**BSA**

# SOCIAL —— TRANSFORMATIONS

**Plenary Speakers:**
**Vron Ware**
**Aaron Winter**
**Climate Change Panel**

**BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

# BSA Annual Conference 2025

# Abstract Book
# Wednesday 23 April 2025

## Table of Contents

**Abstracts are listed by Paper Session
then alphabetically by Stream name**

# WELCOME

Welcome to the British Sociological Association Annual Conference 2025 at University of Manchester. The theme of the 2025 conference is 'Social Transformations'. It is a pleasure to announce that Vron Ware, Aaron Winter, and our panellists, Benjamin Bowman, Rebecca Elliott, Charles Ogunbode, Lisa Vanhala, Catherine Walker, will address the conference in three thought-provoking plenaries this year.

In addition to these plenaries, delegates have the opportunity to attend presentations on a wide range of topics. The conference is organised in streams designed to represent the major areas of research with which sociologists are engaged. These streams are open to any topic on which colleagues are currently working, enabling delegates to meet with colleagues in their areas of interest and explore a variety of topics.

The programme also includes a variety of special events, stream plenaries, publishing events and events for Postgraduate Students and Early Career Researchers.

This conference offers a rich and challenging programme and it is hoped that every delegate will find sessions of interest.

A conference of this magnitude and breadth depends on the efforts of many committed individuals. Significant thanks are due to all those who have helped with the organisation of the conference, particularly the coordinators of the conference streams:

| Conference Stream | Stream Coordinators |
|---|---|
| Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space | Rashida Bibi |
| Culture, Media, Sport & Food | Katie Appleford<br>Alexandra Kviat |
| Environment & Society | Samyia Ambreen<br>Pancho Lewis<br>Audrey Verma |
| Families & Relationships | Julia Carter<br>Leah Gilman<br>Shuang Qiu |
| Frontiers | Paul Campbell<br>Mark Doidge<br>Jen Remnant |
| Lifecourse | James Fletcher<br>Sarah Milton<br>Harriet Rowley<br>Yan Zhu |
| Medicine, Health & Illness | Katie Coveney<br>Sarah Hoare |
| Methodological Innovations | Terence Heng<br>Wendy Olsen<br>Vlad Rizov |

| Race, Ethnicity & Migration | Patricia Irizar<br>Farjana Islam<br>Aerin Lai |
|---|---|
| Rights, Violence & Crime | Louise Livesey |
| Science, Technology & Digital Studies | Alina Geampana<br>Sheena MacRae |
| Social Divisions / Social Identities | Finn Mackay<br>Gráinne McMahon |
| Sociology of Education | Tamsin Bowers-Brown<br>Rachel Stenhouse<br>Juliette Wilson-Thomas |
| Theory | Pam Alldred<br>Fay Dennis<br>Nick Fox<br>Debbie Watson |
| Work, Employment & Economic Life | Caroline Barrett<br>Viviane Galata<br>Karen Tatham |

# SPONSORS

We would like to express our appreciation for the support of our sponsors and exhibitors. The Exhibition Area includes exhibitions from many organisations that offer services and information for conference delegates. Please take some time between sessions to visit these exhibitors.

## Main Conference Sponsor

**Sage Publications**

Sage is a global academic publisher of books, journals, and library resources with a growing range of technologies to enable discovery, access, and engagement.

The BSA would like to thank SAGE Publishing for funding a portion of the free places for this year's conference. Sage is the sponsor for the Climate Change Panel.

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Located in the heart of one of the most vibrant cities in the UK, Manchester University Press (MUP) has been publishing exceptional research from leading names and emerging scholars since 1904. Our thriving Social Sciences list consistently engages with the most pressing issues of our times, boasting key series on globalisation, racism and resistance, and creative ethnography, and producing award-winning academic and trade titles on everything from migration and medicine to environmentalism and urban development.

**Mass Observation Archive**

Mass Observation (MO) is an archive of everyday life, thought and feeling. A not-for-profit charity (CIO). It contains papers by the original social research organisation MO (1937 – 1960s) and current MO Project (1981 – ongoing). It generates qualitative narrative material based on the original methods of early MO. A national panel of self-selecting volunteers respond to open ended questionnaires on social, political, and personal subjects. It is publicly available for research, teaching, and learning. It represents perhaps the largest collection of qualitative secondary data in the UK

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MAXQDA is a world-leading software package for qualitative and mixed methods research. Analyze all kinds of data – from texts to images and audio/video files, websites, survey responses, and much more. Streamline your data analysis with automatic transcription, powerful analysis tools, ease of use, and smart AI integration. Learn more about how MAXQDA can support your research journey by visiting us at our booth.

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**Princeton University Press**

Princeton's sociology list publishes bold and original scholarship that betters our understanding of compelling social matters. It encompasses qualitative and quantitative research in such areas as cultural sociology, economic sociology, urban sociology, and computational sociology. Featuring work that is empirically rich, theoretically significant, and methodologically innovative, the list represents some of the most important contributions to contemporary sociological thought.

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**UCL Press**

Established as the UK's first fully open access university press in 2015, UCL Press has fast become one of the leading open access scholarly publishers in the UK. We publish a wide range of open access scholarly monographs and edited collections that cover sociology, anthropology and related social sciences that are available to read and download free of charge.

# IMPORTANT DELEGATE INFORMATION

## Arrival and Registration

We're expecting a high volume of delegates arriving on Day 1, so the registration area is likely to be very busy. To help everything run smoothly, please collect your badge promptly on arrival and then step away from the desk to allow others to register. Feel free to grab some refreshments, explore the venue or take a moment to familiarise yourself with the programme.

Your badge must be worn at all times for security and meal access. It also indicates whether you've booked for the Conference Dinner.

**Registration** will take place in The Drum, University Place:

Wednesday 23 April from 08:00

Thursday 24 April from 08:30

Friday 25 April from 08:30

## Venue Details

**Venue address:** University Place, 176 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL

Directions:
- [Interactive map](#)
- [Travel by train](#)
- [Travel by bus, tram or coach](#)
- [Travel by car](#)
- [Travel by air](#)
- [Travel by bicycle](#)

**Virtual Tour of University Place:** [https://www.conference.manchester.ac.uk/virtual-tours/universityplace/](https://www.conference.manchester.ac.uk/virtual-tours/universityplace/)

**Sessions** will take place in various rooms at University Place.

## Chairing

We are extremely grateful to all those who have agreed to chair one or more sessions. If you find yourself in a session without a chair we would be grateful if someone in the audience could volunteer to take this role. Chairing guidelines will be available in each room and a copy is also available [here](#).

## Meals and Refreshments

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Tea and coffee** | Throughout the conference | The Drum |
| **Lunch** | 12:30-13:30 each day | The Marketplace Restaurant |

Vegetarian and vegan options will be available as part of the standard catering provision. If you have notified us of any other specific dietary requirements, please make these known to the catering staff when collecting your meals and refreshments.

Your badge must be worn to access refreshments.

No breakfast or evening meals are included in your registration. Manchester offers a wide range of local dining options nearby.

# Conference Dinner

The Conference Dinner will be held at Manchester Museum on Thursday 24 April at 19:00. Dress code is smart casual. This event must be pre-booked. If you are registered, your badge will display a knife and fork symbol. For any questions, please visit the registration desk.

# Publicity and Photography

Share your experience using #britsoc25 on social media!

Please note that professional photographers will be capturing images during the conference. These may be used by the BSA for marketing and promotional purposes, including in print and digital platforms.

By attending, you consent to being photographed. If you prefer not to be included, please speak to a member of the BSA Events team or an official photographer, or contact us after the event at events@britsoc.org.uk

# PAPER SESSION 1
## 09:00-10:30

## BSA Special Activity 1 - Room 1.219
## Early Career Forum Special Event

**Annual Conference Quiz and Best Sentence in Sociology Competition**

*Sarah Burton, Garrett Grainger, Kathryn McEwan*

*(Robert Gordon University, Wrexham University, Newcastle University)*

This event will be a fun, engaging in-person sociology quiz, with an inclusive pre-conference 'Best Sentence in Sociology' competition.  Join our session to meet your Early Career colleagues.  Light refreshments will be provided.

## BSA Special Activity 2 - Room 2.220
## Postgraduate Forum Special Event

**How to Survive and Thrive at a Conference**

*James Frederick Green, Karen Tatham, Justice Aina, Vera Spangler and Luna Fu*

*(University of Worcester, University of Leeds, University of Durham, University of Surrey)*

Attending a conference can be both exciting and overwhelming, but with the right approach, you can make the most of the experience. PGR Forum Presents: How to Survive and Thrive at a Conference is the perfect starting point for postgraduate researchers looking to build confidence and maximise their time at the event. This informal session will cover key strategies for networking, tips on engaging in discussions and asking questions, and practical ways to ensure you leave with valuable connections and insights. Join us for a relaxed and supportive session—refreshments will be provided!

## Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 2.218

**'Have you heard about Look Up Portsmouth?' Shifting Local Narratives around Public Space in Portsmouth, UK**

*Mollie Wilson*

*(University of Surrey)*

High-quality public space provision can positively benefit many aspects of urban life (Dogan, 2023), making it critical in transitions to better and more sustainable urban futures. Despite various proposed metrics and indices for evaluating public space quality (Mehta, 2014; Ferwati et al, 2021), there remains a lack of consensus on what makes a public space 'good'. There is a subsequent need for bottom-up considerations of public space which embed quality in the broader context within which the space exists and capture the geography, cultural heritage, local challenges, and fundamental roles performed by a space within real, daily and routine lives. This paper seeks to explore public space quality through the lens of local users in Portsmouth, UK, and addresses two questions: 'how do the local community perceive their public spaces?' and 'what factors are impacting the local community's perceptions of Portsmouth's public spaces?'. These questions are approached through qualitative analysis of data from 5 focus groups and 19 semi-structured interviews with members of the general urban public .

Thematic analysis of the transcripts revealed that the local community's perceptions of, and feelings towards, their public spaces were largely dominated by a sense of loss, nostalgia and resignation. However, participants commended a recent art festival 'Look Up Portsmouth' for enriching the city's cultural identity, local sense of pride, and community spirit. The wall murals created as part of the festival were subsequently seen as a mechanism for regaining the positive feelings of the past.

## Lifestyles and New Urban Economies (Nues): Are We at the Forefront of a New Polanyian Countermovement?

*Laura Azzolina, Laura Sartori, Francesca Forno*

*(University of Bologna)*

Focusing on the fields of 1. Food and 2. Recycling, we explore the phenomenon of New Urban Economies (NUEs), identified as innovative, place-based economic activities that take shape in a specific urban relational ecosystem in light of the ongoing digital and sustainable transformations. Urban space offers a variety of physical and digital infrastructures in which citizens, organizations and institutions interact, triggering potential economic innovations that respond to new consumption practices and lifestyles. NUEs embody the outcome of these interactions.

Our central hypothesis holds that the NUE phenomenon corresponds to the reaction of the less fragile and vulnerable social groups to the most destructive consequences of global competition - the new market fundamentalism and the commodification of urban space. As in a new Polanyian double movement, we find that the "critical urban middle classes" are the protagonists of innovative forms of urban economy.

The overall research relies on several data sources: a survey of residents in 8 Italian metropolitan areas; a mapping of innovative economic initiatives in three cities - Milan, Bologna and Palermo; in-depth interviews to NUE's founders and to NUE's consumers. As of this research stage, we offer 1. a mapping of the three cities under study that reveals whether the urban and social transformations couple with novel forms of economic activities and 2. some preliminary results on both founders and users of NUEs.

## Serious, casual, convivial, contested: the role of place atmospheres in the popularisation of board gaming in the UK

*Alexandra Kviat*

*University of Bristol*

The last decade has witnessed an unprecedented and somewhat unexpected surge in the popularity of board games, both in the UK and globally. Following a steady increase in the mid- and late 2010s, global board game sales soared during the COVID-19 pandemic and are predicted to rise further with no end in sight. This quantitative growth has been accompanied by a qualitative shift from niche to mainstream, driven by wider societal trends such as the rise of analogue nostalgia and the popularisation of geek culture. The key contributors to this ongoing transformation are social media, popular TV shows, new retail channels and, last but not least, new spaces of play. The practice of board gaming, traditionally associated with the domestic sphere, is currently expanding into the public realm of cafes, pubs, community centres and other spaces of consumption, leisure and socialising outside the home.

The paper presents findings from a multi-site qualitative study of the UK's social board gaming scene, which explored the scope, reasons and implications of the ongoing board game revival and its contribution to the social life of UK cities and communities. Drawing on 50 in-depth interviews with event organisers, attendees and business owners and participant observations at 24 venues spanned across six regions of England, I explore how place atmospheres and their social, material and temporal components shape gaming audiences, contribute to the production of convivial spaces and blur and challenge the boundary between serious and casual leisure.

# Culture, Media, Sport & Food - Room 4.209

**'New' Men and Pedagogies of Self in the Indian Manosphere**

*Marcus Maloney, Saba Hussain*

*(Coventry University)*

The 'manosphere' is a "loosely connected group of anti-feminist Internet communities" (Van Valkenburgh, 2021, p. 84) spanning across a range of online fora and spaces. A substantial body of sociological and feminist media scholarship provides a thorough account of manosphere logics, while pointing to a broader trend of masculine anxieties over "men's position in the social hierarchy as a result of feminism" (Ging, 2019, p. 653). Recently, attention has shifted towards understanding the manosphere's influence on boys' and men's attitudes and practices in wider social settings, including schools (e.g. Wescott et al., 2024). Responding to the current limited focus on Western and English-speaking contexts, this paper aims to understand the political project that Bannerji (2006) describes as "making India Hindu and male". Popularised by noted journalist Ravish Kumar, the phrase 'Whatsapp University' emphasises the all-pervasive educational role of social media in contemporary India. Using critical discourse analysis, here we examine content produced by three popular YouTubers from the 'Indian manosphere' (Bagchi, 2024). We argue that these anti-feminist 'manfluencers' use a range of "pedagogies of self" (Hickey and Austin 2007) to educate a 'new' Indian man (Philips 2022) wedded simultaneously to the logics of neoliberal modernity, Hindu supremacy (Hindutwa), and authoritarianism.

**From Queer Fans Activism to Social Transformation: A Participatory Action Research on Chinese Yuri (Girls' Love) Fandom Community**

*Ka Yi (Maggie) Yeung*

*(University of Leeds)*

Unlike its counterpart genre, Boys' Love, which has gained considerable attention from scholars in cultural and Asian studies, Yuri (Girls' Love) culture has been severely understudied from its beginnings in the 2000s. With rising control from the state on homosexual content on China's social media, the effectiveness of online communication platforms as a significant heterotopia for Chinese queer fandom is shrinking, thus endangering the survival of the invisible queer community of the Yuri fandom. Extreme tension due to censorship by the authorities has led to LGBTQ+ organizations being cracked down, online queer communities, including Yuri forums, being fragmentized, and hashtags and keywords related to Girls' Love culture being systematically erased in social media. The queer sexualities shared by most female members of the Yuri fandom mean they have to stay vigilant towards state power and censorship through adoption of similar yet diversified strategies compared to Boys' Love fandom community. This research will employ an ethnographic and participatory action approach to co-develop with members of Yuri fandom in Hong Kong and Shanghai possible strategies for use in their everyday life to survive the omnipresent state control in China.

This study also aims to combine theory with practice to bring possible social transformation through the knowledge production process, while concurrently presenting the non-western queer narratives and modernity that are evident in Chinese Girls' Love media and fandom community.

**Living with Media: Transformation of Queer Lifecourse and Media Technologies**

*Yener Bayramoglu*

*(University of York)*

Over the past three decades, mediatization has emerged as a significant theory explaining how social transformations have become increasingly intertwined with media technologies. However, like other grand narratives of historical change, this theory risks overlooking the realities of marginalized lives, whose experiences often remain undocumented and absent from mainstream archives. In this paper, I embark on the complex task of intertwining mediatization and the life course through a queer critical lens, aiming to expose the blind spots in these research paradigms. I shift focus toward media-driven transformations within the queer life course, exploring how media technologies shape the lives of those

affected by intersectional inequalities and marginalization. Drawing on 60 non-media centric interviews conducted with LGBTIQ+ individuals in Germany and the UK, I argue that media images, narratives, and information serve as pivotal turning points in the queer life course, especially when social institutions fail to provide the necessary resources for queer people to flourish. While the evolution of media technologies has opened new possibilities for agency, particularly in terms of interpersonal connections and access to queer content, it has also introduced generational disparities. These findings invite a rethinking of media-related social transformation from a queer, life-course perspective, highlighting the vital role media technologies play in shaping the social environments in which marginalized lifeworlds unfold.

