

BSA Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations Study Group
2022-23 Annual Report

Study Group Convenors:

Ali Meghji, Saskia Papadakis, Meghan Tinsley

We have 330 members on the Jiscmail list for the group.

Gurminder K Bhambra stepped down as convenor after the meeting in September 2022. Antonia Dawes and Aerin Lai will be joining the study group as convenors in July 2023.

In 2022-23 we organised the following events:

On 7 September 2022, we held our first in-person event since the Covid pandemic at the Birmingham Midland Institute. Approximately twenty-five people attended the event. Below is the event description:

After two years of online activities, the Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations Study Group invites participants to join an in-person half-day workshop in Birmingham. This will be an informal opportunity to discuss our understandings of postcolonial and decolonial transformations of sociology and to meet colleagues interested in exploring similar questions. The event will be largely informal with much of the time given over to discussion and debate, rather than longer papers.

The workshop starts with an intention to explore the ways in which the contemporary world has been shaped by the historical processes of colonialism, enslavement, and indenture. We aim to better understand these processes as a central aspect of the sociological project. We further seek to examine their political, economic, social, and epistemological consequences in the present, alongside possibilities for intervention and liberation.

The afternoon will be broadly structured around two main topics of conversation:

First, a discussion of why it's important to acknowledge the colonial past in the shaping of the present. This will be facilitated by Gurminder K Bhambra around the theme of how colonial taxes have contributed to the establishment and development of the national welfare state in Britain.

Second, a discussion of colonial memory and postcolonial representations will be facilitated by Meghan Tinsley. This session will centre on imperial nostalgia, the cultural artefacts of the British Empire, and the possibility of a decolonial memory.

The event will end with a discussion of the ways in which we use the terms postcolonial, decolonial, anticolonial, facilitated by Saskia Papadakis and Ali Meghji.

We will also have time for discussion of the future activities of the study group and its organisation.

The workshop will take place on Wednesday, 7 September from 2-5pm, and will be held in central Birmingham.

On 13 March 2023, we hosted an in-person lecture by Prof Julian Go (University of Chicago) entitled 'The Imperial Origins of Policing: Race, Militarisation, and the Boomerang Effect in Britain and the US'. Approximately seventy people attended this event, which was held at the University of Manchester and co-sponsored by the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE). The event description is below:

If it is by now commonplace to bemoan the fact of militarized policing, we know less about its birth, development and social logics. This talk offers a critical historical sociology of policing in the US & Britain, where the so-called "civil" policing model originated. It theorizes the *racialized imperialism* of modern policing, exploring how militarization from the birth of policing itself has been inextricably tethered to the global colour line, colonialism and empire.

Speaker Biography: Julian Go is Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago. His research explores the social logics, forms and impact of empires and colonialism; postcolonial/decolonial thought and related questions of social theory, epistemology, and knowledge; and global historical sociology.

Much of Go's work has focused on the US empire, resulting in articles and books such as *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives* (co-edited with Anne Foster, Duke University Press, 2003), *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2008) and *Patterns of Empire: the British and American Empires, 1688 to Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). His other work is on postcolonial thought and social theory, culminating in his book *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory*, Oxford, 2016; and global historical sociology and transnational field theory: *Fielding Transnationalism* (co-edited with Monika Krause, Wiley & Sons, 2016) and *Global Historical Sociology*, co-edited with George Lawson (Cambridge, 2016). His most recent book, *Policing Empires: Militarization and Race in Britain and America, 1829-present* (Oxford, forthcoming) explores imperialism's impact upon police militarization in the US and Britain. He is also working on a project that recovers anticolonial thought as a critical form of social theory.

His scholarship has won prizes from the American Sociological Association, the Eastern Sociological Society, the American Political Science Association, and the International Studies Association, among other institutions. He is the winner of Lewis A. Coser Award for Theoretical Agenda Setting in Sociology given by the American Sociological Association. In 2021-2022, Julian served as the President of the Social Science History Association.

On 7 June 2023, we hosted an in-person seminar with Prof Sari Hanafi (The American University of Beirut) entitled 'Towards a Dialogical Sociology'. Approximately twelve people attended this event, which was held at the University of Cambridge.

Speaker Bio: Sari Hanafi is currently a Professor of Sociology, Director of the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies and Chair of the Islamic Studies program at the American University of Beirut. He is the President of the International Sociological Association. He was also the editor of *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology* (Arabic) (2017-2022). Recently he created the "Portal for Social impact of scientific research in/on the Arab World" (Athar). He was the Vice President of the board of the Arab Council of Social Science (2015-2016). He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales-Paris (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) (1994). He has also served as a visiting professor/fellow at the University of Poitiers and Migrintern and the *Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* (France), University of Bologna and Ravenna (Italy), Chr. Michelsen Institute (Bergen-Norway), Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Hanafi was also a former senior researcher at the Cairo-based French research center, Centre d'études et de documentation économique juridique et sociale (1994-2000). He is the author of numerous journal articles and book chapters on the sociology of religion; connection of moral philosophy to the social sciences; the sociology of (forced) migration applied to the Palestinian refugees; politics of scientific research. Among his recent books are: *Addressing the rupture between the religious and social sciences: Is the morning coming soon?* (Kuwait: Nohood Center; forthcoming in OUP in English) *Knowledge Production in the Arab World: The Impossible Promise*. (with R. Arvanitis) (in Arabic, Beirut: CAUS and in English, Routledge - 2016); *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of the Middle East* (co-edited with A. Salvatore and K. Obuse); *From Relief and Works to Human Development: UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees after 60 Years*. (Edited with L Takkenberg and L Hilal) (Routledge- 2014). *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in The Occupied Palestinian Territories* (Edited with A. Ophir & M. Givoni, 2009) (English and Arabic) (NY:Zone Book; Beirut:CAUS), *The Emergence of A Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs* (with L. Taber, 2005) (Arabic and English); *Pouvoir et associations dans le monde arabe* (Edited with S. Bennéfissa, 2002) (Paris:CNRS). He is the winner of 2014 Abdelhamid Shouman Award and 2015 Kuwait Award for social science. In 2019, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor Honoris Causa) form the National University of San Marcos (the first and the leading university in Lima- Peru – established in 1551). In 2022 he became lifetime corresponding fellow of the British Academy

In addition to these events, the Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations Study Group played an active role at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the British Sociological Association. In conjunction with the Race and Ethnicity and the Diaspora, Migration, and Transnationalism study groups, the PDT study group organised a stream plenary featuring Rahul Rao and Sita Balani. The study group, in conjunction with the R&E and DMT study groups, also organised eighteen panels (alongside various roundtables and poster presentations) at the annual meeting and co-hosted a reception for delegates.