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Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions
International Society for the Sociology of Religion

Network 22

Réseau

March 2004
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28th ISSR/SISR Conference

Religion: Challenging Boundaries

Zagreb (Croatia) July 18 - 22, 2005

Please make a note of the date and put it in your diary

Description of the conference theme:

page 3-4 of this Network and on our Web Site

Deadlines

May 31st 2004: Proposals for Thematic Sessions and Working Groups to be sent to the General Secretary

Session titles and the organisers' names will be published in the next Network and posted on www.sisr.org by **July 15th 2004**

October 31st 2004: [Abstracts of proposed papers for sessions](#) to be sent to the Session Organiser, [abstracts of miscellaneous papers](#) to be sent to the General Secretary

Early January 2005: Programme of the Conference on the Web Site and in the first issue of Network for 2005

Letter from the President

From Turin to Zagreb. Our next conference will be held in the Croatian capital in July 2005. We are returning to Croatian territory after more than thirty years absence: the XIth ISSR conference took place in Opatija in 1971 on “Religion and Religiosity, Atheism and Non-belief in Industrial and Urban Society”. It was then part of Yugoslavia, but is now an independent state. Differences in language, culture and religion have swept away the myth of the unity of the Southern Slave people, a myth that lay at the roots of former Yugoslavia when it was established after the Second World War. We will come back to where the boundary changes took place, due to a war that involved religion too. The Zagreb Conference will therefore constitute an important event for our association; it will be not only an academic meeting, but also a sign of solidarity with the people and colleagues who have lived through such hard times during the Balkan conflicts. Many thanks to our colleagues from Zagreb for their willingness to organize the conference.

From Turin to Zagreb, and elsewhere. We have to multiply our efforts to bring our association to the attention of new researchers around the world. In this sense, the Forum for New Researchers is a strategy to encourage people to join us. Hopefully, they will contribute to spread new ideas and renew the scientific study of religion. One way to improve is also to strengthen the good relations we enjoy with other associations, like the Associação de Cientistas Sociais da Religião do Merco-Sul (Social Scientists of Religion Association of Merco-Sul) or the International Study of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISORECEA). In Zagreb, we will try to continue organizing joint sessions with these two societies as well as with the ASR and SSSR. At the same time and along similar lines, we intend to suggest a joint-session at the forthcoming IAHR (International Association for the History of Religions) conference to be held in Tokyo in March 2005, in honour of Yoshiya Abe who passed away three months ago: he was a good scientist and friend of the ISSR.

From Turin to Zagreb; from one topic to another; from the theme of the new generation to that of changing boundaries. But always religion, and always in motion. All the best for 2004!

Enzo Pace, President of the ISSR

DO NOT FORGET THE FIRST DEADLINE:
May 31st 2004: Proposals for Thematic Sessions and Working Groups to be sent to
the General Secretary

RELIGION: CHALLENGING BOUNDARIES

Religion and society challenge each other's boundaries. Boundary challenges occur at both the conceptual and the empirical levels.

At the conceptual level, the challenge is to reflect critically on the terms in which these boundary issues are constructed and analysed. The range of issues includes the boundaries between the public and the private, the religious and the political, the collective and the individual, and the spiritual and the religious.

At the empirical level, the challenge is to understand the significance of boundaries, boundary regulations and boundary struggles in relation to nations, states, ethnicities, political and religious movements, the public and the private, majorities and minorities, identities and individual rights.

Plenary One: Challenging boundaries: Public Religion, Private Religion

The focus of this session will be on:

(a) the continuing, but contested public/private distinction in the sociology of religion, especially in relation to secularisation theory and its challengers; and

(b) how practices and discourses concerning the public/private distinction operate in different societies and with what implications.

Plenary Two: Challenging boundaries: Religions, Nations, and Identities

This session concerns a world in which boundaries of all sorts are facing challenge and change. Older understandings of religion, nationhood, and identity are under siege theoretically and practically. Boundaries are contested within and between religions, nations, and identities. Issues may be framed in ethnic, political, or cultural terms; they may involve minority-majority relations at local or global levels, and they may be studied on every continent.