### Heteronormativity in Korean Boys Love Comics: A Study of Chinese Women's Gender Discourse

*Shuzhe Wang*

*(University of Oxford)*

This study aims to investigate the gender discourse of young Chinese women through their engagement in Korean Boys Love comics (KBLCs), a popular genre that depicts idealized gay relationships, primarily by women and for women. Despite the rich scholarly debate on the feminist resistance and patriarchal backlash presented by Boys Love (BL) works, the genre of KBLCs and consumers' interpretation of gender representations in BL have remained largely unexplored. Based on digital ethnography and 20 one-on-one interviews with Chinese KBLC readers, this study reveals that readers often perceive KBLCs as embodying heteronormativity through fantasized body images, sexualized personalities, and reinforced traditional heterosexual roles of the comic characters. Furthermore, though readers generally criticize those gendered representations, their rationales vary. The majority of readers replicate binary gender ideas in their interpretation. They critique the feminine boy characters as deviant masculine symbols in need of correction. I argue that this perception is a projection of women readers' internalized misogyny. Conversely, a minority of readers directly criticize heteronormativity for limiting the imagination of gender roles in BL. They advocate for KBLCs to break out of the dualistic gender framework. This study sheds light on the complex gender narrative of contemporary Chinese young women, both misogynistic and feminist. Also, it adds to the missing perspective of BL readers' reception in existing research. It argues that to comprehensively understand the influences of BL works on shaping feminist discourse, readers' voices should be placed in an equally important position as creators' motivations and scholars' content-based analysis.

# Emerging Themes & Special Events - Room 3.213

### 'But why shouldn't the Baindla woman ask for her land': How Dalit Women 'Undo Caste' with Everyday Acts of Anger

*Priyanka K*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Erpula Saayamma, the low-caste soothsayer in Gogu Shyamala's narrative world, responds to caste with rage, when the dora of their village refuses to return her ancestral land and yet demands her services to appease the goddess who has cursed him. Saayamma had lived with that anger, "on that anger, beneath that anger, ignoring that anger, feeding upon that anger," until her stomach burst open and her fists hit the table at the dora's house in front of the village elders. In present-day Uttar Pradesh, similar tableaus of 'undoing caste' are unfolding - Dalit women strike back at elite gate-keepers denying them access to opportunity, they respond to intra- and inter-caste violence from families with violence, they assert, defy and militate in the ways they dress, talk and wear their hair. In this paper, I argue that while contemporary sociological literature highlights the continued centrality of caste in our social lives, how we 'do' caste remains understudied. I further argue that how women 'undo' caste is also greatly understudied. I draw on my feminist ethnography among Chamar, Valmiki and Kori women who have initiated forms of social mobility to understand how Dalit women are using anger to challenge caste in

their everyday lives, despite being multiply oppressed. By situating my findings within Dalit and Black feminist frameworks, I emphasise the need to recognize anger as a legitimate form of resistance against hierarchical structures. This approach also reclaims Dalit women's experiences, recognising them as 'agentic beings' rather than victims of their circumstances.

### 'You should keep away from those with negative energy!': Emotional Rituals in One Online Baby Mama (Bao Ma) Entrepreneurship Community in China

*Lang Dong*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

This study analyses the emotional rituals that occur within an online community of entrepreneurial Baby Mamas in China. The participants, self-identified as 'Baby Mama' (Bao Ma), engaged in online interactions on short video platforms, and furthered gathered on instant messaging apps. The community leader asserted that this team aimed to guild the Baby Mamas to turn their lives around (fan shen), and established stratified groups via different entry standards, each led by a respective group leader. Through digital ethnography and interviews, this study traces the digital footprints of the participants, observing their interactions on various platforms, and the divergent resistance of some ex-members afterwards. This study aims to examine the emotional rituals that occur in the online groups and their role in fostering solidarity, and to provide empirical refinement to Collins' conceptualization of emotional rituals. It argues that group membership and solidarity are not solely sustained by emotional energy, but are linked to access to collective goods. For followers who claimed to be attracted by the leader's charisma, the emotional energy and collective goods obtained from rituals were consistent. For the deviant members, however, the hope of gaining access to collective goods functioned to suppress their deviant emotions. When these emotions prevailed over the desire for collective goods, they decided to leave the team. The emotions experienced by existing members were justified by an enterprising self-image, whereas those deviants were driven by indignation at the exploitation of junior members, as a consequence of a sympathetic resonance.

### A Methodology of the Heartbroken: On Cultivating Utopian Desires

*Vera Chapiro*

*(University of Bristol)*

This methodological paper explores researcher grief as an affective pathway into utopian thinking. Research inflected with a biopolitical lens is highly attuned to the racialised, sexual and labour registers of "death-proximity" (Berlant 2022). Given this familiarity with death in its multiple social and environmental forms, how can sociological research incorporate a politic and practices of grieving? And how can an ethics of grief, informed by the offerings of queer theorists building on psychoanalytic models of mourning, form the basis for formulating utopian visions?

To go beyond a simple critique of the present, and begin to formulate a desire for the otherwise, at the heart of utopian thinking, it is necessary to recognise that so many of us come to our desks heartbroken by the world we strive to chronicle. This engagement with the psychic life of the researcher builds on Denise Ferreira da Silva's (2007) critique of the transparency thesis, or the presumption in modern/colonial knowledge systems in which the position of the thinker is the 'transparent I', who, in turn, studies the 'affectable' racialised other.

Researching from a position of affectability, starting with the ugly, unruly feelings of haunting, grief, madness and heartbreak, I argue, is the first step towards elaborating a desire for something other than our seemingly intractable present. The intention of this methodology of grief is to expand the scopes of our disciplines, to incorporate in our methods principles of relationality and repair, as well as to cultivate a desire and vision for living otherwise.

# Environment & Society - Room 3.209

**"We want more green, but not like this": How Perceptions of Top-Down Decision-Making Influenced Resistance to Greening in a Progressive Neighborhood**

*Josephine Bertoux*

*(Sciences Po)*

Urban green spaces are often hailed as essential for a just transition for their benefits to air quality, cooling, and social integration. However, such projects often face resistance, which remains understudied compared to other greening controversies such as wind farms. This article examines justifications behind opposition to a greening project which would expand a park in the east of the city. Despite the neighborhood's progressive politics and its status as one of the city's most mineralized areas, local organizations almost unilaterally protested the project, successfully halting construction.

Theories of environmental gentrification explain resistance based on the existing community's fears of displacement, loss of neighborhood character, and the reinforcement of racial and class inequalities. However, this framework has limited applicability here, as the area in question has already undergone gentrification and its residents benefit from strong tenant protections.

Through qualitative analysis, the author finds that, despite being legally represented by an environmental NGO, the opposition focused less on conservation and more on concerns around local identity and inadequate consultation. Additionally, the study highlights the capacity of privileged activists to form a credible counter-power to the City Council, leveraging their cultural capital and mastery of legal recourse. Further text analysis situates this movement within the broader context of anti-greening mobilizations in Paris.

In times where just urban climate policies are critical to mitigating the impacts of unprecedented climate change, this study offers insights into citizen resistance to top-down greening initiatives and explores pathways to foster public acceptance of net zero transformations.

**Farmers as Biochar Innovators and Their Role in Addressing Climate Change: A Frame Analysis**

*Catherine Price, Carol Morris*

*(University of Nottingham)*

Whilst agriculture is one of the hardest sectors to decarbonise (along with shipping and aviation), it is uniquely placed in potentially being a carbon sink and contributing to achieving net zero. Although carbon emissions need to be reduced rapidly, there is also a need to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. A growing suite of greenhouse gas removal (GGR) approaches are being developed, and one potential approach is biochar. Biochar is a carbon-rich substance produced by a thermochemical process called pyrolysis. It sequesters carbon from biomass source materials for potentially hundreds or thousands of years. Agricultural land is likely to be one of the main sites of application for biochar.

In this paper, we ask the questions: How is biochar production and application framed by farmers? What do these framings mean for the role farmers can play in the transformations required for addressing climate change? We draw from original data collected in 2023 and 2024 from 29 semi-structured interviews with UK based farmers involved with biochar field trials and those with an interest in biochar.

Using an 'issue frames' analysis approach, the following frames are identified – Innovation, Economics, Security, Governance and Accountability, Risk, Justice, Substitution, and Tradition. The innovation frame features strongly, illustrating how farmers are producing their own biochar and applying it to agricultural land. This suggests farmers may be able to contribute to the transformations required to address the climate crisis.

# Families & Relationships 1 - Room 4.213

**"I hope my academic pathway has healed their wounds": On Intergenerational Negotiations of Upward Social Mobility Processes in Migrant Families in Germany**

*Minna K. Ruokonen-Engler*

*(Institute for Social Research Frankfurt)*

The upward social mobility process induces a change of social status and societal position. Accordingly, these changes are supposed to be followed by the transformation of the habitus, comprising of alienation from the life world of respective family. This argument, however, seems to neglect the power of linked lives and the role of the family and migration history, intergenerational family dynamics as well as the role of material and immaterial care relations in generating social upward mobility projects. In my paper, I discuss how social upward mobility processes through education are intergenerationally induced and narratively negotiated in the context of labour migrant families in Germany. I am especially interested in interrogating the affective and gendered underpinnings of these negotiations. I draw on empirical material from my ongoing research project that explores from a biographical narrative, multigenerational perspective how social upward mobility experiences are biographically processed and intergenerationally negotiated between parents and their children in labor migrant families living under societal constraints.

**The Shame-Pride Axis among Carers for Grandparents with Dementia in South Asian Communities: A Qualitative Study in the Sociology of Emotions**

*Barialy Akbary*

*(University of Portsmouth)*

The South Asian family as a microcosm reproduces the emotions of shame and pride to maintain interpersonal relationships and cultural norms. This study shows how the shame-pride axis underpins critical principles of social reinforcement and reciprocity in dementia care, highlighting the invisible child labour, gender imbalance, and filial piety and decorum in caregiving practices, by documenting the reflexivity of grandchildren of people with dementia from South Asian communities. Using creative methods, the study focuses on the carer's experiences, by analysing the narrative contours of selfhood within their intergenerational and peer group relations. Unfortunately, these cultural norms of emotions may also serve the interest of the neoliberal conversion narratives to exploit vulnerable populations from South Asian communities by urging them to use their social capital of advantageous networks and relationships in caring responsibilities. The power of this moral discourse also relieves the under-resourced market in social care.

**Childbearing and Childlessness in the Narratives of Upwardly Mobile Women in Hungary: Can Difficulties with Childbearing be Defined as a Cost of Social Mobility?**

*Fanni Des, Julianna Boros, Judit Durst, Zsanna Nyírő*

*(Hungarian Academy of Science)*

This paper explores how education-driven upward social mobility may affect family planning and childbearing among First-n-Family (FiF) graduate women. These women are more likely to remain childless after the age of 35 than their non-FiF peers (Adamecz et al. 2024). We argue that the difficulties related to starting a family, the postponement of childbearing and childlessness can be linked to the costs of social mobility (Friedman 2014, Durst et al. 2014, Durst et al. 2016). Specifically, our research evidence points to two factors: challenges in finding a partner, and the greater labour market and academic effort required to achieve the same outcomes as their multi-generational graduate peers (Dés 2020, Durst et al. 2014, 2016).

Drawing on 71 narrative, semi-structured interviews with Hungarian upwardly mobile women, this study examines how education-driven social mobility affects their family planning and how it is connected to childbearing or childlessness. We will explore the meanings that these women attach to their childbearing in the context of their mobility. How do their emotions associated with social ascension

influence dilemmas and decisions related to childbearing? Can conscious or unconscious childlessness be associated with the price of mobility among our interviewees? While international academic literature addresses the link between upward social mobility and declining fertility (Dubuc 2017, Billingsley 2017, Billingsley 2018, Billingsley-Matysiak 2018, Wang et al. 2023), the relationship between the cost of social mobility and childbearing remains underexplored. This paper seeks to fill this gap by offering a nuanced analysis of upward mobility's impact on reproductive patterns.

# Families & Relationships 2 - Room 4.214

**Singlehood in Manchester: Challenging the 'Single City'**

*Alicia Denby*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

Drawing on creative life-story interviews with 28 single people living in Greater Manchester, this research challenges claims that Manchester is a 'single city'. Despite little empirical data to support claims, it has been widely reported that the city is the site for singlehood, on the basis that urban space is seen to facilitate sociability, individuality and heterogeneity. Noticing a discrepancy in how participants experience singlehood in the everyday, versus how urban singlehood is portrayed in the media, the research draws attention to the complexities and challenges in single people's experiences in the city. The research finds that while city-living as a single person fosters comfort and belonging through identification with fellow singles, it simultaneously induces uncertainty and displacement due to precarious living arrangements and the persistence of the couple norm in various spaces (Roseneil et al., 2020). However, as assumptions about urban singles are typically based on one-dimensional portrayals like those in Sex and the City (1998), the complex realities of urban singlehood are overlooked, leaving single people unnoticed and unsupported. Therefore, for Manchester to be truly considered a 'single city', this research deems it essential that the experiences of single people are better understood, and adequately supported.

**Hitting the Ground Running: The Materialities, and Embodied, Emotional and Affective Experiences of Intergenerational Running Mobilities at Junior Parkrun**

*Samantha Wilkinson, Simon Cook, Ronnie (Age 4)*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

This presentation examines material-mobility relations (Cook, 2023) in the underexplored context of junior parkrun. Junior parkrun is a weekly 2km community event for children aged 4-14. Children, and an accompanying adult(s), can run, walk, wheel, marshal or spectate at these organised events. Our research explores children (aged 4-14) and adult perspectives on why they engage in junior parkrun; emotional, embodied and affective experiences of running together; and how place is experienced through intergenerational running mobilities. Material geographies are critical to this, something explored in the presentation through the methodological use of drawing-elicitation interviews; diaries; intergenerational interviews; and a collaborative autoethnography between the first author and her four year old son, who is a named co-author of this presentation. This presentation demonstrates the centrality of objects, or what may be termed 'material accoutrements' (Cook, 2023), in both facilitating and constraining participation in junior parkrun, as well as shaping the experiences of mobility, exercise, space and intergenerational relations in childhood. Such affective material objects include: shoes; clothing; and prams. Through doing so, this presentation brings to the fore the significance of materiality and children's material bodies to their relationships with place.

**Family Relations across Distances: Negotiation, Cooperation, and Resistance among Chinese Liushou Families**

*Kaidong Guo*

*(University College London)*

Building on eight months of ethnographic research in China, this study explores how Chinese liushou (left-behind) children and their grandparents maintain and negotiate relationships with migrant parents through ICTs and how they cope with the conflicts and challenges of distant parenting. While ICTs foster intimacy across distances, they can also exacerbate conflicts, leaving children frustrated by communication gaps and grandparents struggling with digital inequalities. The study emphasizes that liushou members are not passive but actively engage in strategizing relationships and communication. It reveals how children and grandparents navigate tensions, form intergenerational alliances, and adapt to shifting family dynamics. As a result, relationships in these families are dynamically reshaped, challenged, and negotiated through mediated communications and direct interactions among migrant parents, liushou children, and grandparents. This study emphasizes the interconnectedness within the care triangle, adding layers of complexity to the family dynamic. Consequently, this study calls for a shift in the study of Chinese liushou families from a focus on the migrant parent-child dichotomy to the intricate relationships within the care triangle.

**Ambivalences, Tensions and Flexibilities: Intergenerational Cooperation on Childcare in Rural-to-Urban Migrant Families in Southern China**

*Yingzi Shen*

*(University of Sheffield)*

China has witnessed unprecedented rural-to-urban migration alongside its rapid modernisation and urbanisation in the past four decades. Its hukou (household registration) system divides rural and urban areas socially and economically by tying one's hukou to social welfares and public services. The hukou system results in significant difficulties of childcare in rural-to-urban migrant families (RUMFs) in the city. Very limited literature explores the specific childcare arrangements and processes in RUMFs. This research tends to fill this gap by examining the intergenerational cooperation on childcare in the context of rural-to-urban migration from two generations' perspectives.

