

IFCF meeting, Tuesday 16th January

Co-Op Education Centre, Fore Street, Ipswich

Dr Sami Everett

Dr Sami Everett, anthropologist and Research Associate at the University of Cambridge and co-author of Woolf Institute report 'Trust in Crisis: The Emergence of the Quiet Individual', talked to us this evening about his proposed new book. Sami explained that one of the underlying motivations for doing the research on which the book is to be based was to explore his own background. Sami has dual nationality, French and British, a diverse heritage from western Algeria and from London.

Specifically, Sami explained that he has spent time, as an anthropologist, exploring what he calls *Maghrebincité*. The name of his proposed book is "Maghrebincité since 1981: North African Jewish Experience in greater Paris". Sami explained that the term *maghrebincité* refers to the course of adapting to life in France, in particular areas of the city, for groups, both Jewish and Muslim from North Africa. Sami talked about a particular area of Paris called Le Sentier. Whereas this area used to be a centre for the French garment industry and home to textile companies, since the 1980s these have often been replaced by new technology firms. Sami's grandparents worked in Le Sentier garment industry and he worked there in the telecoms industry. Sami discussed the term 'ethnocommerce' to describe an area employing mixed ethnicities.

Sami gave examples of a new tech firm, M-Switch, owned by a Rabbi of the western Algerian rite, employing Muslims, including a woman, the first Muslim IT engineer at this company. Sami retold incidents that touched on deep sensibilities between the Jewish manager, and his Muslim staff in 2011 and how they dealt with these.

These stories gave rise to discussion amongst those present about issues to do with dislocation, i.e. parents of mixed heritage (Muslim, Hindu), Gurmeet, being born here, in Suffolk; also being born in India and having an adult life in UK (Punna). Anne Spalding talked to us about working in the fashion industry, and coming across people of many diverse backgrounds and how tensions were dealt with here. Discussion was lively, and the talk was thought provoking.

Sami is involved in the Centre CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) as Research Associate for the Religious Diversity and the Secular University project www.crassh.cam.ac.uk .