

# Call for Papers

Conference organized by CESAR



## Religion and Identity

hosted by the  
Department of Religious Studies, University of Szeged,  
Hungary

20th – 22nd October 2023



The Central European Symposium for the Academic Study of Religion invites submissions for its upcoming conference, hosted by the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Szeged, Hungary between the 20th and 22nd of October 2023.

## Religion and Identity

### Intersections of collective and private identity with religion and spirituality

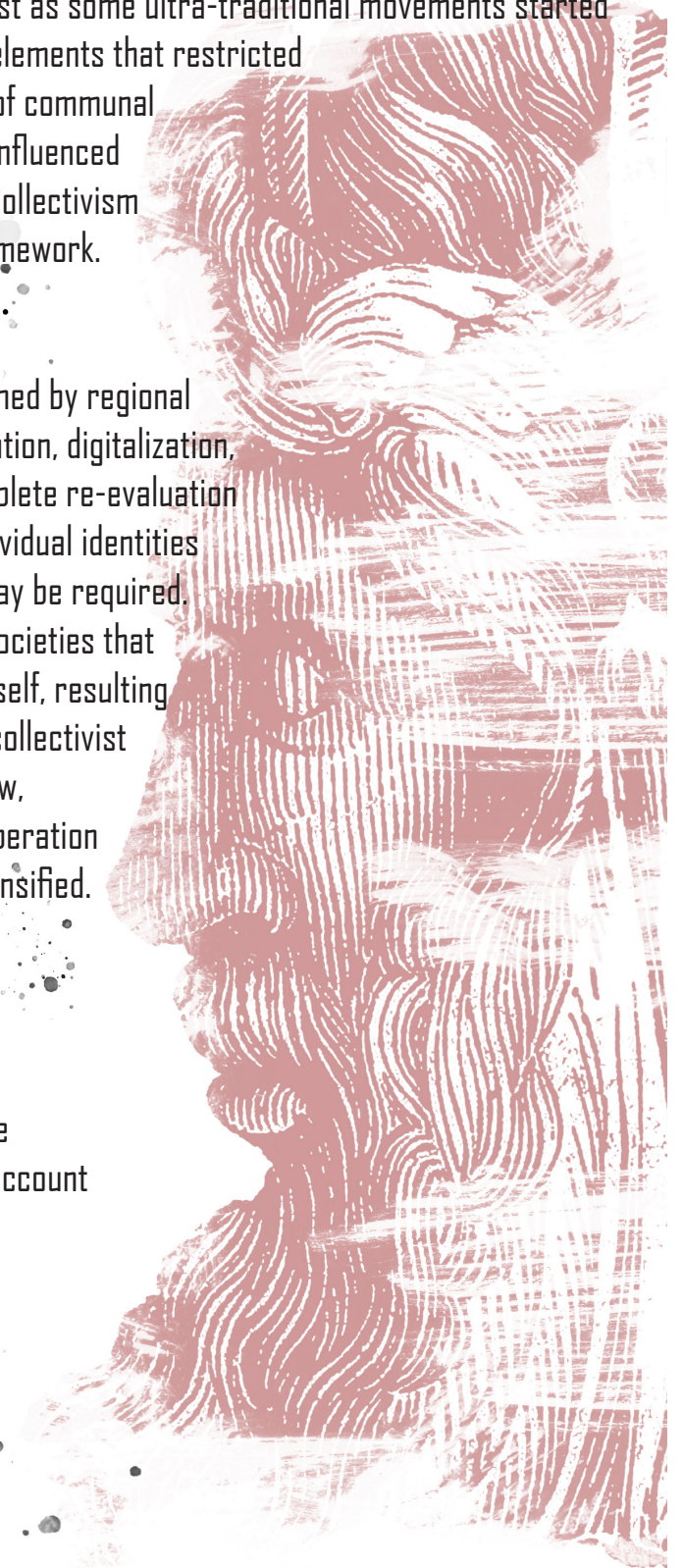
Ever since the very first human social formations, the spheres of religion and identity have intersected significantly. Confucian thinkers valued collective harmony over the free choice of the individual. On the contrary, in Greek antiquity, greater emphasis was placed on citizens and their virtues. While Greek historians and philosophers had a tradition of rebuking their predecessors and aiming to improve their messages for deeper understanding, Chinese scholars revered their fore-runners and copied their methods, preferring to be one in a long lineage, rather than standing out.

