Call for papers:

Religious Super-diversity and Peacebuilding.
An Anthropological Perspective

Steven Vertovec introduced the category of super-diversity in 2007. According to this notion, the nature of immigration brings with it “a transformative ‘diversification of diversity’ not just in terms of bringing more ethnicities and countries of origin, but also with respect to a multiplication of significant variables [that include] differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents” (Vertovec 2007: 1025).

Although religion was initially not very central to debates around migration-driven super-diversity, it has changed over recent years, affected by three different perspectives: the debate towards secularization and the re-enchantment of the world, the increasing of the presence of migrant religions, and that of new religious movements (Becci & Burchardt 2016). Despite anthropologists have often focused on conflicts, some scholars have recently debated about the role of religion in peacebuilding process (Albera & Courouci 2009), also taking into account the fact that religious spaces are produced through the labor of ritualization and interpretations (Chidester 2016).

As Vertovec claimed (2019), if on the one hand super-diversity could entail patterns of inequality and prejudice, emergent forms of racism and segregation, on the other it could challenge these negative features in increasingly complex, composite, and stratified societies. Despite certain ambiguities, the religious super-diversity could lead to greater interaction, to the development of convivial and cosmopolitan identities, and to contribute to the building of a peaceful coexistence.

This book aims to argue about the relation between religious super-diversity and peacebuilding, from an anthropological perspective. The interested participants are encouraged to submit papers to discuss, analyse, and criticize this relation, both
through theorization and concrete case studies. Analysis may consider the following themes among others:

1) Religious super-diversity, urban spaces, and public sphere.
2) Religious minorities and their (key) role in the building of peace.
3) The engagement of religious leaders and communities.
4) The involvement and commitment of institutions and political leaders.
5) Dynamics of “positive” competition among religious communities.
6) Shared religious places and pilgrimages as space of coexistence.

**Preliminary references**


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Abstract deadline: **15 January 2021**.
Notification of acceptance: **30th January 2021**.
Paper deadline: **1st May 2021**.

The volume resulting from this call for paper will be published by Sapienza University Press – New Series *in progress*. *All articles will be peer reviewed*
ABOUT THE SAPIENZA’S RESEARCH PROJECT:

*Negotiating Stories in Cohabitation: Dynamics and Narratives of Peace in the Great Empires of the Past (from Antiquity to Present Times)* is a Sapienza Project (RG11916B85F0352C). The research group proposes an interdisciplinary analysis of the processes through which some of the ancient great empires negotiated and reevaluated their own past histories in the context of regional peacebuilding: Roman Empire, early modern Christendom from Europe to the Americas and Asia, Iberian Empires, Mughal empire, and the Tibetan Kingdoms of the Tibetosphere. The project will focus mainly on the concept of border and conflicts of identity across the boundaries and on the role of historical narratives in conflicts and their resolution. The approach is interdisciplinary, rooted in the discursive approach to conflict and reconciliation through the language of myth, theology, philosophy, law, and arts. During the project, we will become acquainted with concepts and theories of peacebuilding and conciliation, as well as social, political, and cultural issues related to the position of minorities in the empires of Late Antiquity, Middle Ages, and the long Renaissance, from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. We will also explore the repercussions that certain narratives of the past continue to cast on the contemporary images of minority group in the socio-cultural and political scenarios of the present.

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ABOUT THE MSCA’S RESEARCH PROJECT:

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RELCAPE\textsc{t}OWN \textemdash~\textit{Religious Super-Diversity in Cape Town. Dynamics of Leadership and Territorialization Through Religious Spaces in the Migration Process} is a MARIE CURIE SKŁODOWSKA ACTION 2019 - n. 886578. Through an anthropological research, this project explores the interaction between religions and migration in specific areas of Cape Town, South Africa, from the perspective of the “religious super-diversity” notion. The research deals with social, cultural, and political roles of religious places and communities in a theoretical framework that investigates the relationship between religious agency of migrant groups and social cohesion. It aims to shed light on the implications of religion and the dynamics of religious leadership and hierarchy upon urban spaces, the public sphere, and relations with institutions. The areas of Cape Town known as Subcouncils 15, 16 and 20 have been selected for the impressive presence of old and recent “migrants’ religious places”: there are different Christian churches, Synagogues, Mosques, Hindu Temples, Jehovah’s Witnesses Temples, etc. In 2007 Steven Vertovec introduced into social science theories the category of super-diversity. According to this notion, the nature of immigration brings with it “a transformative diversification of diversity.” Super-diversity as a starting point provides a challenging scope on the South African cities. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, Cape Town and South Africa have been experiencing new migration patterns, which introduced wide variations in countries of origin, ethnicity, language, religion, and gendered channels of mobility. While a great deal of attention has been placed upon the numbers of migrants arriving in Europe from Africa, a little less it has done on the relationships between religious places and migrant mobility in the African cities which present wide super-diverse societies, with multiple identities and constantly changing religious urbanscapes.

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