

## The Ironies of Racialized Religion: A Surinamese Case

In multi-ethnic urban Suriname, many people of African and South Asian descent claim to know who others are through racial categories even as they disavow knowing themselves and consult religious specialists to confirm their lack of self-knowledge. This talk explores this disjuncture to think about the different ways that racialization and religion work to create knowledge of self and other. Starting with a failed magical rite between a Hindu Surinamese client and an African Surinamese ritual expert, the talk describes the mutually illuminating, and frequently contradictory, encounter of race with ritual in one part of the Caribbean.

In doing so, I illustrate how Surinamese ritualize race and racialize ritual to explain both why studying religion is critical for understanding race but also how ritual challenges racial categories without necessarily undermining their social influence. Tracing the shifting ways that people attribute or disavow opacity or transparency to other minds, I show, offers critical tools for understanding the similarly different ways that race and religion shape social relations, especially in multi-ethnic and religious post-colonial societies like Suriname.



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