Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope you are all doing well in these turbulent times.

I am writing with updates on the RC22, to inform you about the activities that we have already done, and those that are planned.

First, the Mid-Term conference that took place in Vilnius (Lithuania) was a real success. We had the opportunity to discuss very timely issues and to learn more about religion in the Baltic countries. The organization was perfect, something that is not an easy endeavor with hybrid events. I would like to congratulate especially the local team led by Milda Ališauskienė.

Second, thanks to the work of the RC22 secretary, Cecilia Delgado-Molina, we have an updated website that I invite you to visit: https://isa-rc22.org/ Thanks to her design skills and initiative, we also have this new (more stylish) newsletter that you are reading. I encourage you all to keep sending information and news to nurture these updated online spaces.

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Third, I wanted to inform you that as vice president of the RC22 committee I had the opportunity to attend the ISA Research Council Meeting that took place online last December 18th. Many relevant topics were put on the table such as the ISA communication strategy, but also the work being done by the ISA with the United Nations (which is quite unknown by the members), or the news of the recently created Research Council committee on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). If anyone is interested in knowing in more detail the specifics of the meeting, please email me; I can share the minutes of the meeting with you once I get them.

Regarding future activities, the XX World Congress of Sociology will take place in Melbourne, Australia, from June 25 to July 1, 2023. [Here you can find more information about, and the preliminary schedule of the conference. This year's main theme is Resurgent Authoritarianism: The Sociology of New Entanglements of Religions, Politics, and Economies. The analysis of the role of religion in our global world will play a major role, and this is why the participation of RC22 members is especially welcome and important on this occasion. In the RC22, we are in the process of setting up a program coordination committee. If anyone is interested in contributing to the committee, please let us know. In addition, if anyone already has proposals for organizing sessions (integrated or simple), please let us know as well.

Finally, we encourage you to think about the possibility of organizing the next mid-term RC22 conference in 2024. We are looking for a new place to go to continue debating, learning, and further enriching the sociology of religion.

Please, do not hesitate to write me if you want more information about the RC22, the ISA, or any other related topic.

I take this opportunity to wish you a prosperous, creative and joyful year 2022.

Mar Griera, ISA RC22 Vice-President
SOME REFLECTIONS AFTER ISA RC22 MID-TERM CONFERENCE IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

By Prof. dr. Milda Ališauskienė
Chair of the Conference Scientific and Organizing Committee

ISA RC22 mid-term conference “Religion, Politics, and Uncertainty: Shifting Boundaries” took place on November 11-13, 2021 in Vilnius, Lithuania in a hybrid mode. The conference was co-organized by ISA RC22, Vytautas Magnus University, Vilnius University, and the Lithuanian Society for the Study of Religions.

The conference aimed at discussing the following questions. How do scholars and various other actors redefine religion in the context of increasingly conspicuous fluidity of boundaries between religion and politics on the transregional, transnational, and global levels? How is religion transformed and relocated by diverse and shifting interactions of secular and religious actors, secular and religious ideologies, and politics of the past and memory? What impact different historical contexts and their interactions have on the role of religious communities in relation to the increasingly international or global nature of policies and implementing communities? The context of pandemics has added an element of uncertainty in need of reflection additionally to all the questions raised by the organizers of the conference. The conference sociologists of religions as well as the representatives of other close disciplines from 26 countries, 60 papers were accepted for the conference and 67 participants were registered. 31 participated live and 36 – online.

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New Publications

In “Indigeneity in African Religions. Oza Worldviews, Cosmologies and Religious Cultures” (Bloomsbury, 2021), Afe Adogame offers a rich, in-depth account of the religious culture and worldview of the Oza people in Nigeria and their connections to all spheres of life. Mapping religious change from the 19th – early 21st century, and demonstrates how indigenous religions are crucial for understanding not only the past, but also African futures.