Based on semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observation, this study unpacks the complicated processes of intergenerational childcare practices in RUMWs, which is characterised by tensions, ambivalences, and flexibilities. Varied divisions of childcare labour between migrant grandparents and parents are identified; grandparents usually lack authority and power in childcare arrangements, and they take charge of children's biophysical needs alongside household chores, whereas parents (especially mothers) play a dominant role in children's education and extra-curricular activities.

This research also finds flexibility in choosing maternal or paternal grandparents for childcare based on the happiness and benefits of children, which suggests adaptations of the patriarchal tradition in rural families. Additionally, different childcare styles and opinions often cause tensions and ambivalences between grandparents and parents. Nevertheless, both generations utilise strategies to cope with these challenges for better childcare. Furthermore, there are tensions between childcare and grandparents' eldercare, which shows that grandparents' childcare support is difficult to be reciprocated.

# Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 4.211

**A Cartography of Data-Led Healthcare: The Problematization of Health, and of Care, in Contemporary Society**

*Max Perry*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) has been, over the past decade-or-so, in a state of perpetual crisis. Though it is conceded that funding shortfalls, effects of the covid-19 pandemic, as well as political

and organisational blunders have all contributed to an NHS that is now at its lowest ebb (see: The 'Darzi Report' [2024]), the remedies offered in policy circles are characterised by radical transformation above diligent rebuilding. Such radical transformations are motivated by an apparent shift in the shape of society itself (most prominently an 'aging population', and the rising number of long-term and mental health conditions diagnosed). Policy makers thus argue that these societal changes require a transformed healthcare service that leverages A.I. and intensified data sourcing (Hoeyer, 2023) to reorientate care around a new 'preventative' and 'precision' clinical medicine.

In this paper, I examine this problematization through an empirical account of policy as it relates to 'data-led healthcare' across NHS England and NHS Scotland. By following expressions such as: 'secure data environments', 'data as a service', 'cloud first strategies', and 'interoperability' I attempt to bring into the light a politics of clinical knowledge. A politics that concerns where power over coordination of clinical truths is located, and through what oracles uncertainty is transformed into actionable knowledge. In the spirit of Rose's investigation of the psy sciences (Rose, 1996), my intention is to consider how the ethics of clinical subjectivity, the truths of bioscience, and the exercise of power are being transformed in our contemporary world.

### Finding Our Way Home: A Sociological Exploration of Access, Wellbeing, and Indigenous Knowledge

*Camille Morissette*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

This research takes a sociological approach to exploring Nature-Based Solutions and Interventions (NBS/I) as promising avenues for wellbeing, particularly within the context of Global Mental Health (GMH). Despite the growing interest in NBS/I, their foundational connections to Indigenous Ways of Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (IWOK/TEK) are often marginalized. Using an indigeneity framework, this scoping review examines the social and structural barriers that limit equitable access to NBS/I.

The study is guided by four interconnected objectives: 1) mapping the representation of various NBS/I types within the literature, 2) identifying access barriers rooted in structural inequities, 3) analyzing the narratives prevalent in the discourse surrounding NBS/I, and 4) advancing an indignity framework grounded in co-created knowledge systems. The research critically interrogates systemic injustices rooted in colonial and imperial legacies that influence accessibility for marginalized communities, with particular emphasis on Indigenous populations. These systemic issues include social determinants of health (SDH), inequities, and power dynamics concerning land and resource dominance.

By addressing these barriers, this research underscores the transformative potential of integrating NBS/I informed by Indigenous and sustainable practices. Through this approach, it advocates for a reimagined framework for NBS/I that promotes belonging, human rights, and a holistic conception of health. This work ultimately calls for a more inclusive and socially just application of NBS/I in the realm of wellbeing, proposing actionable steps towards achieving this vision.

### Moral and Truth Regimes in Maternity Reform: The Case of Midwifery Continuity of Carer Implementation in the English NHS

*Aimee Middlemiss, Susan Channon, Julia Sanders, Heather Strange, Rebecca Milton, Sara Kenyon, Tina Prendeville, Susan Barry, Aled Jones*

*(University of Plymouth)*

The NHS is facing a crisis in maternity care and safety, and poor maternity outcomes are both widespread and especially prevalent for those from deprived, Black, and ethnic minority backgrounds. One reform solution proposed in the 2016 National Maternity Review was the implementation of Midwifery Continuity of Carer (MCoC), a model of maternity care in which the same midwife or small group of midwives provides antenatal, intrapartum, and postnatal care. This would replace a system in which many midwives specialise in different stages of care. It was argued that rolling out MCoC throughout the NHS in England would reduce poor maternity care experiences and improve clinical outcomes. However, the implementation of this model of care has faced significant difficulties. As part of a wider investigation into MCoC implementation, we carried out qualitative interviews with senior

regional and national stakeholders involved with MCoC implementation in England. In this paper, we present an analysis of sociocultural values in the accounts of these stakeholders. We find these expert accounts of MCoC implementation are underpinned by a Foucauldian moral regime which privileges certain norms and practices whilst deterring others. These accounts produce an idealised midwife-subject who is passionate and evangelical about MCoC as a form of care and seeks to persuade others to their cause, including through the use of evidence in a regime of truth. We conclude with some thoughts about the possible consequences of this moral regime regarding the implementation of MCoC as a maternity policy in the English NHS.

### Physicians Associates in UK Medicine: Professional Dominance or Loss of Control?

*Louise Ashley*

*(Queen Mary University of London)*

Physicians Associates (PA) represent a new role in the medical workforce, first introduced in 2004, now numbering over 3000 in the UK. However, PAs receive shorter training than doctors and are not medically qualified. Increasingly, this is said to risk patient safety, especially as concerns have also been raised within the profession that PAs not only assist, but increasingly substitute, doctors. While 24 universities continue to provide training for PAs, their recruitment in some areas of the NHS has been suspended, pending review. The purpose of this paper is to theorise the rise of PAs and resistance to this role from within the profession against the wider context of changing status and the decline of medical professional dominance. The Weberian approach within the sociology of the professions has long been concerned with strategies of social closure and occupational control, which relate to the degree of professional dominance and autonomy. Previous studies have shown that medicine's 'professional project' has been gendered, as gendered segregation of health care professions is an important mechanism of closure and control. We consider here whether resistance to the PA role from within the profession can also be theorised as a means of occupational closure, as medical power comes under threat and as PAs represent a perceived attack on medical professionalism. Our analysis is based on recent discourse and media debates, which offer vital and novel insights into the institutional conflicts at stake, and which have been characterised as increasingly toxic.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Lecture Theatre A

### Decolonising Criminology Education: Initiating a Processual Pedagogy for Transformative Change

*Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal, Omar El Masri*

*(Brunel University of London)*

This project emerged from the recognition that criminology often perpetuates harmful colonial ideas and misconceptions about race and crime (Hall, 1997). Criminology pedagogy, therefore, carries a particular responsibility to address inequality and oppression in its examination of social harm, crime, social control, and the pursuit of justice. The project aimed to initiate meaningful decolonisation of a core undergraduate criminology theory module. Over two years, the project actively engaged students and staff in co-creating a reflexive teaching and learning environment grounded in anti-discriminatory principles (Kendi, 2020). To do this, the project incorporated reflexive practices and dialogues to encourage students and staff to engage in critical discourse and to include them in rethinking and restructuring the module. Evaluation of the processual approach was conducted using data generated from periodic surveys, assessment analyses, and focus groups. The outcomes included embedding a decolonising culture in the module that allowed for creative revisions and moved away from the traditional and rigid approaches to delivering Eurocentric criminological theory. In addition, the process enhanced student agency and increased support for the iterative curriculum development framework that embraces intersectionality. Despite several challenges, the project demonstrated the potential for replicating decolonial processes across criminology and sociology modules. The project illustrates the

vital need for a transformative approach to criminology education, moving beyond superficial changes to create a culture for decolonial transformation.

## Evaluating the (De)Colonised State of Contemporary Criminology

*Anamika Twyman-Ghoshal, Rowan Sweeney, Omar El Masri*

*(Brunel University of London)*

The legacy of colonisation has profoundly impacted academia by prioritising certain systems of knowledge production over others. This is evidenced in the scholars and cannons that have shaped criminology; structuring reality and reproducing power dynamics that favour Western, particularly United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (US), epistemologies over others. This project critically examines the (de)colonised state of criminology by empirically evaluating the most dominant theorists in the discipline. Discourses within criminology on key thinkers tend to lionise 'great white men' and lack critical reflection of the identities of those deemed most influential. The research focused on the UK and the US, the two countries that have had a marked influence on the discipline (Faraldo-Cabana and Lamela 2019).The evaluation examined citation frequency in British and US-American publications, including journals and textbooks, and surveyed US-American criminologists on who they identified as key scholars in the field. The gender and racial identity of those identified as most influential were then recorded to see if there is any divergence from the dominance of whiteness and maleness in criminology (Faegin, 2020). The findings reveal the ongoing dominance of white male thinkers in the field over time, providing a clear need for a more systematic and intentional approach to decolonising criminology. It is evident that a profound transformation of the entire discipline is necessary to achieve cognitive justice (Visvanathan, 1997) and ensure that diverse epistemologies are recognised and valued.

## Transnational Identity Construction under Neoliberal Multiculturalism: The Case of Hui Muslims in China

*Man Xu*

*(University of Toronto)*

This research addresses the methodological nationalism in studies of ethnic minorities in China, reflected by the focus on how processes within the nation-state shapes the construction of minoritized ethnic identity. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with Hui Muslims who are engaged in global trade businesses between China and the Middle East, this article develops a transnational approach to examine ethnic minority identity construction. I argue that China's ambition to establish itself as a global power has led to a new official discourse of neoliberal multiculturalism, which redefines ethnic resources as transnational capital that can be leveraged to facilitate the nation's global rise. This research examines how Hui Muslims draw on this cultural repertoire of neoliberal multiculturalism to reinvent symbolic hierarchies of class, ethnicity and nation, and to negotiate the repressive power of the authoritarian state. This finding has significant implication for understanding how China's global rise produces new resources and constraints for ethnic minorities to negotiate social inequalities, and for theorizing changing ethnic relations under the global development of neoliberal multiculturalism more broadly.

## Beneath Skin-Deep? Why Colourblind Policies Perpetuate Racial Stratification for Justice-Involved Women

*Mariam Swehli, Gillian Stokes, Carol Rivas*

*(University College London)*

This presentation critiques colourblind, gender neutral policies in the British criminal justice system. In the UK, the female prison population has increased by over 39% in the last 25 years, with over 50% of women entering prison suffering from domestic violence and 65% suffering from depression. Policies created for men cannot be implemented on the female prison population as the two populations are fundamentally different. When we account for race, women from minoritised racial, ethnic and religious populations suffer discrimination in prison by both prisoners and staff. Black women are more likely to be sole carer for their children, women from minority populations have less access to mental health support, and Asian and Muslim women are the most likely to suffer stigma from their own communities,

resulting in less support when leaving prison, as these needs are not currently accounted for in policy, planning and services.

Through a colonial and socio-political context, we present the racial disparities faced by minoritised racial and ethnic women throughout the system, including biased media and policing, the overrepresentation in prisons, sentencing disparities and support provided post-incarceration. It argues that policies must take an Intersectional approach, with consideration of the impact of wider societal beliefs on women from racial and ethnic minorities. To move away from racial hierarchies, the government must acknowledge the historical and continued injustice that colourblind policies foster in the criminal justice system for women from racial and ethnic minoritised populations.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 1.218

**'You need a network': How Highly Qualified, Resettled Afghans Rebuild Social Networks to Convert Cultural Capital and Reclaim Professional Identities**

*Louise Ryan, Maria Lopez, Alessia Dalceggio*

*(London Metropolitan University)*

The 'Refugee Gap' (Bloch, 2004; Cheung and Phillimore, 2014) is well known, as even the most highly qualified face deskilling (Bygnes, 2021). Nonetheless, while acknowledging structural barriers, it is important to note refugees' active strategies to rebuild careers (Erel 2008; Erel and Ryan, 2019; Bernhard, 2021). In this regard, it is especially important to pay attention to class diversity among refugees. Class is under-researched in relation to refugees (Vickers, 2016; De Jong, 2019),). Those who are highly qualified, who speak the local vernacular and have professional expertise from their home country may experience initial de-skilling but may have resources to gradually convert cultural capital and improve their situation over time. Social networks appear to be particularly relevant (Perino and Eve, 2017; Speed et al, 2021; Ryan, 2023).

Our paper draws upon longitudinal data generated with resettled Afghans in London (2022-2024). We aim to understand how these highly skilled professionals seek to rebuild their careers and the role of social networks in these processes. This raises specific questions around reciprocity, mutuality and network closure, as refugees encounter obstacles in forging new connections, particularly with influential people in society. This brings to light the role of relationality in presentation of self (D'Angelo and Ryan, 2021) as refugees seeks to reclaim professional status in a new context.

Drawing upon social network analysis and our rich body of data, we seek to advance understanding of the role of social capital in navigating upward mobility, transferring cultural capital and reclaiming professional identity over time.

**Visualising Care under Careless Borders: Photovoice Accounts from Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Communities**

*Megan Crossley*

*(Lancaster University)*

This paper examines ethics of care as experienced and enacted by refugee and asylum-seeking communities in North-West England, using photovoice as a sociable method for dialogic and visual knowledge production. The study demonstrates how care, agency, and control are negotiated amidst practices of everyday bordering, politics of exhaustion, and the moral distancing perpetuated by the state. It thus illustrates how displaced migrants use photovoice to articulate the impact of borders and bordering practices on their lives and communities.

Care is used as an analytical framework to understand how these communities navigate, resist, and adapt to shifting geopolitical conditions and a heightened politics of migration governance. Moving beyond conventional understandings of the role played by community organisations and local solidarity networks, this research repositions people seeking asylum and refugees as active care agents involved in practices of mutual social support. It argues that these assemblages of care constitute essential sites for reimagining migration and the perceived carelessness of the state and its bordering practices.

Through the use of the sociable methods of photovoice, this study foregrounds the significance of collective and dialogic engagements through creative, visual practices in producing situated knowledge about care. The paper sets out ethics of care as both a methodological and conceptual framework, highlighting how new social narratives and modes of being emerge through sociability in the research process. It invites further reflection on the potential of participatory visual methodologies to not only document but also catalyse social change through relational and affective practices of care.

## Homelessness amongst Ukrainian Refugees in England: Mental Health Implications and Coping Responses

*Maureen Seguin, Olha Fokaf, Katya Iemelianchuk, Tina Deinekhovska, Matt Egan*

*(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)*

Background: The 'Homes for Ukraine' (H4U) and Ukrainian Family visa schemes facilitated Ukrainian nationals to enter England from March 2022. Despite accommodation provision implied by the H4U scheme name, a lack of access to long-term housing has been a significant stressor for many who arrived. This qualitative paper examines the pathways into and through homelessness experienced by forcibly displaced Ukrainian women in England, impact on well-being, and coping responses.

Methods: From a larger sample, we selected interviews with forcibly displaced Ukrainian women who were homeless at or before the interview as well as interviews with 11 stakeholders. We conducted deductive thematic analysis informed by Strong Structuration concepts to interpret the interplay between the English housing environment, individual housing pathways, perceived mental health status, and coping.

Results: Fifteen displaced Ukrainian women were currently or previously homeless (inhabiting temporary, supported, and emergency accommodation). Homelessness was attributed to a lack of council housing and a hostile private rental sector. Uncertainty over length of tenure in current accommodation and lack of certainty over what would come next were viewed as contributing to depression and anxiety symptoms. Seeking support and problem-solving were common coping approaches. Many grappled with a dilemma between returning to Ukraine (where accommodation was viewed as accessible) versus remaining homeless in England.

Conclusions: Forcibly displaced Ukrainian women are unprotected from a toxic housing environment which has driven some to homelessness. This housing outcome has had extremely negative mental health implications, compounding trauma due to the Russian full-scale invasion.

