

CFP: INSEP2013 - The Value(s) of Sexual Diversity

Third International Conference of the International Network for Sexual Ethics and Politics - INSEP

14th - 16th October 2013, Ghent University, Belgium

Hosted by CEVI – Centre for Ethics and Value Inquiry
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Ghent University, Belgium

General Conference Theme – The Value(s) of Sexual Diversity

For this conference we would like to focus on the legal, political and ethical boundaries of diverse sexualities. By this we mean that we wish to 'trouble' current assumptions, dispositions and claims for the boundaries between legitimacy and illegitimacy in diverse sexual identities, sub-cultures and practices in both national and international contexts.

These concerns can be represented in a number of areas of inquiry.

In the more (so-called) 'tolerant' context of the West, how are the lines drawn between what is sexually permissible and what is not permissible? What are the legal, ethical and political arguments that prescribe some diverse sexual practices, identities or fetishes, and where are the lines drawn between what can be prohibited, or regulated, or by absence of prescription permitted? What part does the role of law and the idea of citizen rights and obligations play in the construction of prohibitions or regulation? How do arguments of prohibition, regulation and permission draw on broader ideas of tolerance, liberty and respect and dignity for difference or social protections and moral norms? What discourses or developments beyond the law are necessary for promoting respect for sexual difference?

What demands do the interstices of race, gender, class, culture, age and ability make on sexual diversity, and to what extent can diversity contain them? Can we make claims for respecting diverse sexualities and at the same time have constructive dialogues with countries and cultures that do not? How convincing are the ethical and political arguments that construct boundaries in a contemporary, increasingly globalized and multicultural context? How and where do differing non-Western sexualities fit in? Is it oppressive to insist on universal principles for respecting sexual identities and difference? Where do we draw lines between legitimacy and illegitimacy?

Or, on an even more fundamental level: are sexual difference and diversity as such valuable?

The third international conference of INSEP welcomes papers, presentations and panels focusing on conceptual and theoretical debates, cultural and political analysis and empirical studies from which conceptual, ethical and political conclusions are drawn.

Sub Themes

Whilst we welcome a wide and diverse range of papers focussed on the general conference theme, we are particularly keen to encourage submissions dealing with issues relating to three sub-themes of particular interest.

BDSM: Legal, Cultural and Ethical Questions

At least one part of the conference will launch an INSEP project on the legal, cultural and ethical questions surrounding BDSM. This sexuality is important in its amalgam of practices, ascriptions of identity and sub-cultural community, and the dichotomous positions it occupies in exploring the ethics and politics of sexual diversity, represented in its alternate representations as: pleasurable danger or dangerous pleasure; consensual pain or pathological cruelty; power exchange or sexualised oppression; imaginative sex or celebration of degradation. In this stream papers are welcomed that seek to develop ethical, political and legal arguments that both respect the sexual diversity within BDSM but tackle the questions raised about the scope and limits of its individual and social forms and practices. This part of the conference will involve both intellectual critique and the voices of practitioners.

Sexology and the Negotiation of Diversity

Sexology, in research and therapy, in the range of different approaches, techniques and practices it uses, has tended to position sexual diversity against a norm-deviance model of sexual behaviour. It has simultaneously adopted a pathological model of sexual difference and diversity whilst, in its transition from classical to modern to contemporary sexology, played a part of dissembling prejudices about sexual diversity. With bio-medical precepts and scientific methodology at the centre of sexological perspectives, sexual diversity provides a challenging area for sexologists who seek to promote and engage therapeutically with a healthy sexual identity and practice. Papers that explore the relationship between the scientific and therapeutic study of sexual diversity and the problems of comprehending sexual diversity outside pathological and norm-deviant structures are particularly welcome.

The Mainstreaming and Commodification of Sexual Diversity

Transgressive sexualities used to both challenge and define the boundaries of the normal and acceptable. Nowadays, in the West at least, these partisan sexualities have become increasingly standardised and commodified. Forms of deviance that once were pathologized have now become disarmed as fashionable (part-time) life-styles. Sexual practices once considered dangerous now serve as the canvas for the mass-marketing of sexual props and aids, books, films, etc. Pornography, e.g., has become 'chic' (and even sometimes art) and/or is being produced based on standardised formats. Kink has become the newest fashion. Opposition to heteronormativity sometimes digresses into complacent imago management. How much 'sting', then, is left in sexual diversity when the importance of being earnest is rapidly being superseded by the importance of feeling accepted? How does the pacification and neutralisation of difference hamper recognition and acceptance of non-standardised sexualities?

Acceptance Policy

INSEP seeks to provide a critical and dynamic space for cutting edge thinking, new research and key discussions and debates about issues of sexual ethics or politics, whether conceptual and theoretical discourse, analytical studies or aesthetically or empirically constituted insights. INSEP sees the value in the fullest range of approaches to the study of sexual ethics and politics, including: gendered and feminist perspectives; distinctive lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual perspectives; queer perspectives; and approaches from more general positions such as liberalism, Marxism and democratic theory. The 2013 conference seeks to be an inclusive space for discussion, welcoming dialogue and vigorous debate, but not sectarianism. We consider paper proposals and panel proposals from any disciplinary field, and are willing to consider expositions that take less orthodox forms. To facilitate funding applications - please note INSEP has no funds of its own - we operate a

'rolling' process of abstract review and acceptance or rejection. Our turnaround time for refereeing is 10 days.

Submission & Timeline: Submissions for papers (300 words), panels or workshops (500 word stipulating participants) should reach us by the final deadline of 16 July 2013.

Normal acceptance/rejection **notification** - 10 days. All delegates/paper-givers must **register** by September 15th 2013.

Please send abstracts to: insep.network@gmail.com

The **conference fee** for presenting delegates for the full three days is 200 Euros, which includes the conference pack, refreshments and a conference dinner. A concessionary rate of 150 Euros is available to presenting students and postgraduates. The rate for non-presenting delegates is 100 Euros, including refreshments, conference pack and the conference dinner.

About INSEP

Sexual ethics and politics lie at the heart of how we understand and practice our sexual lives. They form the basis from which we understand and engage with diverse and different sexualities. Both, however, are currently open to question. On the one hand, discussion of sexual ethics has previously been confined to the auspices of an abstract intellectual discourse, effectively separating it from practice. Sexual politics, on the other hand, has seen progressive advances through world-wide activism by grass-roots movements, NGOs and national and international agents, but in the push for progress, the space for self-critique and reflexivity is often eradicated. INSEP wants to activate a critical dialogue between sexual ethics and politics by connecting them and exploring the ways they can contribute to each other. The sexual is political and just as sexual politics could be enriched by emancipatory ethical thinking, sexual ethics should connect with contemporary sexual activism, politics and practices aiming for the realisation of sexual equalities and justice.

For more info on INSEP and previous conferences please visit:

INSEP – <http://www.insep.ugent.be/>

Journal INSEP – <http://www.insep.ugent.be/journal/jinsep/>

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