Further elaboration of issues about religion and boundaries will take place in thematic sessions on topics such as:

- Religion and migration
- Public Islam and privatised religion in Europe
- Public and private religion in Islam
- Religion, family and schooling
- Religion and cultural identities
- Religion, constitution and law
- Religion and the state: claims, conflicts and separation
- Religious terrorism and responses
- Dynamics of fundamentalism and the religious right
- Religions and ethnic change

Religion in the context of European integration
Religions and political identities
Religion, apostasy and national identity
Religion and national identity
Majority and minority relations
Interpretations of changing religious boundaries
Religious switching and multiple conversions
Varieties of religious pluralism: individual versus collective
Renegotiating religious boundaries
Religion and social stratification
Religion and gender boundaries
Religion, the body and nature
Religions, humans and nature
Life and death
Measuring boundaries
Constructionism and essentialism in the sociology of religion

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CONVENERS OF

Thematic Sessions

and

Workinggroups

Should send to the General Secretary

before May 31st 2004

the title of their proposed session, in English and French

and the rationale of their Session (100 words in each language)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Council has set aside limited funds to assist participants in ISSR/SISR conferences coming from countries with non-convertible currencies. Those who wish to request financial assistance from the SISR are asked to submit their applications to the General Secretary. Such support can only be offered if the following conditions are met in full:

- The quality of the proposed paper must be good. A paper that has already been published in French or English will not be accepted.
- The inability of the applicant to pay for participation in the Conference must be demonstrated.
- The applicant must agree to give a paper at the Conference and remain in residence for the duration of the conference.
- The deadline for submitting applications for financial assistance is 31st October 2002. An Abstract of about 3 pages should accompany each application.
- The application must also contain a short curriculum vitae.
- The application must be accompanied by a letter from the head of the applicant's academic department or research centre certifying that financial assistance cannot be obtained from the applicant's department, research centre or from national and international foundations.
- Other things being equal, priority will be given to those who never received financial assistance.
- Applicants who are informed that their application has been approved in principle must submit the full text of their paper in English or French (between 5,000 and 6,000 words) to the General Secretary no later than 15th March, 2003.
- Successful applicants must become members of the ISSR/SISR and must submit their papers for consideration by the Editorial Committee for publication in Social Compass.
- Payment of financial assistance will be made only when the applicant sends the remaining part of the original ticket (not a photocopy) to the General Secretary after the conference.

Only those applicants who meet these conditions in full will be eligible for financial support from the ISSR/SISR. Applicants are also reminded that requests for funding cannot be met in full. Final decisions rest with the Programme Committee.

Obituary for Yoshiya Abe (1937-2003)

It is with great sadness that we report the death, December 1st 2003, of Yoshiya Abe, a long-standing representative of Japan in the Council of the Society, in the affairs of which he exercised an influence far in excess of the contribution that might have been expected of an ordinary Council member representing a country in which western-style sociological study of religion was still in its infancy.

Yoshiya Abe - graduate of the University of Tokyo – gained his PhD in Comparative Religion in 1970 at Claremont Graduate School in California, and for three years he taught history at the University of Wisconsin before being appointed as Staff Specialist in the Religious Affairs Section of the Cultural Affairs Agency of Japan. In 1974, he took up appointment as the Director of the Exchange of Persons for the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Among the first western scholars to be nominated for these exchanges were sociologists of religion. Abe persisted with this programme, bringing Japan into the forefront of sociological studies of religion. He devoted his energies and his considerable enthusiasm to persuading Japanese scholars to pay due attention to the social aspects of religion and not to confine their efforts to purely textual issues. His ambitions were largely realized, at least symbolically, when, in consequence of his vision and hard work, the 1978 conference of the SISR was successfully organized in Tokyo. That event made it clear that the problems, issues and concerns of the SISR might arise in any religious context and were not confined to Christianity or the West.