## Navigating Colonial Legacies: Diversity Consultants' Perspectives on Addressing Institutional Racism in UK Public Services

*Jity Bajaj*

*(University of Essex)*

The field of diversity management in institutions is characterised by fundamental tensions between incremental approaches and more radical decolonial interventions (Noon, 2018; Zanoni et al., 2010). This paper explores this by examining the role of diversity consultants in addressing institutional racism in UK public services. This paper presents preliminary findings from research for a PhD, examining how diversity consultants and senior leadership collaboratively address institutional racism in these services. Diversity consultants play a crucial role in organisational change efforts, yet their impact and experiences in addressing institutional racism remain understudied (Kirton & Greene, 2019; Noon, 2018). This research addresses this gap by focusing on diversity consultants as key agents in the struggle against systemic racism, exploring their unique perspectives navigating complex institutional dynamics. Addressing the overall question of how can diversity consultants and senior leadership work together to challenge and transform enduring colonial legacies and systemic power structures perpetuating institutional racism? A survey of UK diversity consultants, using Likert-scales and open-ended questions explores : Perceptions of institutional racism prevalence across public service sectors, Strategies to influence organisational culture, Barriers to implementing sustainable change and experiences of collaboration with senior leadership.

Data will be collected in February 2025. Analysis will involve descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and thematic coding of open-ended responses. Presentation of findings will be based on the above areas. This paper contributes empirically by mapping diversity consultants' experiences and lays the groundwork for more targeted interventions and informs ongoing debates about incremental versus radical approaches to addressing institutional racism.

# Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 2.219

**Broken Bodies and, Dreadful Lives: Gendering Abuse in Intimate Times**

*Riya Pramanik*

*(University of Delhi)*

In Indian tradition, there is an age-old practice of perpetrating violence against women which has been justified through traditional texts. Victimizing women's bodies in the Indian family structure needs to be understood through the intersectionality of gender, patriarchy, and masculinity. Domestic violence is one of the most recurrent crimes against women intricately associated with the perpetuation of patriarchy in India.In post-independent India, the constitution guaranteed certain safeguards to protect women. However, the everyday violence in private and public spaces is increasing.

Violence in intimate spaces is also a concern for scholars as it is seldom taken cognisance by the family and various state organs. Women who are victims of domestic abuse face varying levels of inequity based on their socioeconomic backgrounds. Since women facing severe economic hardship are more likely than women with a strong economic base to remain in abusive relationships, financial instability hinders them from leaving. Poverty and low socioeconomic status play a decisive role in the lives of those victims. Poor women face increased exposure to violence for several reasons. Literature shreds of evidence that those with low socioeconomic status are more characterized by dreadful health than other counterparts. As per Household Bargaining Model, the lower a woman's income, the worse her bargaining power in the household and the more severe level of domestic abuse.

Methodologically, this presentation will rely on sources like interviews of domestic violence victims done through the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis method.

**Economic Violence against Arab-Palestinian Women in Israel: Coping Mechanisms in Social, Cultural and Structural Contexts**

*Raghda Alnabilsy, Tal Meler*

*(Ruppin Academic Center)*

This presentation aims to draw attention to the types of economic violence, particularly coercive debt, experienced by Arab-Palestinian women in Israel - a situation where economic resources are limited and controlled by the abusive spouse. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in 2022 with Arab-Palestinian women in Israel, as well as analysis of several legal cases (n=21), we provide a glimpse at manifestations of economic violence, focusing on the participants' experiences and definitions, as well as the coping mechanisms they employ. Such abuse needs to be examined against the background of multiple positions of marginality, vulnerability and civic exclusion these women experience, shaped by the patriarchal regimes of both social institutions and their spouses/ex-spouses. The study enhanced our understanding of the transparency of economic violence, particularly coercive debt, highlighting the diverse coping strategies used by the women affected by it, with consequences persisting even after they break the silence or leave their abusive spouses. The study's main practical implication is the need to expand State support for Arab-Palestinian women in 'coerced debt' at any stage required of them (housing-arrangement, employment, cancellation of debts, emotional-support). In particular, there is a need to identify which structural barriers strengthen their vulnerability and which services are meaningful and helpful to these women from minority communities.

**Insights regarding Children-to-Mother Violence from the Perspective of Arab-Palestinian Mothers**

*Raghda Alnabilsy, Niveen Hassan-Abbas, Tal Meler*

*(Zefat Academic College)*

This study seeks to deepen the understanding of child-to-mother violence, a largely overlooked issue in the literature. This phenomenon represents a significant societal and health concern, as it violates women's fundamental rights to dignity and physical and mental well-being. Despite its importance, research on this topic is scarce globally, and no studies have been conducted in Israel until now. In 2024, we conducted 35 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Arab-Palestinian women in Israel. These interviews explored the mechanisms, dynamics and impacts of child-to-mother violence from the women's subjective perspectives. We uncovered various forms of violence - physical, psychological and economic, experienced by these mothers and their effects on multiple aspects of their lives. The study focuses on the ways mothers articulate their experiences of their children's violent behavior, particularly economic violence. The study also reveals a connection between child-to-mother violence and the fact that the children had witnessed intimate partner violence. Our findings were analyzed in the context of the women's marginalization, vulnerability and civic exclusion as members of a minority group, which further complicates seeking assistance from authorities, leading many to handle these issues independently. Additionally, factors such as patriarchal beliefs, lack of social support, minority status, language barriers, and limited access to resources contribute to the persistence of this violence. This study will serve as a foundation for developing targeted prevention and treatment strategies to reduce the incidence of such violence and support the affected women.

**Broken Bonds: The Role of Family Trust Deficits in Youth Involvement in Street Crimes**

*Aman Ullah*

*(University of Swabi)*

Breakdown of the family, neglect, abuse, and parental conflict are some of the leading factors for anti-social behavior among youth. The term unsupportive families in the present study refers to parent/guardian behaviors that make the youth feel unattached to family members, including a range of unattachment behaviors such as low affection, lack of warmth, trust, and intimacy. However, lack of trust in personal relationships, particularly within families is another unforeseen factor, which may lead youth to participate in criminal behavior. The present study hypothesizes the association between a lack of family trust upsurge in youth participation in street crimes. The major portion of the data for this paper was drawn from the Ph.D. dissertation of the author. Moreover, the inquiry mode of the study was quantitative data collected from 300 youth offenders (15 and 29 years old) currently placed in seven prisons of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan for different types of street crimes. Chi-square statistics were used to ascertain the association between study variables. The study explored that trust by family guardians is a crucial factor in familial relationships. It has been inferences from this empirical work and prior scholarly work that family support nurtures a bond of trust among family members, which leads to internalized normative behavior among youth. The findings of this research work could contribute to the formation of policies that not only prioritize family counseling but also focusing trust-building programs, along with early intervention initiatives aimed at at-risk youth.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities - Room 3.210 Special Event

**Author Meets Critics: *Born to Rule* by Aaron Reeves and Sam Friedman**

*Sol Gamsu, Aaron Reeves, Sam Friedman, Louise Ashley, François Schoenberger, Emma Taylor*

*(Durham University, London School of Economics, London School of Economics, Queen Mary University of London, University of Oxford, King's College, London)*

This session will be an 'author meets critics' panel for Aaron Reeves and Sam Friedman's book, *Born to Rule: The Making and Remaking of the British Elite* (2024 Harvard University Press). There will be a

round of quickfire responses to the book from Louise Ashley, François Schoenberger and Emma Taylor with replies from Aaron and Sam, followed by questions from the floor.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 3.211

### Doing Reflexivity: A Sustained Reflexive Practice for Feminist Sociological and Cultural Studies Research

*Alanah Mortlock*

*(King's College London)*

My paper contributes to critical feminist interventions in sociological methodologies by introducing an original research practice for sustained reflexivity. The ethical imperative for researcher reflexivity is one of academic feminism's most enduring and widely adopted contributions in critical social sciences research. However, recent work in sociological methods has suggested implementation of this ethic has commonly become a performative exercise of virtue signalling, reduced to a self-descriptive statement in the methods section and not consistently employed as a methodological tool. In response, my intervention outlines a sustained reflexive practice in which the researcher shares and interrogates their own affective responses to their analytical objects. Substantively, this practice involves seeking and theorising the political, cultural, and social attachments of these affects in the data and the macro-context, thus leveraging the researcher's responses as sites of knowledge production contextualised by their positionality. This practice develops alongside Louise Folkes' intervention of "sharing personal stories… to alleviate power differences" in the interviewer-participant research relationship; I reinterpret this method for cultural studies textual research, in which I argue researcher positionality most significantly affects how we engage with the discourse and represent our findings to the reader.

In the paper, I will first contextualise the development of this methodological intervention by outlining the problem of performative reflexivity in sociological research. I will then explain the process of implementing this reflexive practice in research, and finally discuss how this practice can add value to a feminist methodological debate as to how we better implement our ethical commitments.

### Community Studies, Whiteness and the Politics of Method

*Sacha Hilhorst*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

Many sociological concepts were forged through studies of industrial communities. Mid-century studies of those who lived near and worked in car factories, aluminium works or pits yielded insights into community, class and culture. While these studies were evidently a product of the industrial era, recent years have seen a return of the (post-)industrial community study, as researchers seek to understand shifting identities and political subjectivities in now-deindustrialised locales. Yet the methodological legacy of the community study is a troubling one. Taking the tools of anthropology, social scientists turned the ethnographic gaze onto 'ordinary' inhabitants of the British Isles, eliding the colonial origins of their methods and the imperial entanglements of everyday life. Drawing on Gurminder Bhambra's critique of 'methodological whiteness', this paper offers a critical rereading of the community studies tradition, focusing on landmark studies such as Tradition and Change and Coal Is Our Life. Foundational texts in the tradition are persistently marked by racialised and constitutive contrasts between (1) the 'ordinary' citizen and the delinquent and (2) 'advanced' societies at home and 'primitive' ones in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Although present-day community researchers would shirk from such terminology, analytical bifurcations of 'ordinary'/'delinquent', white/non-white and here/there continue to mark research on post-industrial communities in the UK, rehearsing an idiom of whiteness and respectability. Such methodological shortcomings limit our ability to understand the forces remaking class, community and politics. The paper goes on to discuss alternative approaches, drawing on ethnographic work in two post-industrial towns.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 3 - Room 3.212

### Negotiating (Transforming) Heteromasculinity: Straight Men Who Dance with Men (MDM) in UK Swing

*Matthew Hall, Sarah Wingrove*

*(University of Surrey)*

Since the revival of Lindy Hop and West Coast Swing in the 1980s, the popularity of Swing dances in the UK has grown to communities in their tens of thousands – and meanwhile has steadily evolved to reflect newer generations of dancers' attitudes towards gender and heterosexual relationship dynamics. Outside of the 'DanceSport' communities of Ballroom and Latin, the social dance floors of many improvised 'lead/follow' Swing dances provide a unique and valuable site for exploring significant cultural transformations in contemporary, and somewhat queerer, masculinities.

As such, this paper explores recent changes in how straight male Swing dancers conform to, negotiate, and resist gendered norms and expectations of heteromasculinity within traditionally heteronormative partner dance settings. Drawing on interviews and video-elicitation with 40 heterosexual-identifying men who dance with men (MDM) in UK swing dance scenes (Lindy Hop, West Coast Swing and Modern Jive), the paper provides a theoretical foundation for exploring localised hierarchies of masculinity that are influenced by both wider social change and the specific heteronormative and intergenerational dynamics of social dance settings.

### Gender Uptake: Theorizing the Semiotics of (Un)Doing Gender

*Yuchen Yang*

*(University of Birmingham)*

Originated from second-wave feminism, the non-sexist parenting movement has made significant inroads into popular parenting advice books. But while many parents now welcome gender-atypical tendencies in kids, a perplexing puzzle hunted many feminist parents: Despite their attempt to expand their kids' choices, somehow their sons still like trucks and nerf guns, and their daughters still like Barbies and princess. In this presentation, I use these moments of perplexity amid progressive social change as a window into the meaning-making processes through which people maintain/transform their existing knowledge about gender difference as a product of socialization. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with 72 self-identified feminist parents, I examine the ideological work these parents undertake to make sense of their kids' gender-stereotypical interests in gendered or ungendered ways. In doing so, I offer an audience-centered and ethnomethodologically-informed theory of "gender uptake" to complicate the widespread dramaturgical reading of "doing gender" as a theory of "performance." Consisted of four ideological moves that cannot be predetermined by the performer's impression management, gender uptakes are interpretive acts that take up the performer's conduct and sex category as relevant signs and conjecture them into a gendered alignment. As I will show, the accomplishment of gender remains underdetermined until the audience (in this case parents) makes such an uptake in an account that renders the performer's (in this case children's) expression account-able and intelligible in gendered ways.

### From Social Devastation to Social Transformation: Gendered Resistance on the Margins

*Anton Roberts*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

Homelessness and inequality represent one of the most pressing global challenges, fuelled by generations of austerity and welfare conditionality. This doctoral research explored the role hyper-masculinity played in experiences of rough sleeping. This form of homelessness represents one of the biggest challenges at the point of service, users present with a vast array of complex needs e.g. barriers to engagement, adverse childhood experiences etc. Most narratives surrounding homelessness centre

on structural drivers or draw on more individualistic models of homelessness, that arguably reduces the capacity of individuals to make rational choices. The central research question of this paper challenges assumptions that rough-sleeping communities are devoid of social resources, using the lens of social capital. The paper explores the lives of 15 individuals utilising in-depth interviews, social network analysis, and ethnography. The central findings outline the multiple ways in which individuals navigate relationships and negotiate gendered performances in one of the most inhospitable/victimising environments imaginable. Through their experiences of street sleeping, the results demonstrate the systematic stripping away of their supportive networks and the development of a range of social 'risk management' strategies. I will contend that far from lacking in agency or resources, such individuals reflectively engage with their presentations as a means of creating a highly 'gendered' social capital. The implications of this work argue for a gendered model of service provision at the local level as a tool for social change. More broadly in society, it draws attention to the dangers of hyper-masculinity for undermining meaningful relationships.

**Performing a Moral Self: On (Gendered) Justifications for Infidelity in Intimate Relationships**

*Simone Schneider*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Infidelity poses a moral dilemma. Many people believe that it is wrong to 'cheat' in an intimate relationship. And yet, some do engage in such behaviour. Against this background, this presentation explores how people reconcile contradictions between their ideas and their actions. I examine this topic based on semi-structured interviews with adults aged 30-50 years and based in London who have personal experiences of boundary transgressions. This includes people themselves or their partner transgressing boundaries or being the 'other' person in a case of a transgression. More specifically, I explore how interview participants justify and perform a moral self vis-à-vis their own transgressing of relationship boundaries. In mapping different justification strategies, I am particularly interested in how gender shapes such processes of justification. To theorise my analysis, I draw on cultural (Swidler, 1986, 2003) and French pragmatic sociology (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006) as an overarching framework for how to make sense of and think about justifications. Building on social theory, I explore why certain justifications 'work' in their respective context and what we can learn from these insights about intimacy, gender, and the self in contemporary times.

# Sociology of Education 1- Room 4.204

**Post-Brexit Infrastructures of International Student Mobility**

*Rachel Brooks*

*(University of Oxford)*

The scholarship on international student mobility has, over recent years, been influenced by what Collins (2013) has called the 'infrastructural turn', highlighting a variety of structures that have facilitated the movement of students across educational borders for purposes of education. These have included educational agents, education fairs, and social networks, as well as universities themselves (Kleibert, 2022; Wang 2022). In this talk, we show how, in the UK at least, a new type of infrastructure has emerged, closely linked to the changes wrought by Brexit and the UK's exit from the European Union's Erasmus+ mobility programme. These 'third party providers' are characterised by their focus on the provision of mobility opportunities of very short duration and, for the majority of organisations, their roots in the 'gap year' volunteering sector.

We demonstrate the impact such providers are having in reframing understandings of international student mobility – in terms of norms about duration, geography and content. In turn, these changes raise a number of ethical issues that the higher education sector may need to grapple with, not least the extent to which this new infrastructure provides an effective means of opening up access to more disadvantaged groups, and whether short periods of volunteering are an effective means of furthering the educational objectives of the Turing Scheme. To date, the latter point has not been a focus of debate in the UK higher education sector, perhaps because of the opacity rendered by labelling such provision as a 'summer school' or 'summer exchange'.

