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Nuancing Nominalism: Religious Belonging in Contemporary Britain

Believing in belonging: an exploration of the social contexts and constructions of belief: This paper challenges currently accepted theory within the sociology of religion which posits a distinction between private belief and public belonging. Such an apparent distinction rests on a problematic notion of individualized or 'private' belief. The study analyses qualitative data from a three-year-research project probing 'belief' and explores how belief is socially constructed, embedded, and reproduced. Findings imply that the lack of social reproduction, or transmission, of religious beliefs can be traced to where people are locating legitimate sites of power, meaning and authority.