The conference started with a keynote lecture by Jeffrey Haynes, who is an Emeritus Professor of Politics at London Metropolitan University, UK. His areas of expertise are religion and international relations, religion and politics, democracy and democratization, development studies, and comparative politics and globalization. Haynes is the author or editor of 55 books. Jeffrey Haynes’ keynote lecture was entitled ‘Religion and politics: what is certain and what is uncertain and why does it matter?’. This keynote aimed at discussing the certainties and uncertainties linked to the interaction of religion and politics in the period of increasing global polarization. Grounding himself on the case studies of 9/11, the 2008-9 global economic crash, eruptions of right-wing populism, and the rise and fall of Donald Trump Haynes stated that the role of religion is increasingly unpredictable in politics. Religion might help but also undermine democracy, it can sustain but also restrict civil society, it can support and work to limit human rights, according to him. The only certainty that we envisage in the relations of religion and politics is that these relations continue despite the attempts to reduce the role of religion in it.

The second keynote lecture was presented by dr. Anna Halafoff, who is an Associate Professor in Sociology and a member of the Alfred Deakin Institute (ADI) at Deakin University. She is also a Research Associate of the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific at Monash University. Halafoff is a member of ADI’s AVERT (Addressing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation to Terrorism) Network’s Executive Committee, a Chief Investigator of ADI’s Centre for Resilient and Inclusive Communities, and a member of ADI’s Science and Society Research Network. Dr. Anna Halafoff’s keynote was entitled ‘Selling (Con)spirituality and COVID-19’ and aimed at the findings of an International Research Network for Science and Belief in Society Small Grant Project on (Con)spirituality in Australia. The spread of misinformation about COVID-19 has occurred at a rapid pace, in parallel to the virus, in a hyper-mediatized and marketized world. This has led to heated debates over the origins of the pandemic, the need for lockdowns, and vaccination programs. Adherents of ‘conspirituality’ are among the many engaged in the spread of problematic misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Charlotte Ward and David Voas first used the term in a scholarly article in 2011, to describe the merger of conspiracy theories and New Age spirituality at the turn of the 21st Century. The research, according to Halafoff, builds on the two core conspiritual convictions first proposed by Ward and Voas, and an Australian case study, to identify an additional ten key convictions central to (con)spirituality. It also illuminates the internal diversities and complexities within spiritual communities regarding attitudes to COVID-19 and vaccination. The ‘con’ in (con)spirituality is therefore bracketed to problematize the term and to include a focus on those who are selling misinformation, and those who are attempting to counter it.

The ISA RC22 conference papers were presented in eleven sessions and the round table discussion on religion, politics and uncertainty around the Baltic Sea finalized the two-day meeting in Vilnius and globally with the help of technologies. The round table discussion aimed at analyzing issues arising in the relations of religion and politics in the context of pandemics but not limited to it is within the region of Northeastern Europe.

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Call for Papers: Religion and Bioethics: A Sociological Perspective

Hossein Godazgar (University of Warwick) and Tyler Tate (Oregon Health and Science University) are editing a special issue for the journal Frontiers in Sociology on ‘Religion and Bioethics: A Sociological Perspective’. The focus will be a sociological study of the intersectionality between religion and bioethics. Submission deadlines are 31 January 2022 (for Abstracts) and 04 July 2022 (for full manuscripts).

The call for papers and details are available here: https://www.frontiersin.org/research-topics/25414/religion-and-bioethics-a-sociological-perspective
The round table discussion participants were prof. Anne Kull from Tartu University (Estonia), prof. Titus Hjelm from Helsinki University (Finland), prof. Agita Misane from Riga Stradinš University (Latvia) and prof. Milda Ališauskienė from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania). The discussion was chaired by ISA RC22 vice-president prof. Mar Griera from Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain).

Scholars shared their insights describing relations between religion and politics during the period of pandemics, discussed the way societies of respectful countries are influenced by misinformation, orchestrated by their Eastern neighboring countries. It was observed that the geopolitical position of the three Baltic States and Finland has been one of the factors in the recent developments of religion and politics relationship towards more intensive, too. The far-right political movements and the public discourse of preservation of traditional family values linked with nationalistic agenda and being explicitly or implicitly supported by national churches have been observed in the discussed societies.

