



## Introducing our new editors

*Religion, Brain & Behavior* is thrilled to announce that we are expanding and diversifying our team. Two new senior editors, Suzanne Hoogeveen and Irene Cristofori, and a new assistant editor, David Rohr, bring a wealth of expertise and experience to our journal. In this special editorial, our three newest team mates introduce themselves.

Before they do so, however, we want to take this opportunity to thank Joel Daniels for his many years of extraordinary service to *RBB* as our tireless and dependable Assistant Editor. Thank you Joel.

### Suzanne Hoogeveen

My name is Suzanne Hoogeveen. I am a Dutch researcher, currently working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Psychological Methods Unit of the University of Amsterdam. I am very excited to start as an editor at *RBB*—the glimpse behind-the-scenes during my guest editorial for the Many-Analysts Religion Project special issue and my collaboration with *RBB*'s own inspirational Joseph Bulbulia have only further fueled my interest in editing for this journal. My research focuses on the intersection between high-level cognition (e.g., religious beliefs, morality), low-level mechanisms (cognitive or neural processing) and methodological advancements. My work typically involves answering substantive questions in the field of social and cognitive psychology using novel tools such as Bayesian hierarchical modeling, a many-analysts approach, analysis blinding, or multiverse analysis. Examples of such substantive questions are: do religious symbols make people seem more trustworthy? Does nonsense from a scientist sound better than nonsense from a spiritual guru? Do anger displays promote status in men while harming status in women?

During my PhD under supervision of Michiel van Elk and Eric-Jan Wagenmakers, I conducted the Religious Replication Project, which focused on the psychological and neurocognitive mechanisms related to supernatural beliefs. Specifically, it involved reassessing existing research, addressing new questions and applying Bayesian statistics to shed light on the validity of prevailing theories in the cognitive science of religion. Based on the project, the—perhaps unsurprising—conclusion is: some effects are and some aren't replicable. We found that religiosity indeed seems positively related to self-reported well-being (Hoogeveen, Sarafoglou, et al., 2022); religiosity seems predictive of the tendency to make post-mortem continuity judgments of psychological states, in particular for mental states (e.g., love) compared to bodily states (e.g., hunger; Hoogeveen, Altay, et al., 2023); religiosity seems related to credibility ratings for gobbledygook statements, and a reduced relative difference for those from a scientist compared to a spiritual guru (Hoogeveen, Haaf, et al., 2022). At the same time, we obtained convincing evidence for the absence of other effects: an experimental attenuation of personal control does not seem to activate a compensatory mechanism of belief in a controlling God (Hoogeveen et al., 2018); neural markers of cognitive conflict and error processing do not seem to be associated with religiosity (Hoogeveen, et al., 2020); focusing on one's death does not seem to strengthen one's cultural identity (Hoogeveen, Berkhout et al., 2023).

Across all my research, I apply Bayesian statistics. Specifically, I have used Bayesian hierarchical modeling, a flexible and powerful method to maximize the informativeness of the data yet constrain inference based on structural features (e.g., people nested in countries, trials nested in people), as well as theoretical predictions (e.g., all countries should show an effect in the same direction). In my current post-doc position, I will further develop these Bayesian hierarchical models for joint modeling of behavioral data (e.g., accuracy, response times) and neural data (e.g., fMRI, EEG). Specifically, we aim to provide guidelines for the necessary number of trials and subjects in cognitive tasks given the signal-to-noise ratio and a collection of openly accessible joint modeling pipelines combining behavioral and neural data to optimize this signal-to-noise ratio. Finally, a large part of my PhD focused on promoting open science practices within the field of the psychology of religion. In my own work, I always try to provide open data & code and publish preprints of my manuscripts.

## Irene Cristofori

My name is Irene Cristofori. I was born in Italy. I am currently a neuroscientist and Associate Professor at the Claude Bernard Lyon 1 University and at the Institute of Cognitive Sciences Marc Jeannerod CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique/French National Center for Scientific Research) where I am the head of the Neuropsychology lab.

My research focuses on better understanding social cognition (social pain, human beliefs, trust, aggression) and how to improve it in healthy and neurological populations. To do this, I adopt a multi-method approach, including brain lesion mapping analysis, intracranial electroencephalography, operative mapping, eye-tracking, and behavior. My research on cognitive neurosciences dovetails with clinical neuroscience work while bridging novel conceptual approaches in studying TBI and brain tumor patients' functional recovery.

