



**– Institute's Colloquium –**

**Prof. Dr. Bettina Schmidt**  
**University of Wales Trinity Saint David**

**Spirit Possession and Wellbeing:  
An Anthropological Study about Religious Experience in  
Brazil**

The study of religious experience is at odds for many anthropologists. While the study of spirit possession and trance has its place in anthropology, the focus in anthropology is usually on cultural practice and its function for individuals and communities. The study of religious and spiritual experience is often regarded as a theological field. This lecture will show the wider relevance for the study of religious and spiritual experience for anthropology. After highlighting some of the key scholars in the field the lecture will turn to spirit possession and trance in Brazil which is presented as a sub-category of religious and spiritual experience. The last section of the lecture will present a new research project that derived from the research on spirit possession and trance. It focuses on spirituality, spiritual healing and wellbeing and reflects on the importance of a subjective understanding of wellbeing. Though the project is still in its early stage, the lecture will include some narratives about wellbeing collected among religious devotees in Brazil and the UK.

**Bettina E. Schmidt**, Dr.habil, PhD, MA in cultural anthropology (Marburg University, Germany), professor in study of religions at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and the director of the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre which located in Lampeter, UK. Previously she worked at Marburg University, Oxford University and Bangor University. She was also visiting professor at the City University of New York and visiting scholar at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Elected President of the British Association for the Study of Religions.

She has published extensively on Caribbean and Latin American religions, identity, cultural theories and migration. Her academic interests include anthropology of religion, diaspora identity, religious experience, urban studies, medical anthropology and gender issues. Her main fieldworks were conducted in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, New York City, and, more recently, in São Paulo, Brazil, about spirit possession and trance.

**Wednesday, May 16th 2018**  
**6-8 p.m.**  
**Institute of Ethnology**  
**Stuttstraße 21, Raum STU 105 (2.10)**

**Everybody is welcome!**