### "I think it's a necessity nowadays": Free Food Provision and Universities' (Temporal and Contingent) Practises of Care

*Ellen Mchugh, Emma Wainwright*

*(Brunel University of London)*

In recent years, the number of people reported to be living in 'food insecure' households in the UK has risen from 4.7 million in 2021/22 to 7.2 million in 2022/23 (Francis-Devine, 2023). In response to this rising food poverty and insecurity, there has been a significant growth in food banks, including in sites of formal education. However, while there is now rich research on the role of schools and nurseries in alleviating food poverty (Baker, 2023; Bradbury and Vince, 2024), universities have been largely overlooked in this appraisal. Higher education students are facing considerable financial struggles (NUS, 2024), with food insecurity among young people across England increasing (Ipsos, 2022). This paper extends the extant literature with an examination of free food provision at universities across England. Drawing on 31 survey responses and eight semi-structured interviews with university staff involved in the administering various forms of free food, this paper critically examines the infrastructures and policies supporting free food provision within universities. Framed by theorisations and practises of institutional care (Baker and Burke, 2023) and the contemporary context of austerity and increased cost-of-living (Strong, 2022; Harari et al., 2024), we explore the repositioning of universities in relation to student welfare and food poverty and the wider constructions of HE providers' roles and responsibilities towards their student populations. Given the ongoing challenges facing the HE sector, the paper highlights the precarity of current funding streams that suggest free food provision as a temporal and contingent practice of care.

### Listening to Student Voices: Exploring Employability Experiences in the Law School of a Post 1992 HEI

*Helen Chalk*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

In recent years, the capability of HE to develop 'work-ready graduates' has become a government priority and 'employability' a significant focus of HE. This presentation explores students' experience of and engagement with the 'employability agenda' in a Law School in a post 1992 HEI.

The academic pressure of the student experience now sits alongside students' employability 'expectations' and 'needs'. Students have expectations of employability arising from institutional claims about graduate outcomes, and student loan statistics demonstrate the need to achieve employment at a level which is economically sustainable for repayment of loans and a decent standard of living.

At the same time, the continued growth of HE means that institutions are attracting an increasingly diverse cohort and must therefore ensure there is equality of opportunity and experience within and beyond the curriculum, including in relation to employability.

This research is grounded in the premise that listening to student voices is necessary to understand their perspective, to challenge conventional thinking around whether institutional employability initiatives are accessible to all, and to understand the repercussions of not engaging. It questions whether the top-down institutional led approach to teaching and learning employability hears those student voices and is an educational practice which encourages the self-transformation necessary to successfully transition from HE to graduate employment. Using Bourdieu's theoretical tools, it interrogates assumptions that an equivalent employability offering is available to all and questions whether a bottom-up student-centred approach, informed by what employability means to students, will reframe narratives and recalibrate inequalities and differential opportunities.

# Sociology of Education 2 - Room 4.205

**Practical Digital Literacy: Exploring Practical Reasoning behind Teenagers Everyday Social Media Consumption**

*Luca Giuffrè*

*(University of Milan)*

In recent years, social media attracted many concerns regarding teenagers. Platforms in fact entered young people's everyday life as sociotechnical infrastructures capable of supplying tailoring flows of content. Moreover, the growing screen time and possible negative outcomes spread out moral panic (Rao & Lingam, 2020), thus driving today's debate towards the need of educating youths to be digitally literate.

Approaches to digital literacy however tends to be normative when it comes to defining related beneficial usage (Pangrazio et al., 2020). Consequently, I argue digital literacy research lacks in considering teenagers practical understandings of social media experiences, that is the knowledge to competently partake on said platforms - which I refer to as practical digital literacy.

This research therefore aims at unravelling how teenagers consume and which criteria are employed to define quality in social media content. The theoretical perspective derives from Pierre Bourdieu's conceptualisation of practices as manifested embodiment of social structures deployed to properly participate in fields of consumption (1990).

To this purpose, I conducted activities in 6 high schools in Italy based on the embedded lesson approach (Dennen & Rutledge, 2018), hence merging lectures and data collection through fieldnotes, group interviews and a survey. The analysis combines qualitative thematic clustering to variables' multiple correspondence analysis, namely a statistical method for enhancing interpretability between consumption patterns and sociodemographic factors (LeRoux & Rouanet, 2010).

The findings expand the current understanding of practical reasoning rooted in youth platformized consumption (Caliandro et al, 2024) which is fundamental to reconceptualise digital education activities.

**'Arriving on foot and leaving on horseback': The Implications of Changes in Trust for the Prevent Duty Guidance in the Education Sector**

*Jane Horton*

*(University of Liverpool)*

Radicalisation has hitherto been framed in British political discourse as a problem of individual psychological vulnerability to extremism, in which a suspected person was considered at risk of a specific form of ideological abuse. Correspondingly, formal policy documents and professional directives stipulated a safeguarding response which incorporated vulnerability to radicalisation into the customary responsibilities of practitioners. This instrumentalised the established trust relations between professionals and individuals in their care for security and social control purposes (HM Government, 2015; Ragazzi and Warmsley, 2023).

The centrality of trust to diverse social arrangements has been established in scholarly literature over the decades (Gidddens, 1991, 1994; Luhman, 1993; Misztal, 1996; Mollering, 2006) however, contemporary insights suggest that there is a prevalent decline in political trust and trust for institutions broadly concerned with governance in society which is intensified by the erosion of confidence in experts whose trustworthiness maintains institutional trust in varying degrees (Jennings, 2022).

This paper, therefore, explores manifestations of trust in the translation of the Prevent Duty Guidance in the formal education sector; its foundations, its instrumentalisation, how trust for the duty is built, sustained and potentially destabilised. The paper is informed by qualitative research conducted with diverse teachers and teaching assistants, illuminating their understanding of and interaction with, the statutory duty to safeguard children from extremism and radicalisation (Prevent). It considers the reconfiguring impacts of the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent (Shawcross, 2023) prompting the consideration of whether 'blind trust' in systems nd policies is, indeed, aspirational?

**Decolonising the Irish University? A Case Study of Trinity College Dublin**

*Imogen Eve*

*(Trinity College Dublin)*

This ongoing doctoral project (2022-2026) addresses debates around decolonisation, diversity and national identity in Irish higher education through a qualitative case study of Trinity College Dublin (TCD). Over the last decade, contemporary 'decolonisation' movements have gained traction in multiple higher education contexts (Peters 2018; Ahmed 2019; Tight 2022). Drawing on and linking with anticolonial thought and anti-racist activism, decolonial movements and theorists articulate that universities are bastions of knowledge (re)production which situate Western knowledge as epistemologically superior, continuing to reify colonial hierarchies and 'epistemic violence' (Mbembe 2016; Gopal 2021). In response, some universities have begun adopting decolonial approaches (Tamimi et al. 2023); however, decolonial activity in Ireland has gained little ground. Given Ireland's history of oppression by, and emancipation from, Anglo colonial rule, decolonial debates are contentious (Nic Dháibhéid et al. 2021). Yet some Irish universities benefited from colonial enterprise (Meredith 2021), and Irish education has been critiqued for emphasising white-Irish (nationalist) narratives (Bryan 2012). Considering this, how are decolonial movements being translated to/within Irish universities? This project addresses this question through a case study of TCD, a university rooted in colonial legacies yet with evolving stances towards postcolonialism and a 'globalised' Ireland (Walsh 2018). Drawing on faculty and policy interviews, syllabi analysis, and participant observation of undergraduate lectures, this study examines responses to decolonisation on multiple levels, including policy agendas, curriculum practices and faculty perspectives. By overviewing the project and initial findings, this presentation seeks to open discussion on the nature of contemporary decolonial transformation in Irish higher education.

**School Communities and Policy Responses in England in a Time of Polycrisis**

*Alice Bradbury, Gemma Moss*

*(University College London)*

Schools in England have faced significant challenges in the 2020s, caused by the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine and an ongoing cost-of-living crisis due to inflation and rising food and fuel prices, which has increased child poverty significantly (CPAG, 2024). These challenges followed a decade of austerity policy with reduced spending on welfare and the reduction of state services (Berman & Hovland, 2024), alongside a period of intense policy change in primary education (Bradbury, 2018) and a teacher retention and recruitment crisis (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). This combination of issues can be described as a 'polycrisis', that is a situation where multiple crises exist at once and interact with one another.

This paper explores how, from 2020 onwards, rising social need in combination with a retreating welfare state have left schools struggling to cope with additional responsibilities including providing food and clothing for families in poverty. Using data from three qualitative research projects conducted from 2020 onwards, we consider how schools as locally-embedded community institutions are best placed to understand families' needs in a time of crisis. By contrast, official policy rarely listens to the views of those on the ground, leading to policy built on shaky foundations, and in turn, research agendas which are restricted. We use our data to challenge these presumptions and argue that instead, governments must recognise and value the ways schools engage with their communities, and fund research that engages meaningfully with the reality of the multiple crises that are affecting the education sector.

# Sociology of Education 3 - Room 4.206

**Can the Student Speak? Representing Identities and Experience**

*Lili Schwoerer, Suki Ali*

*(Oxford Brookes University, London School of Economics and Political Science)*

Postcolonial and feminist thinkers have extensively discussed the impossibility of representing others' thoughts, opinions, narratives and experiences. Critical educational scholarship has underlined the complexities and shortcomings of representing students' views in particular. Those situated in Higher Education critique the metricisation of student 'voice', through surveys such as the NSS, in the context of marketisation and 'audit culture'. Yet, universities continue to position students' 'voice' as central to HE reforms. 'Voice' is now not only captured through surveys, but increasingly through qualitative, often participatory research projects. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, our paper explores the epistemological underpinnings of such uses of 'student voice' in contemporary universities. We argue that contemporary iterations of 'voice' risk fixing students' speaker-positions in a way that essentialises difference. In a context of managerial approaches to diversity and inclusion, the student becomes interpellated as an autonomous, authentic speaker, who can be called on to provide unmediated insights into 'lived experiences'. This construction is racialised, gendered and classed. Through the process of institutionalised listening and responding, structural critiques of the university become individualised, and are therefore easily neutralised. This is the case for critiques that are developed both as part of 'voice' research as well as outside of it. Simultaneously, students' speech that takes inconvenient forms is increasingly policed and even suppressed. We suggest that under these conditions, 'student voice' is not only ineffectual but actively hinders institutional change.

**Styles of Admission as a Mechanism of Inequality Legitimation: The Case of Competitive College Admission in Japan and South Korea**

*Yuki Asahina, Fumiya Uchikoshi*

*(University of Manchester)*

As the world witnesses the growing divide between the elites and the rest, the legitimacy of the advantaged catches the public's attention. While existing studies highlight the prominent role that schools play in justifying unequal outcomes, we contend that the style of admission merits further attention. This paper draws on 96 interviews with first-year college students in Japan and South Korea to examine how styles of admission affect people's belief in the legitimacy of inequality. Our analysis found a strong tendency among students in both sites to emphasize the importance of effort over talent, and this tendency obscures class, gender and regional inequalities among students. Building on the difference across the two research sites, we also show how the legitimation mechanism associated with admission styles, combined with the institutional arrangement of tracks in a local context, helps reproduce inequality in educational outcomes.

**Exploring the Formation of Classroom Parental Networks: Roles of Parental Socioeconomic Status and Parental Responsiveness**

*Yannan He*

*(University of Manchester)*

The interaction and communication between parents can be normally seen in the childcare activities where parental networks have established and impacted parents and children's everyday life and long-term outcomes. Parental networks are shaped by the varying mechanisms specific to the context, displaying different relationship patterns and network structures. Focusing on the secondary school classroom context, this research examines the effects of parental socioeconomic status (SES) and parental responsiveness on the formation of classroom parental networks. Previous research indicates the significant effects of SES homophily and SES popularity in the parental networks by the SES-specific factors, such as education, occupation and income, whereas these effects remain inconclusive. To capture the overall SES level of parents, this research employs a composite SES index synthesising education, occupation and family possessions to explore the SES effects in the given multiple

classroom parental networks. Additionally, little is known regarding the effect of parental responsiveness, while parental responsiveness as the element of parental involvement, parenting style and parents' personal qualities can influence the interaction of classroom parents. Using the 2010-2011 Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU) dataset, this research conducts respective logistic regression model with the quadratic assignment procedure (QAP) for each classroom and meta-analyses to combine the estimates. The findings provide further evidence on the configuration and antecedents of classroom parental networks, primarily shedding light on the roles of parental SES and parental responsiveness.

**White Working-Class Young Men's Engagement with Higher Education: Accessing Voices of the 'Hard to Reach' and (Frequently) 'Left Behind'**

*Richard Waller, Ciaran Burke*

*(University of the West of England, Bristol)*

Despite numerous policy initiatives addressing the issue, white working-class young men remain one of the social groups least likely to attend university in the UK (Reay, 2017; Bradley, Waller and Bentley, 2022). However their comparative 'underachievement' in higher education (HE) remains a relatively under-researched topic, despite its central importance to social inclusion, especially social mobility (Milburn, 2016). The causes of their widespread exclusion from HE are complex. It is often – incorrectly to our minds – attributed to 'aspirational deficit' (Harrison and Waller, 2018), and notions of 'a crisis of masculinity' are cited too during periods of economic and social change.

This presentation discusses initial findings from a qualitative case study, supported by the Society for Research in Higher Education, exploring the utility of innovative research approaches employed to access a 'hard to reach' group for policy interventions and research into student experiences ('Listening Rooms' (Heron, 2018)). Eight self-identified white working-class young male students recruit a non-student friend with similar demographic characteristics, and each friendship pair (student plus non-student friend) records an online (Teams) conversation focussing on topics/provocations provided for discussion on prompt cards.

The conversations centre on decision-making regarding HE participation, and the anticipated impact that attending university – or not doing so – will have on participants' jobs/careers and longer term wider lives. Findings are likely to focus on topics including possible post-16 trajectories, barriers and challenges to HE study, and the sources of knowledge used to inform the young men's decision making.

# Theory - Room 2.217

**Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Transformation: Reflections on Symbolic, General and Conservative Revolutions**

*Bridget Fowler*

*(University of Glasgow)*

I claim that Pierre Bourdieu offers a theory of social transformation, not just reproduction. I do so by drawing widely (but not solely) on his "oral tradition", the recently-translated lectures (Polity 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023). My first argument concerns the Bourdieu-Fanon debate, including Bourdieu's early analysis of the sources of anti-colonial struggle in the "torn habitus" of Algerian ex-peasants. Against Fanon, he called for a "rational revolution", one that would include a post-colonial, anti-bureaucratic, pedagogy. My second argument concerns the enduring significance of symbolic revolutions (cf Manet, 2017): a necessary but not sufficient condition for wider revolutions. The latter occur under distinctive social conditions of crises: specific revolutions coalesce so as to create a new political movement or "general revolution", typically clustered around (secular) prophets (Habitus and Field, 2020). Crucially, Bourdieu distinguishes "conservative revolutions" from radical popular movements of the type analysed by E.P. Thompson, and those he had himself explored in his study of May 1968 (1988; 2021). Martin Heidegger, for example, had contributed to the first conservative revolution in Germany, which legitimated Nazism, whilst the second conservative revolution was within the post-1960s economic field, facilitating the neoliberal "Washington Consensus" (1995). In the face

of such "bankers' realism" (1998), Bourdieu reasserted sociologically not just the feasibility of welfare states but the grounds for a "reasoned utopia" (1998). This is buttressed by the "corporatism of the universal": the margin for liberty offered via reflexive universalism, particularly on the part of lower-ranking public servants and trade unions.

## A Sociologist in the Lords: The Parliamentary Career of Anthony Giddens

*Matt Dawson*

*(University of Glasgow)*

This paper considers the parliamentary career of Anthony Giddens, perhaps the most significant contemporary case of a sociologist achieving political office. Despite this, Giddens' contributions to the House of Lords have been ignored by sociologists critical of his later work. Drawing upon a mix of positioning theory and the work of Edward Said, I argue that Giddens occupies a somewhat unique class of, in his words, an 'intellectual in politics' which involves changing positions. Following a discussion of how Giddens positioned himself effectively to gain a peerage I show how his spoken contributions to the Lords reflect three themes. (1) A 'professional' who enriches parliamentary debate by positioning himself as a sociologist making intellectual interventions. (2) Questionable claims in which Giddens makes political interventions which involve a selective/false presentation of his intellectual past. (3) Contributions which reflected his earlier work, most notably concerning the continual 'transformation' of society which continue the 'dramatic' narratives employed therein. I conclude by highlighting how Giddens' case provides a unique application for positioning theory and the value of Said's distinction between the professional and amateur intellectual.

