-43.
- Badone, Ellen, and Sharon, Roseman R.. *Intersecting Journeys: the anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Barth, Karl *Das christliche Leben: Die kirchliche Dogmatik IV/4. Fragmente aus dem Nachlaß. Vorlesungen 1959 – 1961*, Gesamtausgabe, Bd.7 herausgegeben von Hans-Anton Drewes und Eberhard Jüngel, Zürich 1976.
- Bradshaw, Paul, and John Melloh. *Foundations in Ritual Studies: A Reader for Students of Christian Worship*. London: SPCK, 2007.
- Butler, Judith. "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street". European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics, accessed 7 March, 2012, <http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en>
- Carter, Jeffrey, ed. *Understanding Religious sacrifice: A Reader*. London: Continuum, 2003.
- Castells, M. Toward a Sociology of the Network Society, *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 5., 2000
- Chirongoma, S. "Karanga-Shona Rural Women's Agency in Dressing Mother Earth: A Contribution towards an Indigenous Eco-feminist Theology." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 142 (2012): 120-144.
- Daneel, M.L. *African Earthkeepers: Environmental mission and liberation in Christian perspective*. Pretoria: Unisa Press, 1999.
- Davidsson-Bremborg, Anna. *Pilgrimsvandring på Svenska*. Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, 2010.
- Delattre, Roland. "Ritual Resourcefulness and Cultural Pluralism." *Soundings* 61: 3-28, 1978
- DeLuca, Kevin. *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1999.
- Grau, Marion. *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society, and Subversion*. Place: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2011.
- Grimes, Ronald L. *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory*, Columbia, SC, 2005: University of South Carolina Press.
- Harvey, G. and C. Thompson (eds) *Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005
- Houseman, Michael & Severi, Carlo, *Naven or The Other Self: A Relational Approach to Ritual Action*. Leiden: Brill, 1998
- Isin, Engin. F. and Greg M. Nielson, eds. *Acts of Citizenship*. New York: Zed Books, 2008.
- Ingold, Tim. *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge, 2011
- Kapferer, Bruce. 'Ritual Dynamics and Virtual Practice: Beyond Representation and Meaning.' *Social Analysis* 48 ( Summer 2004): 33-54.
- Keller, Catherine. *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*. London: Routledge, 2003
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Mikaelsson, Lisbeth. "Locality and Myth: The Resacralization of Selja and the Cult of St. Sunniva." *Numen* 52, (2005):191-225.
- Pfaff, Steven and Guobin Yang. "Double-Edged Rituals and the Symbolic Resources of Collective Action: Political Commemorations and the Mobilization of Protest in 1989." *Theory and Society* 30, (2001):539-589
- Sennett, Richard. *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Co-operation*. US: Yale University, 2012.
- Sharp, Gene. *From dictatorship to democracy: a conceptual framework for liberation*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2012.