

PhD course and Open workshop:
Indigenous and Minority Perspectives in the Sociology of Religion: A
two-day event on Ethics, Positionality and Responsibility in Research

Oslo, MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society

November 4th 2025: PhD Course Day

November 5th 2025: Open Workshop

The Nordic Association for the Sociology of Religion invite you to join a two-day event on researching religious and cultural minority populations, taking place in Oslo, November 4–5, 2025. The event combines a PhD course and workshop on Tuesday and an open academic workshop on Wednesday. You may attend one or both days. The first day is open to PhD students and supervisors, the second day to all interested scholars.

The program actualizes questions concerning the position of the researcher vis-a-vis research participants in a marginalized position. It also invites reflection on the shifting boundaries between research on and with minority populations, including the blurred boundaries and complexities between academic work and activism.

Research with indigenous people in the Nordic countries and elsewhere have brought such questions into focus. Indigenous studies have, however been largely neglected in the sociology of religion in the Nordic countries. This may reflect enduring colonial divisions of academic labour, in which the study of Indigenous religions was traditionally assigned to anthropology and religious studies. Another reason might be how boundaries between the researcher and the research “object”, as well as between “objective” analysis and activism, have traditionally been perceived in sociology.

This two-day event invites PhD fellows and other researchers in the social scientific study of religion to engage with, and reflect on, a range of critical questions, including:

- What insights do Indigenous and postcolonial perspectives offer into debates on positionality, insider/outsider dynamics, and the relationship between research and activism?
- How can sociology of religion contribute relevant and responsible knowledge – and to whom?
- How might insights from Indigenous studies inform research on both minority and majority populations?

The key case for discussion will be religion in Sápmi, though reflections on Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat, other Nordic national minorities and indigenous peoples elsewhere are also welcome.

The event is co-organized with KIFO, MF vitenskapelige høyskole and Religionssociologiska föreningen i Sverige.

Day one, PhD course and workshop (for PhD students and supervisors).

Learning from indigenous studies: Positionality, ethics, validity

This day will focus on PhD fellows presenting and discussing their ongoing work, with particular attention to how perspectives from Indigenous research can inform, challenge, and enrich their projects. Supervisors are encouraged to participate.

When: Tuesday, November 4, (11.30 – 17.00)
For: PhD-students (supervisors are welcome to join)
Credits: Equivalent to 3ECTS with paper submission and full participation
Apply by: September 4.

Day two Open workshop (for interested researchers within the social science study of religion)

Research with Indigenous Peoples in the Nordic Countries: Challenges, Possibilities, and Responsibilities for the Sociology of Religion.

This will invite both PhD fellows and established researchers. The day will feature approximately four presentations from researchers with experiences from indigenous research in the Nordic countries, followed by generous time for discussion, commentary, and collective reflection.

When: Wednesday, November 5th. (10.00 – 16.00)
For: All scholars in the social scientific study of religion
Content: Presentations and reflections by experienced researchers, focused on Indigenous research in the Nordic Region.

Confirmed presenters:

Siv Ellen Kraft, Professor of religious studies, University of Tromsø, The Arctic University of Norway
Cato Christensen, Associate professor, of religious studies, University of Tromsø, The Arctic University of Norway
Mia Liinason, Professor of gender studies, Lund University

Credits for PhD course.

Participants send a draft paper in advance of 3-5 pages based on specified readings applied to their PhD project. After the event a full paper should be developed based on insights from the discussions of the paper and workshop. Active participation in the whole event and paper is equivalent to 3 ECTS credits. Instructions on readings and questions for the examination will be sent out in September 2025.

Please send a registration before **September 4 2025**. Contributions towards travels and accommodation may be available for registered PhD students upon request. Please attach a budget for travels and a letter of approval from your supervisor.

Questions and contact:

Lars Laird Iversen, Nordic Association for Sociology of Religion: Lars.L.Iversen@mf.no

Mia Lövheim, Religionssociologiska föreningen i Sverige: mia.lovheim@teol.uu.se

The full program will be available at <https://www.nordicsocrel.org/>