

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Rethinking Spirituality through Gender and Youth / Repenser la spiritualité à travers le genre et la jeunesse

Panel organised by Professor Mia Lövhelm, Uppsala University, Dr Kristin Aune, Coventry University & Dr Anna Fedele, Lisbon University Institute, at the International Society for the Sociology of Religion conference, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), 2-5 July 2015. <http://www.sisr-issr.org/English/Conferences/Conferences.htm>

This session aims to debate the conceptual distinction between 'religion' and 'spirituality', which has been widely used in the sociology of religion. Drawing on the changing religious practices of the "Baby-boom generation" and the public interest in the "new age" phenomena in the 1980s, the concept of spirituality became crucial in describing a shift from institutional religion, characterized by adherence to traditional religious doctrines, to newer forms of flexible, individual and holistic religiosity. In previous research spirituality has, on the one side, been interpreted as a sign of religious decline through privatization and, on the other, hailed as a way for religion to accommodate to the new situations faced by late modern social actors. This session critically explores whether 'spirituality' is a useful concept for studying the ways in which people live out religio-spiritual lives in the twenty-first century. It does so through the lenses of gender and youth, two aspects of social identity that have received significant new attention from religion scholars since the late twentieth century. Scholars such as Woodhead (2012) have advocated 'spirituality' as better able to reflect the complex lives of women and young people, and as more open to material and emotional aspects of religious experience and practice. A new body of work, including Fedele and Knibbe's (2013) collection of ethnographic studies of gender, critique the spirituality/religion distinction. Scholars such as McGuire (2008) and Ammerman (2013) have argued for the concept of 'lived religion' or 'everyday religion' as a better alternative. This session invites scholars conducting empirical studies of youth and gender to contribute their findings to help answer these questions: How, if at all, is the distinction between religion and spirituality helpful in interpreting the experiences of these social groups, especially through embodied and sensory encounters with the divine? How can the religio-spiritual practices of young people, women and gender-marginal men (e.g. men marginalised by ethnicity, sexuality or non-conformity to gender stereotypes) contribute to a development of concepts and theories about religion and spirituality?

To submit a paper abstract (in English and French) go to <http://sisr-issr.org/Program/> . The full list of session topics is available at <http://www.sisr-issr.org/English/Conferences/Complete%20Session%20List%202015%20-%20rev%202014-10-13.pdf> Deadline for submission: 15 December 2014