Examples of the endless forms by which collective and individual identities are interwoven throughout the entirety of our human existence are embedded in our historical records. For example, while orthodox Judaism paid greater importance to the community and matrilinear descent, Protestantism encouraged its followers to pursue greater freedom of self-expression and – to a limited extent – the exploration of their personal beliefs.

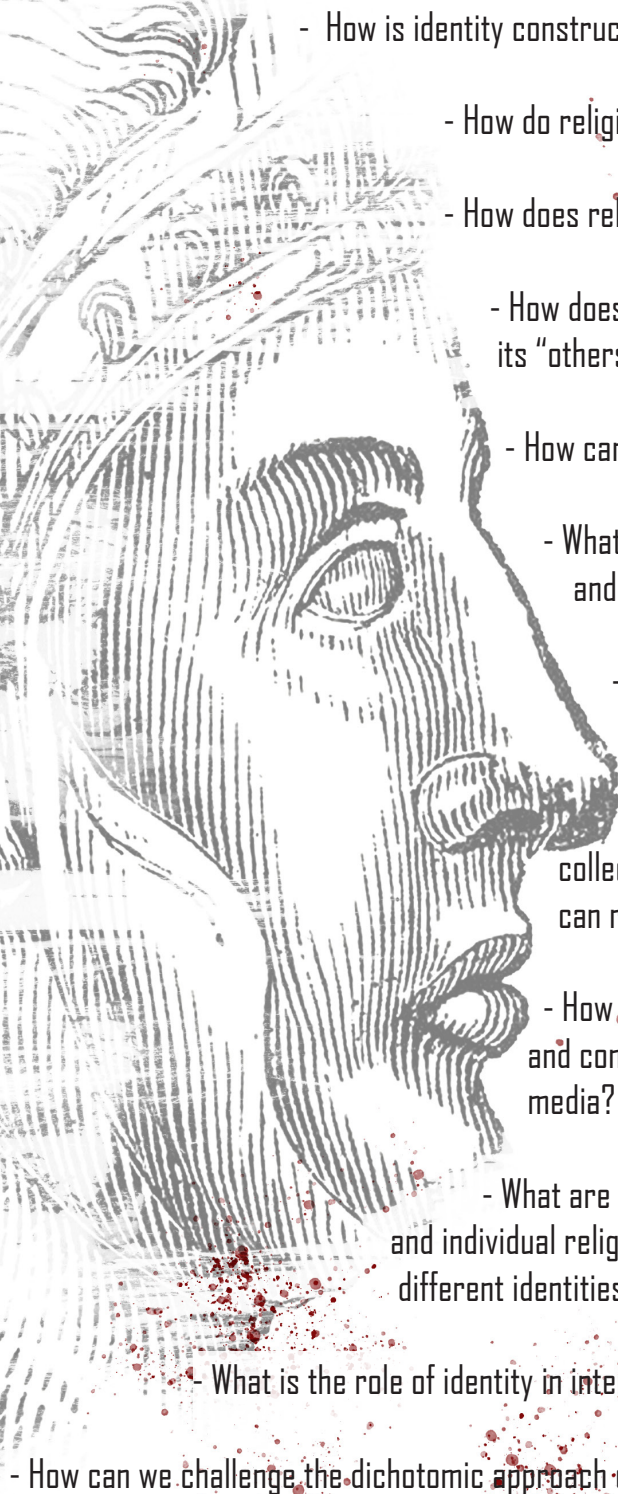
Much later, Neo-Protestantism began placing even greater value on personal relationships as well as interactions between the individual and the sacred. Just as some ultra-traditional movements started to turn back the clock and reinstitute former limiting elements that restricted individual interaction with the transcendent, in favor of communal and collective use. In contemporary societies heavily influenced by commercialism, the concepts of individualism and collectivism are discussed within an even more complex social framework.

