

Conference Entry Form

Conference entry form for participants of the 3rd international conference "Interdisciplinary Cultural Group Research: Youth Subcultures, Worldviews and Lifestyles".

Name *

Anita Stasulane; Marika Laudere

Job Title *

Prof.; PhD Student

Company or Organization *

Daugavpils University

Contry *

Latvia

Short bio

A professor of history of religions Anita Stasulane is a director of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at Daugavpils University (Latvia). She graduated Latvian University (1985) and holds PhD in Interreligious Studies from Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy (1998). Her primary research interests and areas of knowledge cover new religious movements, youth studies and subcultures. Currently she is conducting research on radicalism. Her methodological expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as ethnography is of direct relevance to the project.

Marika Laudere is a PhD Student at Daugavpils University.

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Proposal Title *

Political Engagement of Buddhist Youth in Latvia

Abstract (500 words). Abstracts will be published on the website before the conference. *

The past decades have seen the rapid development of new social movements in many countries around the world. The birth of these movements has been facilitated by the rise of new values associated with increasing concerns over the environment, human rights, gender equality, individual autonomy and self-expression. "Latvia for Tibet" movement falls within the category of those groups which raise the issue of Tibet's independence. "Latvia for Tibet" has been a politically active group since its foundation in 2008. It was established by a merger of three different groups. (1) Youth from Andrejsala represented the largest group (50-60 people) aged between 22 and 25. They were mainly students from higher educational establishments in Riga, artists, and representatives of various subcultures. (2) The second group consisted of youth practising Buddhism and they were among the first ones who invited people for a protest campaign. Their decision was related to their religious identity. Having practised Buddhism for several years, they had developed a bond not only with the religion and its spiritual teachers but also with Tibet which they believed was closely related to Buddhism. (3) The third group consisted of well-known public figures and their friends. It included those who worked in the field of culture and sports as well as representatives of the political sphere. The paper provides a summary of findings on youth activity and is based on 30 qualitative in-depth interviews with Buddhist youth in Latvia and ethnographic research data on "Latvia for Tibet". It will analyse the main reasons of youth involvement in Tibet support group with particular emphasis on their religiosity and the ways of youth involvement and their role in "Latvia for Tibet" group. The Buddhist youth of "Latvia for Tibet" participate in protest campaigns, support the key ideas of the group, as well as express their opinions by signing various petitions regarding human rights violations in Tibet and worldwide. Therefore, according to the classification developed by Westheimer and Kahn (Westheimer and Kahn 2004), the young people of "Latvia for Tibet" can be classified as justice-oriented citizens, because they critically assess the causes of social problems, and work actively to alleviate them. The study data show that the young people of "Latvia for Tibet" want to participate in political processes and influence life in the country, as well as they believe that the democratic system exists in Latvia. Today young people view elections as one of the many opportunities, and exercise their political participation in various issue-specific ways that can potentially influence policies more directly. The Buddhist youth of "Latvia for Tibet" consider the traditional forms of engagement insufficient to influence policy making in the areas important for young people, e.g. education and social welfare.

Session type

Presentation

Panel

Workshop

Panel Title

Short Panel Description

Planned Presenters (3-4 people)

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