

Call for Papers

Making a Difference: the hope and promise of sexuality studies

Midterm Conference: European Sociological Association Sexuality Research Network

24-25 September 2020, Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra, Portugal

Deadline: 1st March 2020

The title for this midterm conference is inspired by Lemn Sissay's poem *Making a Difference* quoted by former ESA President Sue Scott in her opening speech at the 2019 ESA conference in Manchester. The poem urges researchers at all stages of their career and members of academia at large to stand out and use their embodied knowledge to break barriers and make a difference. We draw from this powerful invitation to encourage scholars and activists alike to approach sexuality studies as a platform for change.

Gender and sexuality studies have been subject to funding cuts and obstructive state interventions leading in some instances to the closure of entire university degree programmes. Long-established oppressive and discriminatory practices and the recent advancement of right-wing populism have dire consequences for the lives of those who do not live up to ethnocentric ideals of cis and hetero normativity and normalcy. Reflecting on these challenges, the ESA Sexuality Research Network wishes to stimulate discussions on how the sociological study of sexuality has been operating as a scholarly and activist tool for change and on how it can achieve even more by looking at the broader implications of sexual politics and the politics of sexuality.

How useful is the sociological study of sexuality for challenging new and old backlashes? What methodological and epistemological challenges do sexuality studies face today? What helpful disciplinary cross-fertilisations can we further stimulate? What analytical insights can the study of sexuality contribute to, and what are its future directions? What theoretical, political, and activist interventions are necessary to nurture and sustain hope in this field? What may undermine the hope and promise of sexuality studies? What aspects of the sociological study of sexuality remain under-explored or even ignored, and how can we address marginalised or tabooed topics?

We look forward to sharing research and to discussing ways in which we can contribute to the field and the promises and hopes it holds. We would like the conference to be an opportunity to take a critical look at the politics of hope, its potentials and its limits, its usages, histories, cultural legacies, social and emotional dynamics and its discursive and material effects.

We invite scholars, activists and interested parties to address these and other related questions. Specific topics may include, but need not be limited to:

- SOGI rights claims, human rights, social justice and solidarity
- Challenging LGBTIQ+ discrimination and inequality

- Sexual violence, conflict resolution and reconciliation
- Shifting notions of consent
- Intersections of sex, work and economic justice
- Sexual politics, social movements and queering practices of resistance (e.g. anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, anti-colonial, anti-racist, feminist, etc.)
- Sexual identities, communities and the politics of belonging
- Sexual norms and normativities
- Migration and sexuality, multiculturalism and integration
- Utopianism/dystopianism in theories on sexuality
- Alternative intimacies and modes of kinship
- Care and caring in intimate and sexual relationships
- Sexuality, emotions and affects
- Medicalization, de-medicalization, biopolitics, and biosociality
- Gender, sexuality and reproductive justice
- Sexuality, bodies and embodiment