Dr. Abe was a much sought after administrator, and in his career he traversed a variety of different fields, and was assigned to some pioneering roles – in multi-media studies; the university of the air;’ and in research development – but his abiding commitment to the sociological study of religion ensured that younger scholars entering this field would receive every encouragement to undertake research and also to present papers at international conferences. In consequence of this sponsorship, younger Japanese sociologists of religion enjoyed a better opportunity than their contemporaries in other social science disciplines to become known to overseas colleagues. At the same time, western sociologists in search of theories to explain the emergence of so many new religious movements throughout the world were influenced in their choice of research topics and appropriate methodologies by what they learned of the Japanese experience from Japanese scholars.

An obituary notice for Yoshiya Abe in the ISSR-Network appropriately accords pride of place to the international implications of his work, and his pre-eminence as a scholar, an administrator, and as a broker in academic diplomacy. But even in a notice reflecting his international achievements and reputation, at least allusion must be made to his substantial contributions to discussion of a variety of issues that impinged on, or were derived from the sociology of religion. His interest in topics such as globalization; religious nationalism; fundamentalism; and religion and violence, gave him access to the thought of a whole generation of scholars. He himself was not primarily engaged in research, but anyone seeking to know what Japanese sociological research had achieved could have had no better guide than this man who monitored the results of Japanese social science investigations, and who possessed a knowledge of his country’s social life that was encyclopaedic.

Abe's successive occupancy of diverse appointments, some of which were no more than tangential to the sociology of religion or even to academic social science *tout court*, may have prevented the development of any sort of personal following or well-defined and integrated "school" of close disciples. None the less, Abe stimulated and cultivated scholars in various universities – Tokyo, Tsukuba, Aichigakuin, and Kokugakuin among them. His recurrent experience of being called to take up successive appointments in fields peripheral to the academic sociology of religion, did nothing to limit his influence – may, indeed, have facilitated its diffusion.

He was widely consulted, both on strictly academic issues and also on the strategy of research procedures, funding and administration. This practical knowledge, together with his positive attitude towards research, and his endorsement of only those applications for research funds that reached the highest standard, did much to shape sociological enquiry in Japan. There was another side to Abe, notable in the light-hearted way in which he carried his learning. He was a jolly man who could delight his colleagues with his anecdotes and reminiscences. Superficial acquaintances might be excused if they failed to recognize the serious scholar and wise counsellor who stood behind the lively, witty, humorous man, whose infectious, inimitable high-pitched laughter betokened the apparently care-free bonhomie of a man who, as he said of himself, liked to "live in the fast lane".

Bryan R. Wilson
Honorary President

We would like to express our appreciation to all members who have already paid their 2004-05 dues.
Thank you very much!

WE ARE SORRY TO HAVE TO INFORM YOU THAT:

in view of the enormous secretarial and postal costs involved in preparing and sending out our Newsletters and information to the membership, we will have to **discard** all postal addresses and e-mail addresses of colleagues who have not been in good standing at some time in the last four years.

We hope that this message will encourage all members and former members, who have not already done so, to contact us again by paying their membership dues. By doing so they will ensure that this is not the last time that they will receive a Newsletter from the General Secretariat.

A GIFT FROM SAGE:

Free subscriptions to *SOCIAL COMPASS* for special target groups!

Following up the request formulated during the General Assembly in Turin, the General Secretary contacted Ms Caroline Lane (Senior Production Editor, Journals, Sage Publications), who was at the conference in Turin, to ask if Sage could offer free subscription to Social Compass for members who could not afford to pay the full membership fee. In September we got a positive reply from Sage, but Sage insisted that postage should be paid by the beneficiary. On the basis of a policy paper made by the Executive, the Council accepted the two following target groups: 1) members of countries with non convertible currencies and 2) young researchers (less than 35 years); and proposed *an extension* to academic libraries that had never had a subscription to Social Compass and that were unlikely to do so, for reasons of economic difficulty, in the foreseeable future. The argument was that making the journal available in carefully selected libraries would probably widen the access to it more effectively than by giving it solely to individual scholars. It was also felt that such a scheme would help to raise awareness of the ISSR and of the journal among people who are currently unaware of them – and in regions of the world where our presence is relatively weak such as Africa and parts of Latin America. Moreover, the General Secretary has met the Director and the Editor of *Social Compass* who agreed with this proposal.

