



**MIDTERM CONFERENCE OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
SEXUALITY RESEARCH NETWORK (RN23)**

**28th and 29th September 2023**

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG), University of Zagreb, Croatia

**Deadline for submission: EXTENDED to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Call for Papers**

**Making a Difference: the Hope and Promise of Sexuality Studies**

The title of this conference is inspired by Lemn Sissay's poem *Making a Difference*. The poem urges researchers at all stages of their career and members of academia to stand out and use their embodied knowledge to break barriers and make a difference. We draw from this invitation to encourage scholars and activists 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 advancement of right-wing populism have dire consequences for the lives of those who do not live up to ethnocentric ideals of cis- and heteronormativity. Reflecting on these challenges, the ESA Sexuality Research Network (RN23) wishes to stimulate productive 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 mobilizations against gender and sexual equality? 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 neglected, 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, human rights, social justice and solidarity
- Challenging LGBTIQ+ discrimination and inequality
- Mobilizations against gender and sexual equality
- Sexual violence, conflict resolution and reconciliation
- Shifting notions of consent
- Intersections of sex, work and economic justice
- New frontiers in sex work research
- Sexual politics, social movements and queering practices of resistance
- Sexual identities, communities and the politics of belonging
- Sexual norms and other normativities
- Intersectional perspectives on masculinity
- Migration, multiculturalism, integration and sexuality
- Utopianism/dystopianism in theories on sexuality
- Alternative intimacies and modes of kinship
- Care and caring in intimate and sexual relationships
- Medicalization, de-medicalization, biopolitics, and biosociality
- Reproductive justice
- Bodies and embodiment
- Young people's sexual identities, sexual practices and wellbeing, and (formal and informal) learning about sex(ualities)

The conference will take place in person, in Zagreb, Croatia. Unfortunately, we don't have the technical resources to organise a hybrid conference. However, we will do our best to live stream the plenaries and, where possible, to accommodate the needs of those who, for personal reasons, are not able to attend the conference in person.

We welcome proposals for **individual papers (300 words)** and **panels (1000 words)** consisting of 3 to 4 papers. Please send your abstract or panel proposal and a short biography of paper author/s by email to [esarn23@gmail.com](mailto:esarn23@gmail.com). Please include 'ESARN23 2023 ABSTRACT' in the subject of your email. For organisational purposes, please also indicate which fee you will be paying (see below).

We are able to offer a limited number of **fee waivers and up to five accommodation bursaries**, i.e. 3 nights per person in a local hotel pre-booked by the conference organisers. These opportunities are for PhD students, independent and untenured researchers only. If you wish to apply for either or both, please indicate so in your abstract submission, including a short supporting statement.

**Conference attendance fees** are as follows:

ESA members:

€80: for participants in secure employment

€30: for PhD students, independent and untenured researchers

Non-ESA members:

€120: for participants in secure employment

€50: for PhD students, independent and untenured researchers

A free cultural event will be organised in the evening of September 28<sup>th</sup> 2023.

The deadline for submissions has been extended 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Presenters will be notified about the outcome of their submission around mid-May 2023.

For any query, please email: [esarn23@gmail.com](mailto:esarn23@gmail.com)

The conference will be hosted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FFZG) of the University of Zagreb, Croatia, and it is co-organised by the Department of Sociology, the Croatian Sociological Association (HDS), and ESA RN23 Board, led by Tanja Vuckovic Juros.

<https://www.europeansociology.org/research-networks/rn23-sexuality>

Join the network's mailing list here: <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=ESA-SEXUALITY-RESEARCH-NETWORK>

Conference website: <https://esarn23.wordpress.com>

## **Making a Difference (a poem to be read aloud)**

*By Lemn Sissay*

We are shaking and waking and breaking indifference  
We are quaking and taking and making a difference

We are working observing recording researching  
Wherein we're conferring subverting referring

We're counting the minutes the moments the loss  
Redressing the balance addressing the cost

We are citing and fighting it's all in the writing  
The spark is igniting in dark we are lightening

We are breaking the brackets the fact is the planet's  
In rackets and rackets of rackets in brackets

The systems the victims the damning the scamming  
The biased predicting the beating and banning

The skills we exchange the breaking of chains  
The actions sustained the makers of change

To relentless censors the damned and defenceless  
Our words are the action the louder reaction

When no one is listening we hear  
When heads turn away we volunteer

We work we stand tall we rise up to be counted  
We climb mountains

We are shaking and waking and breaking indifference  
We are quaking and taking and making a difference