

“Religion and the urban, natural and virtual environments”

Bi-Annual Conference of the ESA RN34- Sociology of Religion

Groningen (Netherlands), 26-28 August 2020

This conference wants to adopt a broad approach to the study of the relation between religion and different “environments”: the urban environment, the natural environment and the virtual environment. This threefold approach allows us to capture three areas of religious transformation and innovation, which are of high academic and societal relevance in contemporary European societies and beyond. By approaching these three topics, we aim to contribute both to the academic advancement of the sociology of religion in relation to its conceptual and methodological tools and to a broader societal reflection on the dynamic between religion and the urban, natural and virtual environments. Some of the questions we seek to address are the following:

- How do religions and cities interact with one another and transform each other? How does the urban environment affect religious practices and, conversely, how do religious practices and groups transform the urban environment? How are religious and secular meanings negotiated in urban spaces? How do tourism, heritage industries and gentrification processes produce and transform urban religious heritage?
- How do religious groups relate to the natural environment? How do religions see and interpret the ecological crisis and which alternatives do they suggest? How do religious groups conceptualise their role in relation to environmental concerns and claims? Which forms does faith-based environmentalism take? How do religions position themselves in relation to other social actors in environmental concerns?
- How do the virtual environment and religion interact with and affect one another? How does the virtual environment influence how we understand the idea of “religious community” and community in general? How are religion and the concept of religion affected and challenged by the increasingly digitalized world? What challenges and inspirations for religion can the developments in artificial intelligence and virtual reality bring about? What conceptual, epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges are faced by scholars exploring “virtual religion”?

Papers addressing these and other questions and topics relevant to the sociology of religion are welcome. Besides individual papers, it is possible to propose a **panel** with a maximum of four papers per panel.

Additionally, MA and PhD students will have the opportunity to combine their participation in the conference with a **summer school**. See more information [here](#).

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Dr. Giulia Evolvi, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Prof. Dr. Jens Koehrsen, University of Basel

Dr. Pooyan Tamimi Arab, Utrecht University

All interested should submit an abstract of 200 to 250 words, including a reference to the theoretical framework, research question, methodology and main findings. Panel proposals should include the title and a short description of the panel (200 to 250 words), the name and affiliation of the convener(s), and the title, author's name and abstract (200 to 250 words) for each of the proposed papers. Proposals should be submitted to esarn34-groningen2020@rug.nl. Visit the [conference website](#) for more information.

Publication plans

Selected papers presented at the conference will be published in the *Journal of Religion in Europe*. Those interested in having their paper considered for publication should indicate this when they submit the abstract. Those invited to submit the full paper should do so by October 1st, 2020.

Schedule

Submission of paper and panel proposals	31 January 2020
Notification of acceptance	1 March 2020
Opening of the registration	1 March 2020
Registration deadline	30 April 2020
Publication of final programme	15 May 2020
Conference	26-28 August 2020
Summer school	24-28 August 2020

Conference Fees

Fee structure	Fees include full participation, conference materials, coffee breaks and dinner for the last night (additional dinner tickets will be available for 35 €)
ESA Members	€ 85
Non-ESA members	€ 110
ESA Students	€ 60
Non-ESA Students	€ 70
Late registration (after 30 April 2020) or during the conference	30% higher in each category

Conference + Summer School Fees

ESA Students (conference participation + participation in summer school)	€ 100
Non-ESA students (conference participation + participation in summer school)	€ 175

We look forward to seeing you in Groningen!

Siniša Zrinščak and Julia Martínez-Ariño
(ESA – RN34 Coordinator & Vice-Coordinator)

With the support of:



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