

POSTER ABSTRACTS

There is a designated poster viewing time
15:00 – 15:30 on Friday 17th April 2009 in the Lower Hall, Cardiff City Hall.

Presenters will be available during this time to discuss their work.

Additional times may be indicated on individual posters.

Posters are listed in alphabetical order of first author.

Ariza, L.

University of London, Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths

Embryo and gamete donation as a reproductive option in Argentina: the enactment of kinship in expert contexts

This paper will discuss current practices of gamete and embryo manipulation among infertility clinics and ova and sperm banks in Argentina, with specific attention to the increasing promotion of gametes and embryo donation as a reproductive option for people with otherwise insoluble infertility. Recent contributions in Medical Sociology and Science and Technology Studies have examined the implications of spare embryo donation for research. Less work has been done on gamete and embryo donation as a means to overcome reproductive difficulties, and hardly any on the incidence of these practices in Latin America. Nevertheless, conception through gamete and embryo donation entails a challenging way to parenting (paradigmatically framed by the term 'loss of biological continuity'). Its promotion as a reproductive solution necessarily poses acute dilemmas for a society where "blood links" and family ties are traditionally important, and where Catholicism (although frequently in the form of a double moral standard) still shapes views on conception and reproduction.

Drawing on interviews with embryologists, psychologists and other medical staff working in Argentine clinics, as well as on an analysis of Law Projects presented to the National Congress to regulate IVF in Argentina, this paper will contribute to a discussion of how kinship arrangements are currently being reconfigured within the expert medical field in Argentina.

Bhandari, N, L.

MSMs, their sexual behavior and impact on women's reproductive health

Objectives:

A higher rate of HIV infections is transmitted through homosexual contact. Most males who have sex with males (MSMs) are youth and are an incredibly diverse group, in terms of both their economic circumstances and sexual attitudes and behavior, more economically disadvantaged than older youth, often more subject to peer. Most of them either are married or will become married, thus having an impact upon women's reproductive health.

Methodology:

Research is on the basis of peer education. Government's different strategies for national health program in terms of sexual health and HIV/AIDS has shaded a negative impact among such vulnerable people; due to socio-cultural-religious reasons, those behaviors are to a large extent invisible, often difficult to access in terms of standard sexual health promotion framework of the nations.

Results:

The most needing information, education and counseling are driven underground. Men and women are at not only greater risk of being infected, but also HIV/AIDS affects women also as caregivers in the family.

Conclusion:

An urgent need to promote behaviors, which enable to adopt a lifestyle without risk of HIV and to provide counseling services, is essential. When youth belong to an organization that helps them and provides opportunities, they better avoid risky behaviors, including those that might lead to HIV/AIDS. Not every social sector should discriminate/stigmatize them so that they can create an environment to change their behavior. Regardless, there should be ensured legal framework protections of human rights of those sexual minorities.

Bullen, J.

University of Essex

'Wags to Riches': The media and representations of footballers' wives

Since the 2006 World Cup, Footballers' Wives or 'Wags' have become a mass media phenomenon. Some such women have now become celebrities in their own right. Coverage of their lives by print media has been fuelled by coverage in other media, such as the fictional TV series Footballers' Wives (ITV1), Reality TV shows such as WAGS Boutique (ITV2) and novels like Alison Kervin's Wag's Diary. This paper looks at the changing representation of footballers' wives in contemporary British society. Analysing these various texts has highlighted the intertextual nature of this concept and how at times fact and fiction seem to become blurred. The tabloid and celebrity press seem to fuel an ongoing need for gossip and 'insider information', with these women revealing not only personal details about themselves but also about some of the biggest male sport stars in the country. These women have become inspiring figures to many young girls - many of whom see 'celebrity marriage' as a career option. The media coverage of these women is explored through notions of gender and looks at marriage as a symbolic career. This paper also considers issues of class and consumption - in particular how 'WAG' consumption is simultaneously held up as aspirational yet parasitic.

Cobb, F E.