## Understanding Public Space through Bourdieu's Concept of 'Realized Category'

*Carla Rivera Blanco*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

Public space has become a key concept in urban studies, political philosophy, and social theory, but its widespread significance is a relatively recent development. This paper examines whether Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'realized category' can help explain the evolution of public space into its current form. Using Barcelona's urban transformation, especially surrounding the 1992 Olympic Games, as a case study, the research explores how public space transitioned from a technical term referring to physical locations—such as streets and squares—into a moral and ideological construct tied to democratic values, citizenship, and collective identity.

The 'Barcelona Model' of urban planning illustrates this shift, showing how public space became central to not only urban design but also political and social discourse. Bourdieu's 'realized category' offers insight into how an abstract concept like public space becomes embedded in social and political reality. This transformation was influenced by the global intellectual currents of thinkers like Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas. In Barcelona, figures such as Jordi Borja played a key role in translating these ideas into urban governance and planning, giving public space new ideological significance.

By employing both synchronic and diachronic analyses, the paper traces the historical and ideological evolution of public space and how Bourdieu's framework explains its transition into a normative, socially charged category. This study contributes to broader sociological debates on normativity, showing how public space, as a 'realized category,' shapes modern urban planning and the discourse around democratic citizenship and public life.

## Title to be Confirmed

*Onur Isci*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

Sub-state nationalist movements, which have gained considerable momentum since the 1990s, continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape of contemporary Europe. These movements challenge the traditional frameworks of nation-states by advocating for greater autonomy, such as Corsica and South Tyrol and in some cases, complete independence such as Catalonia and

Scotland. The scope of this study is defined by the Scottish national movement, which is one of the two case studies in my doctoral research. Although the Scottish national movement began gaining strength in the second half of the 20th century, it entered a new phase following the 1997 Devolution, at which point independence discourses gained momentum, leading to shifts in the movement's rhetoric. The completion of the long-debated issue of home rule, which had been a topic of discussion since the late 19th century, culminated in the establishment of a Scottish Parliament in 1997, and the subsequent transition to full independence rhetoric is crucial for analyzing these changes in discourse within the Scottish national movement. In this analysis, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital will be the focal point, with particular attention paid to how the shifts in discourse—especially within the Scottish National Party (SNP)—have influenced both the content of the movement and the habitus of Scottish society. Interviews conducted with Scottish politicians and political figures, particularly SNP politicians, will serve as primary sources for this study.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.204

### Exploring Inequities in Online Teaching: Social Transformations in a New Normal

*Yasmeen Almomani*

*(University of Waterloo)*

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted society and the education sector globally. Constantly changing restrictions associated with the pandemic disrupted in-person teaching for educators worldwide. This presentation explores how emergency lockdowns, and the subsequent rapid shift to online teaching, exposed existing inequities that were not evident to teachers in traditional classrooms; providing new insights into who may thrive and who may struggle during remote teaching. To investigate this, our study used semi-structured focus groups with 49 educators and nine key informants in Canada. This research is part of an international comparative study in Canada and Bangladesh focusing on the health effects of remote teaching. The analysis revealed several key inequities among students; including diminished access to technology, chaotic home environments, increased caregiving responsibilities, and a lack of in-person engagement that made it hard to identify at-risk students. Contrastingly, online teaching fostered inclusion and accessibility for marginalized groups, such as queer students, those with special needs, those who had been bullied, or those in remote underserved communities. Drawing on structuration theory, this duality highlights a complex co-existence between challenges and opportunities that online teaching presents. Our results raise questions about who is best served by online teaching, considering students' socioeconomic status and how this affects educators teaching online. This work creates pathways for critical discussion about social transformations in teaching; contributing to the broader discourse about inequities in online education. This is relevant in the evolving economic landscape of our society as we adapt to a 'new normal' of online work.

### AI-Augmented Work in Healthcare: Exploring Trajectories of Change in Danish Hospitals

*Elena Shulzhenko, Dorthe Brogård Kristensen*

*(University of Southern Denmark)*

The diffusion of AI-based technologies in the healthcare sector brings both the possibility of augmenting human work and the threat of deskilling and loss of human oversight over clinical decisions. AI-augmented work in healthcare deserves urgent scholarly attention due to the high expectations and significant risks of new work designs for public health.

In this pioneering study, we explore how new patterns of work design are evolving in Danish hospitals, focusing on the implementation of AI-based imaging technologies in radiology. We combine an institutionalist perspective with the concept of work design to illuminate how processes at the levels of national and regional healthcare governance shape the evolving patterns of clinical work in radiology departments.

Our findings are based on the analysis of political statements and healthcare policies, as well as in-depth interviews with radiologists and heads of radiology departments, focusing on breast cancer screening.

We show that political actors play a key role in decisions on the implementation of AI technologies across Danish hospitals, sometimes restricting the participation of healthcare professionals in choosing the technology and the timeframe for its implementation. Nevertheless, the aims of implementing AI into screening vary between hospitals in different regions.

We also describe how these processes shape the evolving micro-designs of AI-augmented work processes. We identify critical junctures in the early phase of AI implementation that will affect whether human expertise and oversight over AI-augmented decisions are preserved or lost in the mid-term.

### AI Denial? Technology, Competition and the Future of Professional Work in Germany

*Manuel Souto Otero, Birgit Apitzsch, Maximiliane Wilkesmann*

*(University of Bristol)*

The future of work literature -both from the replacement and the enhancement perspectives- rely, primarily, on experts' assessments of technological capabilities. These have provided a number of useful insights, but give very little attention to those living the present of work, workers, their views on the future of work. This is particularly the case in relation to professional workers, which have until recently been considered protected from automation, but have more recently been presented as targets for replacement by generative AI. We argue that the views of such workers are important because the narratives they accept, whether well founded or not, have effects on well-being and inform their career management strategies. Building on Beckert's work on imaginaries, narratives and calculative technologies, in this paper we ask: how do young professionals understand the impact of technological change on their future work (replacement or augmentation)? and what individual actions do these imaginaries guide? We thus change the focus of the questions asked, from technology's capacity to replace jobs to workers' understanding of workers' narratives and strategies around the future of their work. We explore these questions making use of interview data gathered from ten young professionals working in Germany (a country with high job security and a provider of 'good' jobs), interviewed twice, in 2023 and 2024. Our findings reveal denial of the negative consequences of AI and limited preparation towards a different and more technologised future of work. The paper discusses the implications of these findings for theory and practice.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.205

### Can and Should We Use Bourdieu to Theorise 'Work-Life Balance'?

*Will Atkinson*

*(University of Bristol)*

The answer is yes, but only with modification and elaboration. After all, Bourdieu tended to focus on single fields and the struggles and strategies within them, and how precisely that relates to family life, for women and men, was somewhat left to one side. Intending to give what goes under the label of 'work-life balance' (WLB) a level of conceptual treatment appropriate to its salience for individual practice and wellbeing, but lacking from current literature, I thus sketch a model of WLB capable of articulating its elements, conditions and variation. This involves deconstructing its key components and then reconstructing them in the language of fields, illusio, habitus and so on, but then gluing them altogether with some new or obscure concepts from Bourdieu and phenomenology. I thus introduce a medley of terms designed to articulate inter-field relations, consciousness and conditions of practice, including internal and external field effects, intra- and inter-field horizons, meta-habitus and the illusio space. Though confined to the plane of theory in this paper, the model is nonetheless informed by, and designed to further inform, empirical research at various scales and using myriad methods.

**Variations in the Coping of Precarity across National Contexts: Online Freelance Workers in China and Japan**

*See Pok Loa*

*(University of Leicester)*

This article offers a systematic comparison to show how the coping of precarity and workers' sources of security can vary across national contexts. Comparing interview data from online freelance workers in the remote platform economy in China and Japan – two cases of institutional stability that have undergone rapid labour casualisation and familial welfare regimes where state-initiated safety net is rare – this article identifies two ideological orientations of how workers draw on support resources to restore stability. Attention is particularly given to the role of family-based support and employability in the labour market as sources of welfare. Workers in both contexts were united by their self-initiated deliberate strategies to maximise employability. But in times of joblessness and heightened insecurity, their cultural understanding of help-seeking differed, resulting in nuanced coping responses and varied composition of social welfare. In the Chinese context, precarity tended to be weathered through a combined effort by the family and the workers. Downward transfers of intergenerational resources weaved a safety net to shield workers from the detrimental consequences of precarity. In the Japanese context, taking up assisted forms of safety net was less salient. A strong sense of guilt and self-responsibility regarding career mismanagement prevailed. Strategies to compromise the symbolic reward of work to make up for employability were observed. Structural explanations regarding these cross-national variations are offered.

**Vocational Progression and the 'Ideal' Worker: Early Adult Pathways to Higher Skilled Occupations**

*Karen Tatham*

*(University of Leeds)*

England has some of the widest regional economic inequalities in Europe. Local access to higher level skilled work is a national skills priority. Empirical studies show vocational qualifications are disproportionately taken by disadvantaged young people, who are less likely to attend higher education, and are under-represented in high skilled work by the age of 25-30 years. Reforms of vocational qualifications aim to create improved progression pathways to higher skilled work, create parity with academic qualifications, and increase social mobility. But limited evidence exists of the processes of upward mobility in vocational careers, and how 'decent progression' might be achieved in early adulthood.

Using a career sequencing framework in a mixed methods local study, I explore vocational progression to high skilled work in three local sectors: construction, textiles manufacturing and digital. Drawing from secondary analysis of longitudinal economic outcomes and twenty-nine in-depth stakeholder interviews, analysis showed how patterns of inequality reproduced from industry occupation and skills structures into higher level vocational pathways. Participants suggested career pathways were presented by policy as objective and achievable, but where upward mobility processes reflected imaginaries of the 'ideal worker ', which were contingent on industry norms of who progresses to high skilled work. Stakeholders utilised employer-education partnerships at a local level to create locality skills systems, distinct by industry to support early adults navigate and negotiate vocational career pathways. Institutional agency to support early adults reflected wider national and local skills processes, but where 'the institution' and its networks was a key determinant.

# PAPER SESSION 2
# 11:00-12:30

# Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 2.218

**What Social Connection can tell us about Young People Mobility Patterns in Rural Scotland?**

*Emilia Pietka-Nykaza*

*(University of the West of Scotland)*

Growing diversities of rural mobilities including labour migration, transnational 'lifestyle' migration, return migration, and the resettlement of humanitarian refugees re-shape the ethnic and national composition of the rural communities and have an impact on community relations in rural (Jentsch and Simard 2009). Equally, the limited access to welfare services and increased experiences of poverty in rural places put more emphasis on the role of social and community networks in maintaining the economic, social, and emotional needs of rural communities (Shucksmith et al. 2023). These social, economic, and demographic changes are especially important in the case of young people who remain central to rural livelihoods (Butler, 2021). The key aim of this paper is therefore to examine the multiple relations between social connections, the complexities of young people's (16-25) mobility patterns, and their experiences of rural living and wellbeing. By applying the participatory qualitative method of mapping social connections (Strang et al. 2019) with diverse young people in rural Scotland (including international and internal migrants, and young people who were born and never left the area), this paper maps young people existing social connections to provide novel insights into the relations between mobility patterns, nationality and social connections in rural Scotland. As such, this paper provides greater insights into how the level and quality of social connections among young people in rural vary in relation to their nationality and ethnicity, and its impact on decisions about staying in, migrating, or returning to rural places.

**'I don't wanna look like I come from here, do I?': English Coastal Youth and Their Sense of Belonging**

*Sam Whewall, Avril Keating*

*(University College London)*

This paper examines young people's sense of belonging in English coastal towns. Popular imaginaries of England's coastal towns evoke nostalgic memories of sea, sand and ice-cream. Yet, many are reeling from decades of stark economic decline. Today, young people growing up in some coastal towns in England face the prospects of low-wage and precarious employment, low-level qualifications and skills, a degraded built and natural environment, and the stigmatisation of their towns in policy and media discourse as 'left behind' 'ghost towns' that are 'on the margins'. Drawing on participatory, interview and coproduction data with over 100 young people across four coastal areas, this paper considers how young people's sense of belonging is shaped (and in some cases weakened) by their: leisure opportunities; use of and exclusion from public space; safety; opportunity structures; and the marginalisation of their towns in relation to elsewhere. In doing so, we elucidate complicated perspectives on belonging, tied up with uncertain mobility aspirations and, commonly, a lack of hope regarding the future of these towns. The paper illuminates much needed qualitative perspectives of coastal youth (which have until recently been lacking in academic and policy research), and contributes to broader conceptual and theoretical discussions about the complex nature of young people's belonging to place.

**Networks and Survival on the Streets: The Lived Experiences of Street Children in Accra**

*Ama Boafo-Arthur*

*(University of Ghana)*

Street children are children for whom streets and other unoccupied dwelling places have become their home without the care and supervision of responsible adults. Children living or dwelling on city streets is not a new or recent phenomenon. For several decades, city streets globally have experienced this phenomenon, and Ghana is no exception to this phenomenon of street children. Using qualitative methods, this study explored the social networks of street children at Tema Station and Agbogbloshie in Accra. Capturing the essence of social networks to their survival on the streets, social networks were discovered to be a useful and necessary asset to the street children as they derived companionship, protection, and job allocations through these networks. Some problems they encountered in their activities were also highlighted. It was recommended that state and non-state institutions responsible for children find appropriate and appealing ways of meeting the needs of the street child population by pooling their resources and expertise together and also to engage them in order to develop interventions that meet the needs of the children.

**Spatialized Inequality and the Politics of Teenage Parenthood: Young Parents Navigating Stigma and the Fear of Social Work Intervention in a Deprived Coastal Town**

*Emma Geddes, Aniela Wenham*

*(University of York, Leeds Beckett University)*

Mainstream policy and research have driven forward numerous interventions relating to persistent and significant variation in the rate of teenage pregnancy both between and within local areas in the UK, including a focus on the high concentration of young parenthood in deprived coastal communities. Coastal towns in England face a constellation of unique and intertwining pressures which drive clusters of socio-economic deprivation and social issues. Building upon what is known about the spatial concentration of young parenthood within deprived coastal towns, we take a place-based approach to understanding social inequalities, presenting qualitative evidence relating to the intersection of young parenthood and other forms of social injustice, particularly the increased likelihood of the children of young parents being the subject of compulsory investigation by Children's Services. We explore findings arising from participatory research with 18 young parents and interviews with 15 local practitioners, examining the significance of the spatial context in understanding young people's experiences of stigmatisation and considering the potential for provision to respond to distinctive features of the locality. This paper contextualises broader socio-economic structures impacting upon the experiences of teenage parents and their ability to achieve the 'good' parent status to which they aspire. Through the lens of a deprived coastal town, the findings highlight the importance of the 'locale' in navigating stigma, and how this creates a 'spatialised subjectivity' which interacts with a particular fear of professional intervention, including the threat of child removal.

# Culture, Media, Sport & Food - Room 4.209

**Playing Video Games as Young Adults: Class Differences in Perceiving and Managing the Relationship between Video Gaming and Adult Life**

*Xiaobin Zhou*

*(Loughborough University)*

The study conducted qualitative interviews with UK gamers (aged 18-35) of different social classes (n=37), observing differences in how young adults perceive and manage the relationship between video gaming and adult life. Drawing on the Bourdieusian framework, the study highlights how participants managed video gaming within everyday contexts, focusing on class-based differences in their understanding of gaming in terms of temporality, appropriateness, and mental well-being.

Both groups showed similarities in underlining the relaxing functions of video gaming in everyday life but with slightly different expressions. Middle-class and upwardly mobile participants emphasised

regulated gaming to fit it into everyday life, doing non-productive activities for productivity. They drew relatively clear symbolic boundaries regarding appropriate gaming behaviour, framing it as a legitimate adult leisure activity when appropriately managed. Also, they often recognised the affective benefits of gaming and the intentional utilisation of video gaming for self-care regarding mental well-being, which coincided with the idea of managing well-being as a personal responsibility and aspect of cultural capital in everyday circumstances. Working-class participants described less about regulation but throwing themselves into gaming when they had spare time to pass, enjoying games as a break from reality, which sometimes raised a sense of temporal ambivalence and feeling guilty afterwards. They struggled more with the boundaries of the appropriateness of gaming, justifying their gaming by comparing to and sometimes criticising others gamed excessively. Many participants (except a few females) did not express perceptions of emotional self-care and associated gaming practices with a broader strategy for mental well-being.

