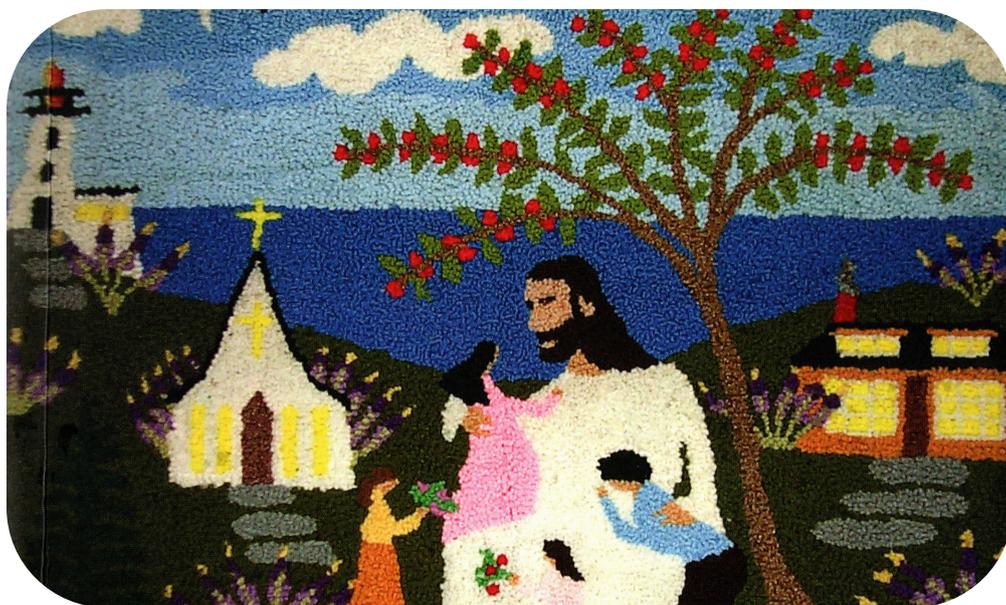


**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
*SIEF ETHNOLOGY*  
*of RELIGION WORKING GROUP*  
Submission deadline: Mar 15, 2026



*Foto: Book cover Vernacular Religion (Primiano, L.N.) 2022, NYU Press.  
Jesus and the Children, n.d., hooked rug by Sister Ann Ameen (Collection Leonard Primiano)*

**VERNACULAR RESPONSES TO  
RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS,  
CRISES, AND  
(RE)CONCILIATIONS**



Lisbon  
September 7-8, 2026

## Conference organized by SIEF Ethnology of Religion Working Group and the Institute of Social Sciences

Local Convenors: Clara Saraiva and Gianmarco Marzola

In a time marked by polycrisis ranging from ecological calamities and political polarization to armed conflict and deepening existential precarity, religion is increasingly entangled in, and mobilized through, struggles over meaning, belonging, and power. As a powerful social field, religion has long been an arena of conflict as well as a resource for mediating, managing, and transforming conflicts.

Conflict within religious traditions often unfolds in terms of struggles over authority, authenticity, and belonging. These struggles center on who has the power to define “proper” doctrine, ritual practice, moral behaviour, gender roles, and legitimate relationships with the state and the wider social world. Such disputes are often intensified by differing attitudes toward modernity. In these debates, competing actors present continuity and reform as matters of fidelity or moral order. Conflict can also be generated by aesthetic disputes over style and taste, new forms of piety and innovation.

Religious phenomena might cause conflicts in the public that arise when religious commitments and moral projects become articulated in shared public spaces and institutions, where they encounter competing norms of secular governance and pluralism. They frequently crystallize at the contested interface of dominant traditions and minoritized religious and ethnic formations, where difference is politicized through regimes of recognition.

Resolving conflict through religious practices can be approached through local and individual strategies, embodied, relational, and material practices, through which people navigate, and recompose everyday life amid conflict and crisis. In this ritual economy of conflict and repair we find collective forms of memory work and religious artistic practices through which communities seek to come to terms with the past and to negotiate ethnic, religious, and political antagonisms in religious idioms.

The conference invites contributors to address these issues of conflict and crisis through vernacular perspectives: Empirically grounded contributions are welcome that move beyond demonstrating that religion can be conflictual or conciliatory, and instead examine how unpacking individual, local, embodied, and vernacular practices generates new methodological and theoretical insights. We are equally interested in how conflict and crisis reorganize religious life, processes of ritualization, and everyday practices and, conversely, how religious life reshapes the ways conflict, insecurity, and precarity are lived and experienced. We also aim to foreground how people creatively negotiate doctrine, tradition, and materiality in their everyday religious lives through the lens of conflict and crisis.

Contributions are encouraged to approach vernacular religion as a situated, negotiated field of meaning-making, following Leonard Norman Primiano's (1995) definition of vernacular religion as "religion as it is lived: as human beings encounter, understand, interpret, and practice it." Our particular interest lies in the creative solutions and strategies that religious communities have long developed to manage, or mediate social and religious conflicts, yet have often remained peripheral to anthropological and ethnological analyses of religion.

We welcome ethnographic, theoretical, and interdisciplinary contributions that address but are not limited to the following questions:

- How do conflicts reshape local traditions, ritual calendars, or genres of religious expression?
- In which ways do vernacular religious traditions adapt, hybridize, or resist under external pressures (e.g. state suppression, migration, persecution from other groups)?
- What role does vernacular religion play in peacebuilding and reconciliation?
- How can vernacular religion help people cope in conflict-based constraints?
- How do conflicts shape and transform local religious practices?
- How do vernacular religious practices reconcile or fuel conflicted imageries?

#### Submissions

- Abstracts (max. 300 words) should include: title, author(s), institutional affiliation, a brief outline of research question(s), theoretical framework, and methodology.
- Panel proposals (3–4 papers) are also welcome; please include a brief description of the panel theme (max. 200 words) plus individual abstracts.
- Submission deadline: Mar 15, 2026.
- Format: Please send abstracts as a Word or PDF document to [kamila.baraniecka@gmail.com](mailto:kamila.baraniecka@gmail.com)
- The selection committee will make its decision by May 4, 2026 to allow reasonable time for participants to apply for travel funds. Conference fee: €40 for senior lecturers/professors/full employees; €20 for junior researchers/students and scholars from low-income countries.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### LOCATION:

Institute of Social sciences, University of Lisbon

- Av. Prof. Aníbal Bettencourt 9 1600-189 Lisbon, Portugal
- Metro station: Entrecampos

### SPECIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

- Scholars and students in need of financial support may apply for a financial contribution to partially cover travel costs. Bursaries also include a conference fee waiver.

### SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska, Kinga Povedák, Clara Saraiva, Alessandro Testa, Thorsten Wettich