The Graduate School University of East London

Postgraduate research student completion rates: A Literature Review and thoughts for research

This poster examines current literature on postgraduate research student completion and retention rates, and the factors affecting propensity to complete or withdraw. The review discusses the methodological approaches taken in 9 key studies with sample sizes from 449 – 19,191 students, and analyses the relative merits of each approach. Approaches discussed include multiple linear regression, multivariate, binomial and hierarchical logistic regression modelling, the Markov Chain Approach and Chi-squared testing. Significant factors affecting completion are reviewed. The poster identifies key factors affecting completion and retention rates within all the studies; age, mode of study, academic discipline, type of funding, alumni status and nationality (Home/EU/Overseas). Academic discipline is the most significant factor affecting completion rates in all studies. Some contradictory theoretical explanations of significant variables are discussed. Merits of using these methodological approaches for individual post-1992 University populations, where cohorts are much smaller, are also discussed. This is in relation to a research project currently engaged in at the University of East London (UEL), to produce a model of the factors affecting completion rates of postgraduate research students. Preliminary observations of new findings on completion and retention rates will be provided, to compare, and critically engage with the existing literature. This research will be used to produce performance indicators for the university's research programmes by year intake cohort. The research will also be used to benchmark UEL against other post-1992 higher education institutions. The outcome of this research will have policy and practice implications for PhD programmes at UEL.

Crinson, I.

Exploring the emergent sociomaterial practices of healthcare professionals participating in the NHS Extended Choice Network

This paper explores the emergent sociomaterial practices of healthcare professionals and the cultural complexities of the organisational context arising from the recent implementation of electronic patient information flow between public and private healthcare providers

participating as partners in the Extended Choice Network (ECN). The ECN is the mechanism designated by the Department of Health to realise its policy goal of widened patient choice and achieve greater value-for-money in the NHS, through a process of 'commissioning' services from a range of healthcare providers, public and independent sector. The ECN supports the 'Choose and Book' service, and is a truly integrated socio-technical policy programme which is affected by both the technological and organisational contexts in which it operates. The paper draws upon a research study which utilises a realist methodological approach to draw attention to the particular context-mechanism-outcome configurations of the ECN programme.

Elverdam, B., Harlang, C., Carstens, T.

University of Southern Denmark

Hospital architecture in the future - an innovative, phenomenological industrial PhD-

There is a growing international awareness of how hospital architecture influences the patients' experience and their response to treatment, and of how hospital architecture can support the treatment, rehabilitation and healing process of the patients (Healing Architecture).

This project is theoretically placed between the architect's professional approach to the designing of hospitals, and the patients' bodily experiences of the hospital architecture.

The aim of the project is to create a connection between the knowledge of the architects and the patients, and to examine how the patients' experience of the hospitals' architecture can be secured, integrated and utilised by the architects in the firm in their creative process of drawing and designing hospitals.

Data will be collected by the use of participant observations and interviews (single and focus group). A phenomenological approach will be used, both in the organisational cultural setting of the architects in firm, and in the individual and socio-cultural field of patients in a Danish hospital.

This paper is part of an industrial PhD-project that creates a close connection between the firm and the project findings. Because of that, the overall approach will be an ongoing, circular process that is focused on the problem and driven by the context of the project, and the findings will reflect that.

Ghodsi , A.M., Balali, E.

Decreasing trend of family's social capital in typologies of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft in Iran

This presentation attempts to study decline of social capital in Iranian families with attention to a model by Talcott Parsons on internal and external circles of kinship system .Parsons in his study of social structure of family propounds these two internal and external circles of kinship system from viewpoint of "ego" .

Findings of this presentation in Iran show decrease of social capital in transition from family of orientation to family of procreation, and from internal to external circles of kinship too. But with consideration of two kinds of family's spatial and social settlements in Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft , amount of decrease of social capital is different in transition from family of orientation to family of procreation. In Gesellschaft individual's social capital decreases in a large amount with transition from family of orientation to family of procreation. But in Gemeinschaft individual's social capital does not decrease in a large amount with transition from family of orientation to family of procreation.

Giuntoli, G., Smithson, M., Grierson, J.

Australian National University

Assessing quality of life in the HIV Futures V survey: An application of Amartya Sen's capability framework.

Despite the plethora of quality of life (QoL) measures that are available in the medical literature and in the social sciences, and the growing popularity of this concept as an outcome measure in public policy, only in a few cases is the measurement of QoL clearly grounded in a theoretical framework. In this paper, the main theoretical frameworks and philosophical approaches behind both measures of QOL in general and Health Related Quality of Life are reviewed; a particular focus is then placed on the capability approach to QoL measurement (Sen, 1985, 1999). The concept of capability corresponds to a positive freedom and refers to people's real opportunities to achieve valued objectives (e.g. roles, activities). An indirect reference to the concept of opportunity is present in any QoL index available in the literature. However, relevant questions such as what the psychological and sociological meanings of the concept of opportunity are, and how measures of opportunities correlate with people's experienced QoL have not been addressed directly and in depth in QoL studies. This paper presents and discusses the results of a secondary analysis aimed at investigating QoL through the measurement of indicators of opportunities in the HIV Futures V survey, a national survey conducted by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society. The paper presents a theoretically ground conceptualization of opportunities and concludes highlighting the pros and cons of measuring QoL through opportunities as opposed to more traditional measures.