Perspectives on these definitions are not just determined by regional social variables, but also by the effects of industrialization, digitalization, secularization, and globalization. In this regard, a complete re-evaluation of the former frameworks in which communal and individual identities and their religious dimensions have been discussed may be required. For example, there are some liberal commercialized societies that tend to prioritize individual rights and the integrity of self, resulting in the emergence of "self-religions." Other societies' collectivist approach towards religious identity has resulted in new, social-political cohesive functionalities where the cooperation between particular religiosities and the state has intensified.

In all these cases, prevailing academic paradigms – such as (post-)secularization theories – may require reconsideration and possible adjustment to take into account or may even need new locally applicable approaches.



The upcoming conference aims to open a symposium where topics concerning the intersections of religiosity and identity – should it be private or public – can be discussed in a broader sense. We welcome papers from Ph.D. students as well as from advanced MA and early career postgraduate researchers, focusing on, but not limited to questions such as:

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- How is identity constructed, shaped, and maintained by religious activities?
  - How do religions change the identities of their converts?
  - How does religion help to maintain the identity of minorities?
  - How does religion construct deviant or unequal identities of its "others"?
  - How can religious identity be utilized in political contexts?
  - What are the dynamics of different layers of religious and non-religious personal identities?
  - How and why may states work to influence religious identities?
  - How can political power use religion to form collective identities which subdue its subjects, and how can religion help the subdued to fight this power?
  - How are religious identities expressed and communicated in interpersonal settings and in social media?
  - What are the relationships between shared religious notions and individual religious identity and how can individuals develop different identities from the same religious traditions?
  - What is the role of identity in inter-religious communication?
  - How can we challenge the dichotomic approach of private and public identity?

## INFORMATION

Date of the event: 20th – 22nd October 2023

Venue: Department of Study of Religion, University of Szeged, Hungary

Keynote speakers: Prof. Réka Szilárdi (SZTE); doc. David Václavík (MUNI)

Workshop moderator: Márk Nemes (University of Szeged)

Supporters: Central European University (Budapest-Vienna, HU-AT),

Charles University (Prague, CZ), Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest, HU),

Comenius University (Bratislava, SK), University of Pardubice (Pardubice, CZ),

Masaryk University (Brno, CZ), University of Szeged (Szeged, HU);