During my PhD work in Professor Angela Sirigu's lab at the Institute of Cognitive Sciences Marc Jeannerod (Lyon, France), I used electrophysiological approaches in drug-resistant epileptic patients to investigate the functional role of brain structures involved in social pain and mechanisms of time-frequency and connectivity mechanisms between this network. This work demonstrated how different regions respond in a specific temporal pattern during social exclusion (Cristofori et al., 2013) and to which extent some regions such anterior (but not posterior) insula can be modulated using monetary reward (Cristofori, Harquel, et al., 2015).

During my postdoctoral fellowship at Kessler Foundation (West Orange, NJ) and Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago/Northwestern University (Chicago, IL), I extended my focus to neural mechanisms underlying traumatic brain injury (TBI), and the long-term cognitive/social deficits using the Vietnam Head Injury Study (VHIS) dataset, working with Professor Jordan Grafman. I focused on the causal contribution of brain regions to social functioning, in particular in social, political, and religious beliefs (Cristofori, Bulbulia, et al., 2016; Cristofori, Viola, et al., 2015) and implicit bias toward aggression (Cristofori, Zhong, et al., 2016). This piece of research defined two key regions in the prefrontal cortex, the ventromedial prefrontal cortex for the evaluation system and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex for the downregulating processing. In addition, I have studied how flexibility, personality, and empathy interact and modulate religious beliefs (Cohen-Zimmerman et al., 2020; Cristofori et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2017).

Another line of my research focuses on functional recovery and factors that can influence this recovery, such as the gray and white matter contribution to executive function in TBI (Cristofori, Zhong, et al., 2015), but also to which extent a TBI can be a supplementary burden to cognitive decline (Moretti et al., 2012).

I publish in journals such as *Lancet Neurology*, *Neurology*, *Journal of Neuroscience*, *Cerebral Cortex*, and *Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience*. My research has been funded by national and international grants (USA, National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation, Mitchell Rosenthal Memorial, Templeton) and France (IDEXLYON, BQR, Neurodis) and I have also been funded by associations of tumor patients (Liv & Lumière).

## David Rohr

I'm delighted to have recently joined *RBB*'s editorial team, and I look forward to working behind the scenes to help everything run smoothly for *RBB*'s editors and for *RBB*'s contributing authors. As assistant editor, I am in charge of managing *RBB* submissions and keeping our editorial team on track.

While my role depends upon my administrative skills more than my scholarship—which lies outside the scientific study of religion—I am also a scholar of religion and a philosopher of sorts. I earned my PhD in religious studies from Boston University in 2020, writing my dissertation on C. S. Peirce's religious philosophy. Since graduating, I've been working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Center for Mind and Culture in Boston, helping to manage and guide a variety of research projects led by *RBB*'s own Wesley J. Wildman: mapping the academic study of religion, including the scientific study of religion; analyzing the phenomenological characteristics of a vast database of written accounts of religious experiences; studying nightmare disorder in elderly populations; and more. Since 2013, I have also been co-editor with Wildman of [www.PhilosophyOfReligion.org](http://www.PhilosophyOfReligion.org).

Alongside my postdoctoral work, I continue to pursue a program of philosophical research. I have broad interests in philosophy of science, mind, and religion, but my deepest expertise is the pragmatic philosophical tradition, especially the work of pragmatism's founder, American polymath C. S. Peirce (1839–1914). Among Peirce's many fruitful ideas, I am most keenly interested in his semiotic, or his inquiry into and theory about signs, reference, interpretation, communication, and meaning. Peirce distilled his semiotic theory from his lifelong study of signs of many kinds—including logical arguments, mathematical diagrams and proofs, scientific concepts and theories, scientific observations and measurements, and historical evidence—but the theory is fruitfully applicable far beyond these kinds of signs. Much of my published work provides semiotic analyses of religious and theological signs, here following closely the pioneering work of philosopher and theologian, Robert C. Neville. However, I am also interested in the study of non-human signs, including biological signaling processes, from simple intercellular signaling like bacterial quorum sensing to the sophisticated auditory signals of some primates, birds, and cetaceans; as well as natural signs that bear rich information despite not being emitted as a signal by any organism.

In future work, I want to consider the epistemic significance of diverse natural signs, both with respect to their indispensable role in various natural sciences (think starlight, gravitational waves, ice core samples, fossils, geological strata, etc.); and also with respect to perception, an inferential process that, while facilitated by an animal's sensory nervous system, takes as essential input or premises natural signs that are generated outside that nervous system—i.e. the lightwaves, soundwaves, chemical concentrations, etc. transduced by the animal's sensory organs. I will argue that the content, veracity, and functionality of animal perception ultimately depends upon the information-rich content of these abundant natural signs.

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