Hammond, N.

Sheffield University

How Might Male Client Relationships be Used to Generate Positive Change Within the Commercial Sex Industry?

Changes within the commercial sex industry have been reflected in the evolving research culture which is shifting in focus from, the women who sell sex, to include those who purchase their services. In parallel a shift can be seen from an interest in violence and street prostitution (Kinnell; 2002) to the acknowledgement of the spectrum of sexual services offered (Sanders; 2008) and the development of online communities of clients and providers (Earle and Sharp; 2007.) However, the purchasing of sex continues to attract stigma and is shrouded by secrecy. Therefore, it might seem that for men this is an individualistic, invisible and private practice. Yet findings from 35 in depth interviews with male clients of female sex workers demonstrate that social relationships and networks do connect some male clients. What the data also suggests is that such relationships potentially offer benefits for the conditions within which the commercial sex industry operates.

This finding will be explored in a poster that briefly describes the current UK commercial sex industry and summarises the sociological literature concerning heterosexual men's relationships with other men in general (Messner; 1992.) The voices of the men who have taken part in this research will be presented, focusing on their views of how they understand their relationships with other clients including; where, how and to what degree these relationships exist. The data raises new questions as to whether men's relationships with other men can potentially improve conditions within the industry - or merely sustain oppressive patriarchal practices.

Lever, J.B., Miele, M., Evan, A., Higgin, M.

Farmers vs. Animal Scientists: an assessment of welfare quality

Animal welfare is increasingly important to European consumers. As well as being determined by the safety of the end product the welfare status of animals must now also be considered in evaluations of food quality. This paper is based on recent research from Welfare Quality(r), an EU funded project that aims to accommodate societal concerns and market demands, develop reliable on-farm monitoring systems, product information systems, and practical species-specific strategies to improve animal welfare. The paper presents evidence from one aspect of these developments, the welfare monitor of broiler chickens, which was evaluated through a series of interviews with UK farmers. The paper does three things. It explores how farmers define what they do; what they do to assess what they do; and what they think of the of the Welfare Quality assessment. In so doing it considers the views of farmers and animal scientists and draws some conclusions as to their knowledge claims.

Morgan, A., Weir, I.

UWIC, School of Art and Design, Western Avenue

Is 'visibility a trap?': exploring the autonomy of the observer/d in the computer game 'Gridlocked'.

Public attempts at observation have widely been regarded as a means of social control, and in recent times, there have been consistent efforts to reinforce the relationship between public surveillance and public safety. The notion that many can be controlled by few through panopticism is widely documented, observation and awareness of being watched has become a familiar theme in society. Surveillance is no longer the sole province of law enforcement or employed for the implementation of safety and, arguably, new opportunities for observation have emerged as a social phenomenon through common media such as the television, photography and gaming. Newer and more sophisticated technologies have developed, and accessibility and employment of equipment which can be used for surveillance is commonly utilised, and can now be found in the home, principally through webcams. Traditional views of control through observation and surveillance techniques have placed power and autonomy in the hands of the observers, whose visibility to the observed is limited or absent. The observed are usually in a position of weakness as opportunities for surveying the observer are limited as they are unseen: the autonomy lies with the observer. Within this paradigm, power and control remain distant to the observed. Drawing on observations made through use of a self-made computer game which depends on capturing live video of users through a webcam, we explore familiar theories of surveillance and ask whether there are unacknowledged potentialities for autonomy of the observed through entrapment, and being 'Gridlocked'.

Pomicino, L., Romito, P.

Faculty of Psychology

New Parent's well-being in the postpartum period: an intervention with the fathers.

Objective: To evaluate the feasibility and the effectiveness of a postnatal intervention with father to promote parents' well-being.

Method: 245 new parents were recruited to participate in the study after delivery (Time 1) at the Maternity Hospital in Trieste (Italy) . Couples were randomly assigned to an intervention (n=150) and a control (n=145) groups and filled-in a self-report questionnaire. Fathers in the intervention group received a booklet and offered a dedicated telephone number to find support in the postpartum period. 6 months after delivery (Time 2), all the participants were contacted by telephone and asked to answer to a second questionnaire

Main outcome measures: Parents' postpartum physical and psychological health, partner relationship, sharing of childcare and housework, work's satisfaction, parents role satisfaction.

Results: At Time 1, response rate was 86%. 119 out of 145 fathers in the intervention group were successfully contacted for the telephone intervention, indicating that this kind of intervention is feasible. At Time 2, response rate was 91%. The data analysis is still in progress.