Organizing committee: Cezar Braga/CEU, František Válek/CUNI, Péter

Boros/ELTE, Dominik Čisárik/UNIBA, Vilém Skopal/UPCE, Matouš

Mokrý/MUNI, Márk Nemes/SZTE

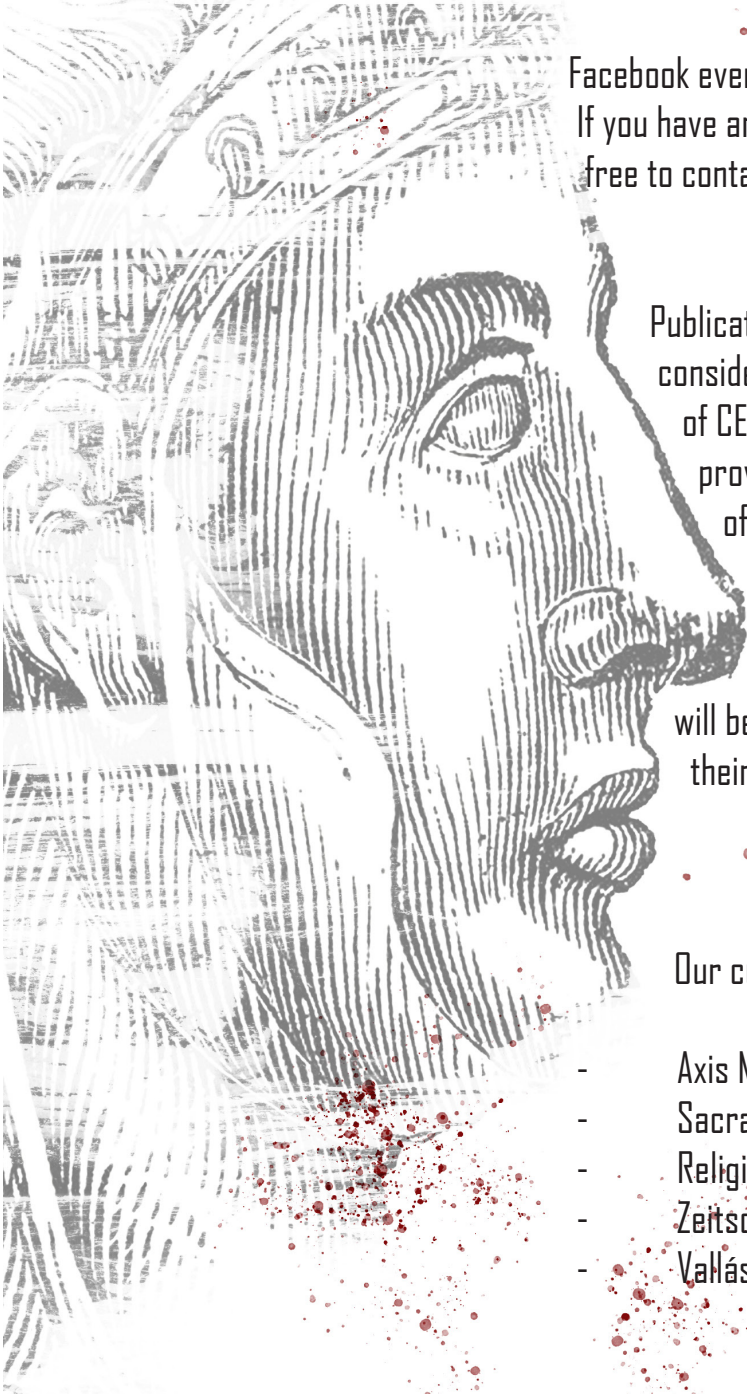
Registration form: <https://forms.gle/H6Vf3LUDQg4yAGaN7>

The attached abstract should include the title of the contribution, the contributor's name, and institutional affiliation as well as an abstract of 300 words, 5 – 7 keywords, excluding any footnotes, or bibliography.

**Application deadline: 10th of July 2023.**

Feedback on acceptance will be provided by 15th of July 2023 via e-mail.





Conference format: The organizers reserve all rights to hold the event in a hybrid / fully online format in case of any unforeseen difficulties in the upcoming months. In the occurrence of such changes, organizers will inform the speakers and all participants in time. If the conference is held in person, the organizers request all participants to be informed about the current epidemiological rules and regulations and follow them strictly during the entire span of the event.

Facebook event for the conference: <https://fb.me/e/2zz5tRt3L>  
If you have any questions or request further information, feel free to contact the organizers: [conference@cesar-platform.org](mailto:conference@cesar-platform.org)

Publication: Selected participants' papers will be considered for publication in an upcoming volume of CESAR-affiliated journals. Further information will be provided during the conference. The editorial boards of the journals select papers based on the quality of the presentation, the relevance of the topic to the journal's scope, and the availability of free space in the upcoming volumes. Those who are selected will be asked by the journal's representative to send their full manuscripts following the conference.

Our currently affiliated journals:

- Axis Mundi (SK)
- Sacra (CZ)
- Religio (CZ)
- Zeitschrift für Junge Religionswissenschaft (D)
- Vallástudományi Szemle / Religious Studies Review (HU)

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