ISA RC22 conference in Vilnius provided a space for academic discussions in hybrid form, the live meeting took place after almost two years of pandemic restrictions.

Long-awaited discussions by the coffee table gave a feeling of normality and hope that soon we will return to usual academic meetings. At least this is what ISA RC22 conference in Vilnius participants wished to each other in the moment of farewell.

New Publications


Following the 2010–2011 revolution, Islamist and secularist political parties and women’s rights organizations formed coalitions in Tunisia. Nothing of the sort had happened before in Tunisian history. This article considers the conditions that led feminists with different ideological beliefs to create what I call an “unlikely feminist coalition” in Tunisia. I argue that Islamists and secularists can form unlikely feminist coalitions when facing similar threats, working on similar tasks prior to formation of the coalition, the experience of common grievances, and a shared feminist identity. Drawing on the gender politics and social movement literature on coalitions, I suggest that more needs to be understood about unlikely feminist coalitions, especially in the Middle East. Find it [here](#).
The African Atlantic Research Team of Michigan State University hosted a day-long symposium concerning innovative ideas that advance African Diaspora Religion research.

The event gathered virtual and in-person speakers from Sociology, Anthropology, History, Africana Studies, Literature, Museum Studies, and Religious Studies for also expanding Historian of Religions, Charles H. Long’s seminal concepts of “Opacity, Transcendence, and Tradition” as better understandings of religious activities in Americas’ African Diaspora. Senior scholar presentations ranged from Emory University Dianne Stewart’s womanist analysis of bringing forth a specifically Trinidadian orisha within the island’s tradition, to Duke University keynote speaker J. Lorand Matory’s comparative structural/symbolic relationship between U.S. BDSM and diaspora religions.

Others’ ‘cutting edge’ methodological and interpretive interventions challenged normative research strategies that continue to render invisible vast swaths of African Diasporic religious action and intention.

The symposium’s closing festive celebration acknowledged the African Atlantic Research Team’s 25th Anniversary while recognizing ISA Board Member and Founding Director of the Team, Jualynne E. Dodson, and dozens of students of color who’ve earned advanced degrees under the Team’s collective mentorship model.

New Publications


Further information: https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/urban-religious-events-9781350175495/
RELIGION AND GENDER – IMPRESSIONS FROM ISARC22 MIDTERM CONFERENCE*

By Nelli Felker, @repliv_kolleg Ph.D. Student

Religion, Politics and Uncertainty: Shifting Boundaries: That is the motto under which the Research Committee on the Sociology of Religion of the International Sociological Association (ISA RC-22) organised this year’s mid-term Conference from 11 to 13 November 2021 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Together with Puyan Mahmudian Jegurlaee, I attended the meeting.

The conference’s title couldn’t be more appropriate to the many challenges that societies are currently facing. Whether it be the global pandemic, climate change, migration or the flood of human rights violations, people are in a constant process of negotiating their living conditions. The conference programm impressively demonstrated the role religion plays in both private and social life in dealing with these uncertainties.

The conference focused on religion in the context of social and political change from a religious-sociological and religious-scientific perspective. The role of religion was discussed in a hybrid format with a total of 68 participants from 26 countries. The contributions reflected the multifaceted influences of religion. It is indisputable that religion is indispensable in modern societies.

In the numerous contributions, however, one particular focus prevailed: religion and gender. The role of women, gender equality and the question how sexual minorities are dealt with can be observed across national borders.

*Originally published on @repliv_kolleg blog

New Publications

"Formas de Creer en la Ciudad" (UNAM, 2021) is a Spanish new coordinated volume [Hugo José Suárez, Karina Bárcenas & Cecilia Delgado-Molina, coordinators] that discuss identities, memory, and citizenship at the crossroads with migration, violence, and gender by analyzing the urban and religious experience in the geography of cities in Argentina, Brazil, Spain, the United States, France, and Mexico.

Open Access: https://www.iis.unam.mx/formas-de-creer-en-la-ciudad/
Consequently, international developments were discussed. In several lectures, the media discourse as well as activism against the “Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”, the “Istanbul Convention” from 2011, was examined. Theologian Anne Kull used examples from Estonia to describe how it is understood as an attack on values by patriarchal and nationalist ideologists in both secular and religious areas of society.