Reid, F.

University of Stirling

Investigating Scottish Sportscares

The paper reports on research into Scottish sporting spaces and places carried out between 2005 and 2008. Utilising a new conceptual framework for the analysis of geographies of sport, case studies are presented to illustrate the importance of place in the sportscape at 3 different scales. On a global scale, the place of Scottish identity and traditions within an international sportscape is outlined. Considering two aspects of the Scottish sports landscape, differences and similarities between regional spaces are highlighted and explained. One local sportscape is examined through the eyes of those who "belong" in that particular sports place. Evidence from surveys and quantitative data are combined with interviews, observation and document analysis to enable more complete understandings of sports landscapes. Future avenues for research into sportscares are set within the conceptual framework.

Schimpfoessl, E.

The University of Manchester

Russia's New Social Upper Class: Family Identities and Social Reproduction

With the stabilisation of the social structure in Russia, upper class families increasingly strive to legitimate their affluence and social positions and to obtain social distinction. To this end, upper class families cultivate conservative values, engage in philanthropy, promote Russian art and literature, and develop their cultural life. Privileged social background has again become an asset that bestows social distinction. Individual family histories and myths - formerly viewed as legacies to be concealed - are now being actively revived, reinvented, and passed on to the next generation as resources for legitimating wealth and status. They are presented as stories of continuity rather than as stories of ruptures, dating back to the pre-Revolutionary nobility as well as to the Soviet nomenklatura. In order to effectively pass on their privileges to their offspring, Russia's social upper class families have started to convert their financial resources into cultural and social resources for their children's betterment. Upper class parents invest heavily in their children's upbringing: they provide them with expensive schooling, foreign language-speaking nannies and governesses, and exclusive extracurricular activities. Parents utilise such resources in an effort to enhance their children's personality development and establish their "superiority" over the middle classes. The poster outlines processes of identity formation among upper class families in contemporary Russia and highlights the strategies that parents pursue to pass on their social status to the younger generation. It is based on twenty narrative interviews with members of the Russian upper class.

Stanley, L., Salter, A., Dampier, H., Shepherd, D., Poustie, S.

Leeds Metropolitan University

'The perfect type of sociological material'? Letters in sociological perspective

The analysis and theorization of letters has a long sociological history, with Thomas and Znaniecki's (1918-21) *The Polish Peasant...* centrally using letters between migrants and their family circles to explore social change. *The Polish Peasant...* was highly influential across the social sciences and humanities generally as well as sociology specifically, although this engagement with epistolarity subsequently declined along with other qualitative approaches. However, with the renaissance of auto/biographical and narrative approaches, letters and correspondences have begun to receive more attention. This poster-presentation draws on an ESRC funded project which is transcribing, analysing and publishing the c7000 letters of feminist writer and social theorist Olive Schreiner (1855–1920) and will set out the ways in which letters are useful data for sociological analysis and the reasons why sociologists should be interested in epistolarity, including that letters provide a particular point of view on events, but are at the same time dialogical, they involve an exchange between correspondents, and letter-writing is a social form strongly marked by prevailing conventions. The structure and form and especially the sequential and longitudinal character of letter-writing provides an index of convention and of social, as well as inter-personal, stasis and change, and the presentation will explore this by using Schreiner's letters concerned with the changing terminology of 'race' as a case study.

Walker, S.H.

University of Cambridge

The Effects of Gendered Body Image upon Contraceptive Outcomes

Psychoanalytical and phenomenological theories suggest that bodily experiences are important influences upon agency and behaviour. This research addresses that hypothesis empirically within the field of contraceptive behaviour. Using primary questionnaire data, it looks for correlations between body concept, as measured by a novel scale, gender and contraceptive history. It highlights differences in body concept between and within the two genders. It finds statistically significant associations between body concept and the likelihood of a history of contraceptive risk taking or unexpected pregnancy. It concludes that differences in body concept may be influencing the likelihood of successful contraceptive use, and suggests that this finding should be taken into account by those producing and providing contraceptive advice to users, and to those designing and implementing sex education.

Westmarland, N., Graham, L.

Durham University

Rape Myth Resistance and Reality TV

There is a renewed interest in rape myths, with government acknowledgement that the well documented problems in the prosecution of rape cases can not be dealt with through legal reform alone. Using qualitative data downloaded from an internet message board, a television series called 'The Verdict' (about a fictional rape trial with a celebrity jury) is used as a case study to investigate the range of rape myths currently in existence and the ways in which they are challenged and resisted.

