

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Symposium: “Gender & Diversity in Contemporary Yoga”

22 October 2020, Ghent University, Belgium

Invited speakers: Prof. Beatrix Hauser (University of Bremen), Prof. Maria del Mar Grieria (University of Barcelona) and Dr. Jennifer Lea (University of Exeter)

This one-day symposium aims to bring together scholars investigating yoga and other body-mind-spirit practices from a critical gender and diversity perspective.

Research has shown how Yoga in the contemporary West often caters for members of the white, urban middle-class, among which a majority of women, who seek a healthy life-style, relief from a stressful professional environment and/or personal development. Critical scholarship has pointed out the compliance of this kind of healthist and individual-oriented practices with neoliberal culture and its demands for self-management and self-optimization. Yet, from an intersectional perspective, feminist and critical race scholars have denounced the restrictive and exclusivist health and beauty ideals yoga upholds with the typical yogi being young, white, slim, sexy and able-bodied.

Expanding on this research, we invite empirical, qualitative studies that investigate these dynamics in contemporary Western yoga or other body-mind-spirit settings and/or explore diverse forms of practice and resistance. Indeed, phenomenological approaches have uncovered how yoga, by developing inner awareness and approaching the body as one’s sanctuary, can be a means for acting against consumerist and restrictive (female) body-objectification. Moreover, we welcome contributions on initiatives that diverge from neoliberal exclusivist yoga and other BMS practices such as activist yoga, donation-based yoga, yoga or mindfulness for specific groups (for instance, older women, disabled people, migrant or refugee communities, etc.).

We especially welcome research on the European context, which, from a gender & diversity perspective, remains understudied compared to North-America. We also call for attention to religion/spirituality, an often forgotten dimension in intersectional research which is particularly useful for interrogating the liberatory potential of body-mind-spirit practices in contemporary Europe’s post-secular climate.

Organisers:

Dr. Carine Plancke and Prof. Chia Longman

Centre for Research on Culture and Gender, Ghent University

*Send an abstract of maximum 300 words to [carine.plancke@ugent.be](mailto:carine.plancke@ugent.be) by 15 May 2020. You will be informed on our decision by 15 June. Unfortunately, we will not be able to cover travel and accommodation costs for participants.*

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