

RN34 - Sociology of Religion

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Religion and (Un)Making Europe: Capitalism, Solidarities, Subjectivities

The Great Recession has been both a symptom and a cause of deeper economic, social and political crises, which have struck at the heart of the idea of Europe and a post-war European 'project' concerned with peace and prosperity. Additionally, Europe is shattered by its failed Middle East policy and divided by disagreement upon migration and refugee politics, whether in political, socio-economic or moral terms. What roles is religion playing in the present (un)making of a Europe that struggles to come to terms with these crises?

Religion, like other social phenomena, has been impacted by the logic of neoliberal capitalism and the global rise of consumerism. Religion also has long been recognized as a source of in-group solidarity, within states or across borders. And religion, often conceived as a deeply-held form of identity, has contributed to subjectivities (or ideologies) that have produced violent fundamentalisms as well as pacifist movements striving for justice. A range of religious institutions, organisations, and movements continue to play public roles in the un-making and re-making of European societies and states.

Against this background, we call for papers which make empirical, comparative and theoretical contributions to the social study of religion and its relation to capitalism, solidarities, and subjectivities. Papers should contribute to debates on how religion supports or undermines neoliberalism, the commodification and marketization of religion, the role of religion in welfare states, how religion builds or challenges solidarities – within states or transnationally, religion and social (in)equalities, gender relations and queer subjectivities, religion and social movements, religious terrorism, the rise of new expressions of religion (including fundamentalisms as well as new forms of spiritualities and 'non-religion'). While we are particularly interested in papers that relate to European societies, we also welcome cases from other parts of the world. Graduate students are especially encouraged to apply.

RN34_a: Sociology of Religion (General Session)

RN34_b: Religion and the refugee 'crisis' / Religion and Migration

RN34_c: Religion, Neoliberalism and the Welfare State

RN34_d: Religion and Human Rights (including women's rights, gender rights)

RN34_e: Islam in Europe

RN34_f: Religion, Violence, Peace and Interfaith Dialogue

RN34_g: Methodological challenges to researching religion in times of crisis

RN09_RN34: Capitalism, Solidarities and Religion: The Market as Religion and Religions in the Market (Joint Session with RN09 Economic Sociology)

Comparative and cross-national research on the role of religion – including Europe’s historic Christian traditions as well as Islam and other faiths – explores how religion takes its place in the contemporary marketplace of competing ideas, which includes a so-called 'religion of capitalism'. Indeed, under certain circumstances religion promotes solidarity, compassion, altruism, and social activism, as it works in partnership with a variety of state and civil society actors. This session explores the dynamics of ‘the market as religion’ and ‘religions in the market,’ identifying the challenges and opportunities created by these social processes.

RN13_RN34: Families, Gender Roles and Religions in Times of Neo-Liberalism: Different traditions and new challenges (Joint session with RN13 Sociology of Families and Intimate Lives)

Families, men and women as well as religious institutions are constantly challenged to foster and adapt to social change while preserving their own faith tradition and identities. The education of the new generation, the pluralization of living forms and gender identities, interfaith marriages and the changing gender roles of parents within the modern family are some of the issues facing those who belong to traditional religions. The intention of this joint session is to examine commonalities and differences between different religious traditions and conceptions of intimate living forms as well as the shifting of gender roles within the context of care and reproduction work.

RN33_RN34: (Un)Making Europe: Religion and Gender (Joint session with RN33 Women’s and Gender Studies)

In times of growing global inequalities and differences, not least due to transnationalization and global neo-liberalism, religion's analysis from a gender perspective is essential. The firm religious symbolization of gender leads e.g. to the question how religion provides answers to its own regimes of inequality, how demands for gender justice are negotiated, and how religious actors respond to gender inequality, the lack of global solidarity and develop dynamics of change.