### Do Video Games Matter? Considering the Cultural Value of Video Games

*Garry Crawford, Charlotte Gislam, Gaynor Bagnall, Victoria Gosling, Neta Yodovich*

*(University of Salford)*

This paper draws on the initial stages of research from a 3-year European-wide Horizon Europe funded project. Videogames' economic and functional value have been often used to qualify them as worthy of existence; however, their cultural value is harder to measure and to use as evidence that videogames matter. This paper argues that videogames hold significant cultural value and that this value has been legitimized through the work of "cultural intermediaries" who frame videogames as culturally meaningful artifacts. By drawing on Bourdieu, the paper explores the processes through which videogames are legitimized by external cultural institutions and further validated by cross-media pollination. By analyzing how wider industries have incorporated and contextualised videogames into their own sectors, this paper demonstrates that videogames contribute to cultural production and are gradually being positioned within valued cultural hierarchies. This reframing of games as 'Culture' advocates for the recognition of videogames as vital cultural artifacts that matter regardless of their monetary and practical value.

# Emerging Themes & Special Events - Room 3.213

### Hope Now: Future Imaginaries in Times of Political and Ecological Transitions

*Liene Ozolina, Magda Schmukalla*

*(Latvian Academy of Culture)*

Climate change triggers a deep fear of losing an essential part of present life, namely a future towards which life can develop. Living under the conditions of climate catastrophe means living a life which pulls towards 'no-time' (Baraitser 2020). In Eastern Europe this existential fear and the traumatic collapse of known identities and temporalities is not new. It was acutely present in societal life and collective moods during the 1980s when a knowledge of the failure of Soviet-type communism was becoming apparent without there being any future alternative to easily replace the failing system. This paper presents a psychosocial approach to studying the practices of hope and imagination in communist and post-communist Europe, with an empirical focus on artists and art collectives and their aesthetic and conceptual tools for capturing and enacting alternative futures. Drawing on case studies of dissident and artistic-ecological movements in Poland and Latvia from the 1980s, we examine how hope and collective desires were expressed in art in the context of these transitions, how these transitions were eventually experienced as unjust and inequitable, and how post-communist sites can therefore help us identify new forms of imagining and working towards just futures. Such a theoretical and empirical perspective shifts the status of Eastern Europe away from its usual position of the less-developed, failed object of European history to the position of an experienced subject holding rich knowledge of how Western institutions and global society will have to change for just transitions and sustainable futures to become possible.

**Connecting Generations**

*Zakiyyah Ahmed*

*(University of Wolverhampton)*

This multi-strand research project explores whether intergenerational activities can reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst South Asian adults (aged 65+) in the Black Country, West Midlands.

Social isolation in these communities is often exacerbated by cultural and generational divides, and current social inclusion efforts are insufficient.

This study examines the role of intergenerational initiatives in fostering inclusion, drawing on the perspectives of South Asian elders, younger generations, and professionals working within these communities.

The project employs a mixed-methods approach involving several key strands: Focus groups, semi-structured interviews, online surveys, and interactive workshops.

This combination of methods allows for a comprehensive exploration of social isolation and the potential community practices to address this phenomenon.

Preliminary findings suggest that intergenerational activities can enhance the well-being, sense of belonging, and confidence of older South Asians. This presentation will offer emerging insights from the research project, including key data from the primary findings, highlighting the views of both South Asian individuals and professionals working with them.

This research aims to identify strategies to bridge generational gaps, promote inclusion, and inform policy and practice in both statutory and voluntary sectors.

The presentation will also engage attendees in discussions about their own experiences and perspectives on social inclusion.


**Is All Publicity Good Publicity? Addressing Public Harassment in LGBT+ Research Impact**

*Tig Slater, Rosie Nelson, Charlotte Jones, Amy Ryall, Joe Jukes*

*(Sheffield Hallam University)*

Since REF2014, research impact has become an integral part of academic roles, e.g. part of the evaluation of applications for doctoral studentships, fellowships, lectureships, promotion, research funding. Yet, amidst rising public queerphobia and transphobia, creating impact comes with potential harassment for those doing UK-based LGBT+ research. LGBT+ researchers face disparaging news stories and become victims of online and offline harassment, including doxxing and calls for their dismissal, in some cases requiring new security measures. Yet, the potential for harassment is rarely recognised at institutional or sector levels; academics doing LGBT+ research are left to make their own safety protocols, weighing-up the benefits and perils of dissemination (Yelin & Clancy,nd).

This presentation will include a preliminary analysis that explores the question of how is harassment experienced and understood by LGBT+ researchers involved in research impact? The data stems from a multi-phase study which includes policy analysis, focus groups, and individual interviews to query how we might respond to the tensions implicit in these researchers' positions. We will explore the findings from the data, the theoretical implications of this, and some preliminary suggestions on how institutions might better support academics working on LGBT+ topics.


**Shaping Knowledge through Emotional Bonds: Insights from Human-Pet-Object Fieldwork**

*Yixuan Li*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

In the sociology of emotions, there remains a gap in understanding how emotional bonds between researchers and participants shape the epistemological standing of the knowledge produced. In other words, few studies discuss how emotions generated in the fieldwork participate in the process of shaping knowledge and theorizing work. Inspired by Ezzy's (2010) emphasis on the co-construction of

emotions between researchers and interviewees, and the explorations of emotional agency and reflexivity by Mary Holmes et al. (2024), this presentation draws interviews and field notes from my doctoral research on human-pet-object relationships. Using an autoethnographic approach, I reflect on the emotional interactions, flows, and influences between myself and the participants in my fieldwork, including expressions, words, actions, and gestures. The aim is to explore how these emotions shape the narratives told and how they are transformed into texts. Emotional bonds between participants and researchers can be conveyed through tears, smiles, or even the expression of pain in a calm tone. These bonds do not exist only in isolated moments of interaction; they accumulate, iterate and evolve, weaving through the entire fieldwork process and influencing the navigation of the research. By foregrounding the emotions of fieldwork, this presentation seeks to demonstrate that emotions are not peripheral but integral to the research process, becoming academic texts to shape the production of knowledge and theorizing work. While the study is ongoing, it aims to contribute to broader discussions about how emotions are essential components of knowledge and theory formation, beyond their role as ethical considerations.

# Environment & Society - Room 3.209

**Indigenous Heritage and Racialised Extraction: The Environmental Injustices of Gold Mining in Turkey's Ida Mountains**

*Ozge Onay*

*(Loughborough University)*

In this work, I examine the environmental impact of the Kirazli Gold Mining Project in Turkey's Ida Mountains, home to Indigenous Alevi Muslims, Turkomen, and Indigenous Sunni Muslims (Yörüks). Through qualitative analysis of secondary sources—academic publications, press releases, social media, and local legends—I explore how mining disrupts historical, cultural, and environmental contexts, reflecting broader social hierarchies. Employing frameworks like racial capitalism and Fanon's socio-ecological racism, the study reveals how capitalist dynamics lead to ecological degradation and undermine sacred local values. It highlights the Turkish state's role in sustaining ethno-racial violence and environmental harm, challenging assumptions about economic growth and state neutrality. The findings offer critical insights into how political power enables profit at the expense of Indigenous communities, contributing to fields such as green criminology, environmental studies, and critical ethnic studies and cultural studies by addressing the desecration of sacred sites and environmental injustices.

**Securing the Woods: Policing "Environmental Extremism" at Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek**

*Kyla Simone Piccin*

*(University of Cambridge)*

This paper draws from ongoing doctoral research on the securitization of resource extraction in British Columbia, Canada. Developed through a combination of site visits, semi-structured interviews, and data obtained through the Access to Information Act, the project examines the policing of anti-logging protests in the forests surrounding the Ada'itsx/Fairy Creek watershed.

As part of the larger project, this paper spotlights a key finding of the research: that, in becoming an object of security, the forests surrounding Fairy Creek transformed into a carceral geography. This carceral geography produced particular criminalized subjects at Fairy Creek, including the "eco-terrorist" or "environmental extremist." Rationalized through discourses of national economic security, law, and order, the vernacular of "extremism" authorized security responses at Fairy Creek that were aggressive, indiscriminate, and systemic, even against those deemed 'suspicious.' Moreover, the production of the "environmental extremist" as a figure hedged against "Canadian (economic) interests" facilitated and further justified the entrenchment of collaborative relationships between public institutions and the forestry industry as policing partners at the site.

The policing of environmental activism at Fairy Creek reflects broader trends associated with militarization, the "war on terror," and the increasingly blurry lines between private capital and public institutions in Canadian security governance. While the insights generated from this paper are site-

specific and embedded in a context of settler-colonial occupation, Indigenous dispossession, and regional climate emergency, they also contribute to broader debates in taking the carcerality of non-prison places seriously and understanding the distinct modalities of carcerality that emerge in extractive zones.

# Families & Relationships 1 - Room 4.213

### Constructing and Mobilising Military Families through the UK Armed Forces Families Strategy

*Emma Huddlestone*

*(University of East Anglia)*

There exists an established literature detailing how military welfare policies attempt to manoeuvre non-serving military partners' behaviours in ways which are productive for militarized interests. This article further contributes to these discussions by exploring these issues within a contemporary socio-political landscape as the military seeks to position itself as an inclusive, modern employer. Through critical sociological analysis of UK Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-2032, this article will explore how military families, particularly the figure of the military spouse, are discursively constructed as recognisable subjects, and relatedly, will reflect on how these constructs may contribute to the mobilisation of normative expectations of their practice and behaviours. It pays close attention to the ways in which social justice, deservedness, and need are constructed, thus bringing into discussion the relationship between the state, the military, and military families through such articulations. Overall, this article will highlight the ways in which the state frames and attempts to produce idealised military figures, as well as how military families are rendered knowable through such rhetoric.

### Names, Children, and Identity in Mixed-Sex Civil Partnerships

*Julia Carter, Nikki Hayfield*

*(University of the West of England)*

In this paper, we consider the surname preferences of women in mixed-sex relationships considering, planning, or having had, a civil partnership. Surname change for women in Britain remains the norm for those entering mixed-sex marriages but this is a more complex decision among same-sex couples where normative patterns are not established (Clarke et al. 2008). Women in mixed-sex civil partnerships are an interesting case study since they have rejected traditional marriage, and yet still have the option to follow heteronormative naming practices. Here we draw on qualitative interview data from 15 women from the UK in 2020-21. We explore how surnames were understood, finding that they more closely resembled same-sex couples than married mixed-sex couples in their rejection of heteronormative and patriarchal traditions, including women's surname change on marriage. Alongside the rejection of surname change, women expressed a desire to retain their own names- and by extension their individual identity. Yet, some complexity was added to accounts of those considering (future or current) children. In these cases, the potential for creating a shared family identity provoked a challenge to the overwhelming rejection of name-change. Ultimately, identity, family, and equality played a part in their naming decisions, and for many, this offered a freedom in opposition to traditional marriage. But given the lack of suitable frameworks for women with children entering mixed-sex civil partnerships, some are left with a less than satisfactory outcome, still reckoning with the static constraints of patronymic naming conventions.

### The Gendered Politics of Intimate Relationships under Chinese Familialism: Feminist and Queer Adaptations, Resistance and Contestations

*Stevi Jackson*

*(University of York)*

Under Xi Jinping, China's regime has reinforced heteronormative familialism, promoting a form of familial nationalism whereby citizens are enjoined to unite love of family with love of nation and to strengthen (heterosexual) 'family values' (jiafeng). Yet the everyday relational politics of family and

community life may have greater impact than party-state ideology on those seeking to resist heteronormative constraints. This paper explores activist and academic controversies around differing forms of queer and feminist adaptation and/or resistance to near compulsory heteronormative marriage in China, focusing on four documented possibilities: delay and refusal; succumbing to social expectations and entering into a heterosexual marriage; xinghun, a marriage of convenience, usually between a lesbian and gay man; going abroad to pursue alternative familial/relationship practices. None of these options is unproblematic, all are gendered and affected by class inequalities, regional differences and the rural/urban divide in terms of both their availability and consequences. They all involve, produce or reflect hierarchies and exclusions and some have led to rifts within and between feminist and queer activist communities. There is, then, a need for an intersectional analysis that takes account of both material conditions of life and the social shaping of individual desires and aspirations. This is necessary for a critical but non-judgemental analysis. In saying this, however, it is necessary to reflect on my positionality as a British feminist sociologist, a cultural outsider, and how this affects my perspective.

# Families and Relationships 2 - Room 4.214

### Re-theorizing the Sexual Minority Closet: Evidence from Queer South Asian Women

*Sonali Patel*

*(University of British Columbia)*

Scholarship generally assumes the closet is a place of safety from the perceived risks associated with coming out. However, this overlooks its function as a source of violence, particularly for those belonging to multiple marginalized communities. This article investigates queer South Asian women's (QSAW) experiences of the closet. Drawing on forty qualitative interviews with second and 1.5-generation QSAW in Canada, I offer a re-theorization of the closet as a dual site of safety and violence. My findings show that the convergence of sexual expectations of coming out with ethnic expectations of concealment exacerbates QSAW's vulnerability to violence from family, the LGBTQ+ community, and intimate partners. Despite living a double life to reconcile these conflicting demands, QSAW experience micro-aggressive violence for being closeted and familial violence for not repressing their sexuality. Dating while closeted further jeopardizes QSAW's safety. Ultimately, the results stress the dangers of pressuring QSAW to come out to their parents. The results are significant for understanding the intersectional complexities of sexual identity concealment, as well as culturally unique forms of it, such as privately engaging in queerness "behind closed doors."

### Sexual Identity Realisation and Changes in Relationships with Parents for Queer South Asians

*Pooja Marwaha*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

This paper focuses on narratives from queer south Asian individuals and the changes that their relationship with their parents go though as they come to terms with their sexuality. Through my research, I add to the limited body of research looking at queer south Asians living in the UK. My work provides an intersectional addition to work by authors of Families We Keep (Reczek and Bosley-Smith, 2022).

This paper will focus on the following question from my thesis - How do relationships with parents change and evolve in response to queer South Asians questioning or exploring their sexual orientation?

Drawing on qualitative data collected via semi-structured interviews conducted online and in person from a subset of 22 participants from the broader thesis, this paper will focus on the accounts provided by 9 participants. The analysis will draw out gendered differences in the change that the parent / child relationship goes through. It will draw on data gathered using concentric circles, (Pahl and Spencer, 2004), to capture the changes in closeness individuals have with their parents over their life cycle.

The findings showcase a range of outcomes, from growing trust and closeness between parents and their children, to a lot of tension and estrangement. By shedding light on these diverse narratives, this

paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the intersection of queer identities and familial relationships within the South Asian context.

## Genocide, Necropolitics and Anti-Homosexuality in Africa: Developing Critical and Sociological Queer Analysis from the Uganda Context

*Matthew Waites*

*(University of Glasgow)*

This paper discusses how the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023 in Uganda, which includes the death penalty for certain acts while also (for example) criminalising related political organising, relates to concepts of genocide and necropolitics. The author has previously published an article 'Genocide and Global Queer Politics' in the Journal of Genocide Research in 2018, which related the concept genocide to earlier anti-homosexual processes, including in Uganda and Gambia. Since then, certain leading activist voices associated with the Ugandan LGBTI+ movement including Dr. Frank Mugisha (a founder of Sexual Minorities Uganda) have invoked ideas such as early warning signs of genocide in their public statements. Meanwhile the concept genocide has become used by certain actors in LGBTI+ politics in Western contexts. Analysis of genocide in relation to sexualities and genders, including homosexuality but also wider conceptual frames, has expanded through published contributions in a growing field of queer genocide studies. Yet despite work on queer necropolitics, the relationship between the conceptualisation of genocide and Mbembe's concept necropolitics lacks adequate discussion in relation to queer analysis. This paper will discuss the relationship between theoretical conceptualisations of genocide and of necropolitics as these relate to anti-homosexuality, including consideration of how the sociology of genocide and sociological consideration of necropolitics can contribute to analysis. Methodologically the paper will proceed through examining Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 and responses and resistances to it, including in online media comments from leading Ugandan LGBTI+ activists and other commentators. Implications in African and global contexts can be considered.

