



The Centrality of Religion in Social Life

Essays in Honour of James A. Beckford

Edited by Eileen Barker, London School of Economics, UK



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James A. Beckford's work is internationally acclaimed not only in the sociology of religion, but also in other fields of the social sciences. Beckford has long been arguing that the barriers that have grown up between the different sub-disciplines should be broken down, with those specialising in religion becoming more cognisant of new theoretical developments, and sociologists in general becoming more aware of the significance of developments in the religious scene.

This book is a collection of essays written in Beckford's honour, drawing on a number of religious themes that have been central to Beckford's interests, whilst also offering a significant contribution to our understanding of the wider society. A central theme is modernity (and its relation to the post-modern), and how religion affects and is affected by the dynamics of contemporary society, with the primary focus of many of the chapters being a concern with how society copes with the minority religions that have become visible with the globalising tendencies of contemporary society. The contributors, who come from America, Asia and various parts of Europe, are all internationally renowned scholars. Beckford's most important publications are listed in an Appendix and the volume opens with a short account of his contribution to sociology by Eileen Barker (the editor) and James T. Richardson.

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About the Editor

Eileen Barker PhD, OBE, FBA, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the London School of Economics, UK. She has written over 250 publications (that have been translated into 27 languages) including *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* and the award-winning *The Making of a Moonie*, now held by Ashgate. She has edited/co-edited 8 books and has been on the faculty of LSE since 1970. She is also the founder and Chair of Inform, an NGO supported by the government and mainstream Churches that provides enquirers with information about minority religions.

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