The most frequent myths appearing on the message boards were: 1) that women are 'asking for it' if they do not keep themselves safe; 2) that if women behave provocatively then they cannot expect a jury to believe she did not consent to sex; 3) that a woman will always fight back when faced with rape; 4) that a woman will always report a rape immediately and display distress; 5) and that women frequently lie about rape. The findings were both pessimistic and optimistic: while the age-old myths undoubtedly still exist, they rarely if ever went unchallenged. The paper concludes that although rape myths are still prevalent in some public attitudes, there is another group of the public who are attempting to educate others about the reality of rape.

Wilson-Kovacs, D, Weber, S., Hauskeller, C.

University of Exeter

Comparing British and German perspectives on regulation and clinical practice - the case of clinical trials using autologous stem cells for heart repair

Over the past ten years stem cell research (SCR) has become a distinct field of scientific inquiry, which is seen to carry great potential for the treatment of chronic and degenerative conditions (Webster 2007). While commentators have acknowledged the contribution of scientists to the shaping of regulatory frameworks (Jasanoff 2005, Wainwright et al. 2006) little attention has been paid to the ways in which medical practitioners make sense of emerging regulation for stem cell therapies.

This paper provides an insight into the clinical implementation of SCR regulation in a bi-national comparison, with reference to clinical trials using autologous stem cells for heart repair. Based on data from thirty-two ethnographic interviews and fieldwork in laboratories and clinics, the analysis explores the enactment of regulation at different stages and the interpretative strategies employed by the medical personnel involved in the management of these trials. We show that the implementation of regulation is not as straightforward and unproblematic as the literature on regulation suggests, and argue that we need to examine the processes through which regulation influences research options and strategies in order to assess its effects. Our analysis reveals the interactions and exchanges that take place in these processes and illuminates the ensuing dynamic between professional interests and clinical research practices. We propose a grounded perspective for the investigation of emerging regulatory and clinical practices, where regulation is examined in the context of its application and understood as a practical accomplishment.

Xenitidou, M.

An International Perspective on Innovations in Social Science Research Methods: What is in store for Social Research?

We have been constructing a 'map' of the 'hot spots' of research methods around the world. This map has two aims: first, to locate innovations in method being developed within social science disciplines; and second, to locate the sites and institutional contexts of these innovations. We have been seeking research practices that have not yet filtered through to typical research methods courses or that impact on the research process in novel ways. Our interest in innovative research practices ranges from data collection to analysis and covers disciplines such as (social) psychology, sociology, social work, socio-legal studies, political science (including public health and public policy) and international studies, (social) geography (area studies, demography, environmental and urban planning), (social) anthropology, (socio-)linguistics, education, communication studies, economic and social history, economics (management and business studies), science and technology studies, statistics, methods and computing.

In this poster, we shall present the conclusions of the project with reference to developments in social research. This includes the identification and geographical mapping of innovative methods and practices, innovators, research networks and structures, as well as a reflection on these developments. Preliminary observations indicate that (i) visual, digital and online methods, (ii) the use of existing theoretical approaches and methods in new ways and (iii) interdisciplinarity are all main features of innovative research practices.

The project has gathered evidence by reviewing previous reports, carrying out desktop research using automated methods of identifying growth points, conducting an e-mail survey with academics, practitioners, research methods experts and others (N=215) - registering data entries in the form of nominations of experts, institutions and links to explore (N=670) - and holding interviews with gatekeepers (N=36) and telephone interviews with nominated experts (N=34 *in progress*).

The research has been supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as part of the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM).

Xu, Q.

Institute of Education, University of London

Father-Daughter Relationships among adolescents in urban China

Contemporary Chinese families are experiencing tremendous changes, with the adoption of economic reform and the implementation of the one-child-per-family policy. These changes are inevitably leading to changing expectations of gender roles in families. However, family studies are a very underdeveloped area of research in China; existing Chinese family research has mostly been conducted in Hong Kong.

The study of father-child relationships has been relatively neglected in the literature generally, but is now receiving more attention. However, most of this research has been on the impact of fathers on younger children, and mostly on boys. Moreover, almost all of these studies have been conducted in the west. There are reasons for expecting the Chinese experience to be very different. The long history of Confucianism and Taoism in Chinese society gives the fathers' role in Chinese families its own specific meanings.

These factors together demonstrate the importance of a study of father-daughter relationships in modern China. The aim of my study is to research girls' and fathers' perceptions of father-daughter relationships among two cohorts of girls aged 13/14 and aged 16/17. It will seek to understand, from fathers' and daughters' perspectives, fathers' influences on girls' lives in the domains of education, career aspirations and girls' views of themselves, in addition, their relationships at two different periods of transition in adolescent girls' lives - namely their early and mid-teens.