Implementation:

(1) Members from Countries with non Convertible Currency, opting for the reduced rate, who had been in this category in the past (taking the registered membership lists as a basis): renew their membership fee and pay additionally €20 for postage. Their fee is €54 +€20 (postage)= 74€

(2) New members from Countries with non Convertible Currency, who become members *for the first time* and opt for the reduced rate, by paying €54, are invited to apply for a free subscription to Social Compass. In addition to paying the fee of €54, they should send their curriculum vitae and a written and signed declaration on honour that (i) they are not able to get institutional funding to acquire a subscription to Social compass; and (ii) cannot afford to pay such a subscription themselves. These two documents should be sent to the General Secretary. If their application is accepted they will be asked to pay the postage (€20) upon which they will receive the free subscription from Sage.

(3) Young researchers, less than 35 years old, who had been members in the past opting for the student category: renew their membership fee and pay the additional €20 for postage. Their fee is €69 + €20 = €89

4) Young researchers, less than 35 years old, who become members *for the first time* and opt for the reduced rate, by paying €69, are invited to apply for a free subscription to Social Compass. In addition to paying their fee, they should send their curriculum vitae and a written and signed declaration on honour that (i) they are not able to get institutional funding to acquire a subscription to Social compass; and (ii) cannot afford to pay such a subscription themselves. These two documents should be sent to the General Secretary. If their application is accepted

they will be asked to pay the postage (€20) upon which they will receive the free subscription from Sage.

It will be the task of the General Secretary to evaluate the applications. In cases of doubt, he will consult the President, who may decide to consult the Executive. Should an application be rejected by the General Secretary, the applicant may appeal to the Council, which shall give a definitive ruling (cf. art. 9 of the Statutes).

The free subscription, implying that the beneficiaries will pay the postage costs, is a gift from SAGE and depends entirely upon the continuation of such policy by Sage. Consequently, it is *not an acquired right*. If Sage subsequently changes its policy, the beneficiaries could not claim that the SISR/ISSR should take over the free subscription policy. And we should be aware that a decline in the number of members paying the full fee might bring this policy in jeopardy.

Attention please

The documents to fill in for a free subscription will be sent out in about one week. Applications made on other than the correct ISSR-documents will not be taken into consideration!

HOW TO CONTACT US?

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Vacant positions in the Council of the SISR/ISSR

Call for candidates

Elections will be organised early next year for the following positions that become vacant, at the next conference:

General Secretary
Treasurer

Great Britain
Switzerland

The following positions are still vacant:

Spain
South Asia

According to Art. 20 of the statutes, the following rules should be followed to present candidates for your region:

- a) Vacancies shall be announced by the General Secretary in the bulletin of the Association at least six months before the elections. Candidates shall be members of the Association and shall be nominated in writing by two other members. The candidate shall signify his or her acceptance of nomination.
- b) The candidate and his or her sponsors shall belong to the geographic region for which the candidate is proposed.
- c) Nominations shall be submitted to the General Secretary who shall compile the list of candidates for election.
- d) Voting shall be by postal ballot and shall take place before the Conference which marks the end of the relevant period of office.

The terms of office of the following members of the council come to an end after having served for four years. According to art19 a) of the statutes they are re-eligible: “The members of the Council shall be elected for terms of four years. They shall be eligible for consecutive re-election once, excepting that those who are elected President, General Secretary or Treasurer shall be eligible for a total consecutive duration of membership of the Council of not more than three terms”.

Canada: Peter Beyer
Germany: Monika Wohlrab-Sahr
Mexico: Carlos Garma
South America: Cecilia Mariz

Who is going to be invited to vote for Council members?

MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING

According to art. 11 b of the present Statutes, membership shall be forfeited:

- a) by resignation in writing to the General Secretary;
- b) subsequent to non-payment of the annual dues at the end of the second year;

Consequently, ballots will be sent only to members in good standing: this means those who have paid their membership dues in 2003 and/or 2004

CONSEQUENTLY, WE CALL UPON MEMBERS TO PAY THEIR MEMBERSHIP FEES

The forms which enable those who haven't yet paid their membership dues will be sent to them within a couple of weeks.

If you have an electronic address and you receive NETWORK/RÉSEAU by regular mail inform the General Secretariat of your electronic address at once:
sisr@soc.kuleuven.ac.be

Please inform the General Secretariat of changes in address:

sisr@soc.kuleuven.ac.be

or

**General Secretariat of the ISSR/SISR, Department of Sociology,
Van Evenstraat 2B, B-3000 Leuven
Belgium**

CONFERENCES and ANNUAL MEETINGS

American Sociological Association: Annual Meeting, San Francisco, August 2004. **Section 34: Sociology of Religion** will organize 3 sessions (Religion and Family, Religion and Immigration, and Religion Race and Ethnicity) and Round tables on August 16. Section Chair: R.Stephen Warner, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1007 W. Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60607-7140, USA; Tel.: +1-312-996-0990 rswarner@uic.edu. For up-to-date information: [www.asanet.org/section 34/index.html](http://www.asanet.org/section%2034/index.html)

Association for the Sociology of Religion: San-Francisco meeting, 13-15 August 2004. The theme: "The causes and consequences of contemporary moralities". Program Chair; Fenggang Yang, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University, Stone Hall, 700 W State Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2059; e-mail: ASR2004@soc.purdue.edu. Deadlines: January 15, 2004: Session proposals; February 15, 2004: paper proposals (abstracts 150 words maximum). Submissions by email are encouraged; please include email address on all correspondence. See ASR web site: www.sociologyofreligion.com

British Sociological Association (BSA): Sociology of Religion Study Group will hold its 2004 Annual Conference in Bristol from Monday 29 March – Thursday 1 April. The theme: "A Sociology of Spirituality". Contributors from outside the UK would be very welcome. The local organizer is Dr Kieran Flanagan (Kieran.Flanagan@bristol.ac.uk). For details, see <http://www.socrel.org.uk/>.

International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR): 19th Quinquennial Congress in Tokyo 24-30 March, 2005. Theme: "Religion: conflict and Peace". Registration before September 30th, 2004: iahareg@convention.jp. For more details see <http://www.1.u-tokyo.ac.jp/iahr2005/>

Network for the Study of Implicit Religion: Inter-Disciplinary Week-end Implicit Religion: Denton Hall, Ilkley 7-9 May 2004. Co-ordinator: Dr. E. I. Bailey, email: eibailey@csircs.freeserve.co.uk

Religious Research Association: Annual Meeting 2004 in Marriott Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, Missouri, USA. October 22-24: "Linking Social Action and Religious Research". Send proposals to: John P. Bartkowski, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, & Social Work, P.O. Box C, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39762, USA. E-mail: Bartkowski@soc.msstate.edu. Include email address on all proposals. Deadlines: January 16, 2004: Session proposals (title and description); March 15, 2004: Paper proposals (title and abstract); September 30 2004: Complete paper due to discussant (if session has discussant).

Society for the Scientific Study of Religion: Annual Meeting 2004 in Marriott Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, Missouri, USA. October 22-24: "Overcoming Boundaries in the *Scientific Study of Religion*". Send proposals to: William H. Swatos Jr, Program Chair, 3529 Wiltshire Drive, Holiday, FL 34691-1239, USA. Email: swatos@microd.com. Include email address on all correspondence. Deadlines: January 15, 2004 Session proposals; March 15, 2004 Paper Proposals with a concise abstract. Web site: www.sssrweb.org.