On this account the history of Lithuania is the perfect example to observe the social confrontation with religious world views and the role of women. The visit to the Lithuanian National Gallery of Art impressively showed me that this is by no means a new discourse. The artist Marija Teresė Rožanskaitė (1933-2007), known for her progressive themes, grew up in the Soviet Union, shaped by experiences of censorship. One of her most impressive paintings (1975) is a modern Maria Magdalena in a red dress and purple leggings. A reinterpretation of the woman dubbed a sinner, who turns her back on the religious symbol of the cross and confidently goes her way. The artist Jurga Barilaitė also tells of a changed relationship between culture and religion and questions images of women with her series of pictures “Six Rules How to Play Mother” from 1998. In addition, many works of art also dealt with religion in a modern world, for example through Ramūnas Danisevičius photography with the title ‘Shrek’, which shows two nuns at a cinema show. Furthermore, the plurality and coexistence of religions was also reflected. The work “Conversation” by the artist Raimundas Sližys, who primarily dealt with secularism in his works, shows a Christian and a Jewish clergyman in conversation. The Christian is shown with his arms crossed and a negative expression on his face, while the Jewish clergyman tries to break open his arms. The museum offers online access to the permanent exhibition, which is highly recommended.

The conference as well as the exhibition in the National Gallery of Art showed in an impressive way not only the role religions play in modern societies, but also the long history of the discourses on religious plurality, religious coexistence and the position of women in society. And above all: in times of social change, political polarization and social insecurity, the influence of religions shows itself in numerous facets.

Call for Papers: The End of the World, an endless discussion?

Are we facing human extinction on planet Earth? Will the Earth soon be consumed by environmental catastrophes? Although warnings about these issues have intensified since the 1950s, these pandemic times have enlivened these doubts that are no longer so hypothetical. The signs of exhaustion given by the Earth tell us of the limits of our expropriation momentum. Before the earth eaters in search of the metals of the people of the commodity annihilate the last shaman and the sky falls on our heads, as David Kopenawa tells us, or as sociologist Jeremy Rifkin states, ‘We are facing the threat of extinction and people do not even know it,’ so we need to act with the awareness that knowledge and science provide us.

Boosting the university space to think about the issues put on the table before it is turned over for good is the intention of this Dossier. As the knowledge of religions and myths have been dedicated to reflection on the end for thousands of years, it is possible that, by listening to them, some ideas may indicate emergency exits. Papers analyzing discourses on the end of the world, millennialsisms, antagonisms between different definitions of the earth, denialism and scientism, anthropology of climate change, Green New Deal, the apocalypse in the arts and literature, and related themes, will be welcome.

Further information here: https://periodicos.ufrn.br/cronos
The Call for Papers for the biennial conference of the ESA Research Network 34 Sociology of Religion is out now. Deadline to submit abstracts and panel proposals is 31 January 2022. You are all invited to submit your proposals and we hope to see many of you in Groningen (The Netherlands) next summer. More information: https://bit.ly/3D9DK1Z

New Publications

Vivencio Ballano (Polytechnic University of the Philippines) recent open-access and Scopus-indexed article entitled "COVID-19 Pandemic, Telepresence, and Online Masses: Redefining Catholic Sacramental Theology". The World Health Organization (WHO) indexed it in its "COVID-19 Global literature on Coronavirus Disease". Available at: https://cgscholar.com/bookstore/wo

Share with us your Call for Papers, Job Opportunities, Grants Applications, New Publications, and any relevant information for members and the scientific community.

Send us an email to include it in our webpage & our weekly digest: Alan Nixon, University of Western Sydney communications@isa-rc22.org

Tag us on Twitter for RT @isa_rc22

Add our email address to avoid losing our Call for Newsletter and send us your information:
Cecilia Delgado-Molina, ISA RC22 Secretary/Treasurer sectreas@isa-rc22.org
We recently renewed the ISA RC22 website! We invite you to visit: www.isa-rc22.org.