## Looking back with Logos the Cat: Queering the Animal Gaze in Interspecies Research

*Erika Cudworth, Julia Linares-Roake, Andrea Breen, Lauren Van Patter*

*(De Montfort University)*

Imagining positive futures with the non-human Other is critical as we navigate the turbulent waters of the multiple crises that the world faces today. Our stories, and the stories of other animals with whom we live with are bound up with intersected inequalities and such crises. The question of the animal gaze is a powerful site of inquiry, as it represents the threshold or boundary between self and Other, where meeting an-Other's gaze both invites a connection or transmission between two beings. Studies have engaged with the animal gaze, querying what understandings are challenged or made possible when we meet the eyes of the radically Other. However, few studies have considered the animal's gaze within the implementation and design of multispecies research.

In this paper, we reflect on the preparatory phase of a multispecies research project focused on dog-human care relationships. We attached videorecording devices to our canine companions' collars, attempting to capture a dogs-eye view of our everyday lives and interactions. This led us to think with Derrida to ask: What does it mean to respond when met with the animal's gaze? How does this change when we attempt to see with the dog? Mulvey asserted that the gaze is a male mode of viewing, and critical scholarship has since asked about the possibilities of subverting the dominatory power of the gaze. This paper considers whether the animal gaze can subvert our ways of seeing and our research process, in the multispecies field of personal relations and intimacies.

# Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 4.211

**Reproductive Justice and Moving beyond 'Choice' in Maternity Care**

*Gwyneth Lonergan*

*(Northumbria University)*

Presently, policy around maternity care in England, as outlined in Better Births: the National Maternity Review for England (2016), is centred on 'informed choice.' Pregnant people are called upon to make 'good choices' with regard to their care, for the benefit of themselves and their babies, and also to improve NHS maternity services more broadly. In this presentation, I draw on the reproductive justice framework to explore how this emphasis on 'choice' is experienced by pregnant migrants, and to propose an alternative conceptualisation of maternity care centred around bodily autonomy.

The reproductive justice framework situates experiences of, and decisions around, reproduction within the wider discursive and material context in which they occur, a context shaped by intersecting systems of oppression (Ross, 2006; Davis, 2019). Drawing on this framework to analyse data produced through qualitative research with migrant women, I argue that the emphasis on 'informed choice' in Better Births ignores the social constraints that prevent pregnant people from engaging with maternity services and actualising their preferences. Furthermore, the focus on 'informed choice' does not necessarily reflect the ways in which my participants made decisions around care. Finally, the expectation that birthing people make 'good choices' can be experienced as disciplining and coercive where pregnant people fail to conform to medical professionals' expectations. I propose, as an alternative, centring bodily autonomy in maternity care, enabling a wider consideration of the factors that inhibit autonomy, and stressing respect for birthing people's decisions regardless of whether they are seen as making 'good' choices.

**The Reproductive Social Justice Movement: Are Women with Learning Disabilities being Left Behind?**

*Alexandra Kaley*

*(University of East Anglia)*

Reproductive justice, a movement grounded in Black feminist theory, advocates for the right to have children (or not) and the right to parent in safe and healthy environments. This movement seeks to confront existing and emerging forms of oppression, positioning reproductive justice as central to broader struggles for health equity and social transformation. Central to this framework are the principles of intersectionality and social justice, which highlight how overlapping identities, such as race, gender, class, and disability – influence reproductive health outcomes for marginalised groups. Despite this commitment to intersectionality, women with learning disabilities have often been excluded from the reproductive justice social movement. For example, sex is still considered a taboo subject and women with learning disabilities are often assumed as unable to make decisions about their reproductive lives; or to have the skills to safely parent children. In this paper, I use a critical disability studies lens to critique deficit-oriented discourses which (re)produce reproductive health inequalities for this most marginalised group of women. Drawing on recent co-produced research, I examine how disability self-advocacy organisations in the UK have worked to challenge ableist narratives, advocating for more equitable access to reproductive healthcare. I argue that while progress has been made, much work remains to ensure that women with learning disabilities are not left behind in the fight for reproductive justice. By addressing intersecting forms of oppression, I conclude that this analysis advances a broader, more inclusive approach to mobilising reproductive rights as a mechanism for social change.

**Endurance as a Necessary Path to Reproduction? A Sociological Note of Treatment Tolerability and Painful Encounters in Japanese Mild Approach to In Vitro Fertilisation**

*Peichieh Hsu*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Mild-stimulation in vitro fertilisation (mild IVF), which involves fewer medications and physical stress, is framed as a 'patient-friendly' and 'close-to-natural' protocol. It is an approach implemented globally; however, it is much more widely utilised in Japan. Research has debated the efficacy of mild IVF for over 20 years. However, how this treatment approach intersects with IVF experiences has never been examined.

This article is built on one-year qualitative data collection within the Japanese IVF community, unpacking nuanced social constructions of bio-knowledge and medical practices underpinning mild IVF tendency. The empirical findings demonstrate a significant inconsistency in the patient-friendly claim and individual treatment experiences. Therefore, by investigating the treatment tolerability, I contest the argument that mild IVF cares for the maternal body. The data suggests that mild IVF indeed provides an alternative for undertaking treatment with less physical burden. However, it could also lead to unmanaged discomfort and repeated unsuccessful cycles. This article aims to contribute to the care studies by illustrating the highly nuanced establishment of patient-centred care in IVF treatment. When global IVF promotes 'tailor-made' treatment that seemingly posits patients' needs at the centre, this article highlights the awareness of how care is framed and performed in medical sites.

**Locating the Black Reprotraveller: Arts and the (Repro)Travelling Pursuit of Blackness**

*Patricia Hamilton, Sanna Eriksson*

*(University of York)*

The vast and growing social science scholarship on ARTs has attended to the both "destabilizing and generative" (Faircloth & Gurtin, 2018, pp. 987-988) effects of these technologies, troubling dominant understandings of family (Franklin, 2013), kinship (Strathern, 1992) and parenthood (Gurtin & Faircloth, 2021). This scholarship has also highlighted the ways that ARTs have unsettled 'race'; as racial constructivism (Hu, Lu and Roth, 2023) has gained ground so too has the belief that racial identity can be curated through appropriate oocyte and sperm selection persisted (Moll, 2019). Much of these valuable insights, however, have emerged largely from research that centres whiteness (Moll, 2019; Pande, 2021a; Quiroga, 2007; Ryan & Moras, 2017; Schurr, 2017; Smietana & Twine, 2022) and, to a lesser extent, mixedness (Nahman, 2006; Newman, 2019; Pande, 2021b; Keaney, 2023). In this paper, we explore what insights might be gleaned by centering blackness. In attempting to locate the black reprotraveller in extant research on ARTs, we consider how attending to the reproduction of blackness may generate, in Patricia Hill Collins' words, "a distinctive standpoint on existing sociological paradigms" (1986, p. S14). We argue that centering the reproduction of blackness facilitates a unique attention to the "interlocking reproductive fantasies of genetics, race, and family" (Owens, 2019, p. 861) as they are produced in and negotiated through engagements with the ART industry.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Lecture Theatre A

**Social Movements in Nigeria: A Decolonial Approach**

*Muhammed Alakitan*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Colonialism in Africa saw a subsequent rise in protests and movements against harmful colonial practices across the continent. The decades after the Second World War even saw increased activists demanding citizenship inclusion in different ramifications and, ultimately, self-government for their countries. Recently, over the last three decades, the diffusion of digital technologies, including accessibility to the internet, has unsurprisingly shaped social movements and protests in a digitised

form. This is in addition to the already existing processes and forms of movements. However, little attention has been paid to how colonial legacies are implied in social movements in postcolonial countries in the digital age. Thus, within this context, this research takes Nigeria since the 2010s as a case study to examine how movements have implied (neo) colonial legacies, particularly in the issues of protests and infrastructures. This study utilises three entry points of analysis – global flows of movements between former colonial empires and colonies, implied (neo) colonial legacies in social movements, and digital platforms' sociotechnical complexities. Lastly, this study observes divergent views amongst movements' actors on the legacies of colonisation and suggests that these views should be taken into account within the current discourse of social movement transformation in Africa. This study relies on an online ethnography, including in-depth interviews with movements' actors, of three social movements in Nigeria – 2012 #OccupyNigeria, 2014 #BringBackOurGirls, and 2020 #EndSARS.

## Navigating the Authenticity and Assimilation Dilemma

*Yvonne Lardner*

*(University of Cambridge)*

It is widely accepted that while formal organisations are a key feature of industrialised nations, they are microcosms of society, influenced by political and social pressures and rooted in the same structural and systemic racial inequalities endemic in society. Further, there is evidence to support the claim that racially minoritised professionals are faced with unique challenges that can form constraints to leadership opportunities. This chapter explores sense-making and identity in relation to "institutional norms" within the social structure of organisational institutions shaped by racially majority-dominated organisational culture. Based on in-depth one-to-one interviews conducted with a purposefully selected sample pool captured a systematic and inclusive depiction of the lived experiences of Black professional leaders, it discusses how, although considered atypical at face value, the research participants proactively worked towards shifting their racial identity from a form of oppression to one of strength. This was achieved by identifying and navigating the tension between authenticity and assimilation. This includes building and asserting an authentic leadership identity while simultaneously navigating the prevailing structures and established norms of organisational culture. This paper advances the discussion and strategic approaches to both theory and practice in relation to race and organisational leadership.

## Mixed-Race Subjectivity, Belonging, and Nostalgia for a Time that Never Was

*Heather Proctor*

*(Newcastle University)*

Mixed-race individuals raised in the UK often inhabit an 'inbetween' positionality of complex modes of (non)belonging with respect to the regions, communities, and nations they are connected to. This research focuses specifically on mixed-race individuals who are mixed Black/white or Asian/white, who hold simultaneous proximity and exclusion to whiteness, often (though not always) connected to their racialised appearance and regional/geographical context. I explore the role of nostalgia in how mixed-race individuals conceptualise their belonging/nonbelonging, and what roles their engagements with popular culture and material practice play in this conceptualisation. In doing so, I examine the ways that mixed-race individuals draw on intergenerational memories of times they were never actually present in, in full awareness that their memories may be a romanticised or curated version of 'reality' via restorative nostalgia. Mixed-race individuals may also inhabit affective states in connection to nostalgia for imagined possibilities and futures, to make sense of shifting and inbetween senses of national belonging. As such, I argue that memory and nostalgia are used creatively and dynamically to conceptualise innovative modes of belonging to multiple nations and communities. Consequently, these uses of memory and nostalgia from an inbetween position can offer us a perspective on the uses of nostalgia and how particular communities or individuals may reject 'dominant' memory discourses around belonging in favour of what they find to be more salient to their own complex experiences.

**Race and Gender in a 'Local' Boxing and Exercise Gym in the East Midlands**

*Christian Davis*

*(University of Leicester)*

Amateur boxing gyms can serve as valuable assets to individuals and local communities, providing social functions that extend beyond sport and leisure. This is a sociological case study of an urban UK boxing gym. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social role(s) that this sporting space plays in the lives of its users. The study utilises an ethnographic and interview-based approach to examine some of the social functions that this gym possesses, and it achieves this through shedding light on the experiences of young Black and South Asian gym users in the city. More specifically, it focusses on how the gym can impact both the racialised and gendered identities of young people. The data was collected using a combination of observations, semi-structured interviews with twenty-seven participants, and analysis of archival materials. The findings revealed that: (1) cultural resistance was being exercised in various forms. Gym members challenged colonial stereotypes and negative ideas of racialised masculinities and femininities. (2) The gym environment facilitated the creation of strong social networks among ethnic minorities. (3) Distinct forms of masculinity emerged, defined by a philosophy rooted in discipline, aggression, toughness, strength, and violence. These forms were further embodied and expressed through the development and display of strong, physically sculpted bodies. The study concludes that boxing gyms, as such, when understood as socially and politically significant entities, can be seen as a tool for positive identity formation, resistance, and change – especially when set against culturally oppressive and racist forces.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 1.218

**Political Diasporism: Examining the Praxis of Radical Imaginaries on Jewish Community Farms**

*Chana Rose Rabinovitz*

*(Queen Mary University of London)*

In the US and UK, there is a growing movement of Jewish people practicing self-determination by cultivating Judaism without Zionism. Many of these Jewish people claim the condition of being 'in diaspora', mobilizing this concept as a political identity. As theorized by scholars of the black radical tradition, this conceptualization of diaspora, unlike traditional models that stipulate a people relating to a homeland (Safran 1991), describes a community outside the norms of nation-states and borders (Hall 1995, 207), a space of counterculture (Gilroy 1993) whose inhabitants experience a multiplicity of consciousness (Du Bois 1903). Thinking with these scholars, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz (2007) coined the term 'diasporism', defining it by a political commitment to solidarity and a belief in a Jewish history and a future independent of a national homeland.

Drawing on ethnographic and archival research, this project explores the embrace of diaspora as a third space and its deployment as a political ideology amongst participants on Jewish community farm outside of Palestine (Our Story, 2022). This research asks why members are drawn to diaspora as a political identity and what possibilities they believe it engenders. Amid the potentials and implications of deploying diaspora as a political ideology, this paper attends particularly to the tensions inherent in an ideology that claims diaspora while building communities rooted in land. It asks, if, and in what ways, community members reconcile claims to diasporism with projects for rootedness in a world structured by ongoing coloniality (Grosfuegel 2002).

**A Sociological Exploration of the Experiences of Minoritised Employees in 'Post-Race' Workplaces in the UK**

*Chidozie Umeh, Sarah Marks, Nelarine Cornelius, Benish Khan, Luyao Bao, Rym Mouelhi*

*(University of York)*

Racial disparities persist in UK workplaces despite formal commitments to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This paper investigates the lived experiences of minoritised ethnic employees in 'post-

race' workplaces—those that claim to have moved beyond racial discrimination but still exhibit racial inequalities. The research examines how subtle, covert mechanisms perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation. Using over 40,000 (forty thousand) qualitative responses from the Race at Work Survey (2015, 2018, 2021) and an abductive methodology, the study employs Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, doxa, and symbolic violence to explore how these practices sustain racial inequalities.

The research question addressed is: how do minoritised ethnic employees experience EDI policies and navigate barriers to true inclusion? The UK's socio-political landscape, influenced by events like Brexit and the Black Lives Matter movement, underscores the persistence of systemic racism despite measures such as the Race Disparity Audit (2017) and the Equality Act (2010). This paper highlights the gap in the literature regarding symbolic violence within workplace cultures that socialise minoritised employees to accept meritocratic HR practices and superficial EDI initiatives.

The study identifies three key findings: microaggressions, minimised by deeply ingrained doxic assumptions, obscure their harm; institutional silence serves as symbolic violence, maintaining racial inequalities; and minoritised employees develop adaptive strategies (habitus), ranging from resistance to conformity, in response to exclusion. This research calls for a paradigm shift, advocating for genuine managerial accountability and meaningful engagement with EDI to dismantle the façade of 'post-racial' workplaces.

### Precariously Positioned Mothers: The Role of Domestic Spaces and Social Infrastructure in Doing Friendship and Accessing Support

*Rachel Benchekroun, Hannah Grondelaers*

*(University College London, University of Ghent)*

Women and mothers migrating abroad often face multiple challenges, such as legal and financial precarity, racial minoritization and language barriers; these produce deep inequalities in relation to experiences of motherhood and access to support (Abrego and Menjívar 2011, Erel and Reynolds 2018). This paper brings together findings from two ethnographic studies exploring the experiences of mothers living in liminality in status, time and space: first, mothers from different countries with insecure immigration status living with their children in a neighbourhood in London, UK, and second, mothers and their children living in a reception centre in Belgium having fled war in Ukraine. We argue that the physical spaces in which mothers live and interact with others shape how they 'do' friendship and how they access and share different kinds of support. We show how certain types of shared living spaces constrain friendship practices, and conversely how different kinds of 'social infrastructure' (Klinenberg 2018, Small and Adler 2019) present opportunities to form and sustain friendships. We highlight the importance of practical and material help as a friendship practice, whilst underlining how mothers are compelled to exercise caution or 'hold back' when it comes to sharing personal information. This paper contributes to understandings of the roles of gender, motherhood and domestic and social spaces in shaping friendship and support practices in the context of precarious migration.

### Digital Divides: Lifestyle Migration and Expat Escapes in Central America

*Alexandra Eleazar*

*(University of California, Santa Barbara)*

Scholars have analyzed lifestyle migration and the dreams that lead relatively affluent and privileged migrants to seek a life elsewhere (Benson and O'Reilly 2009). However, digital labor and remote work are quickly complicating and changing the trajectory and possibilities of migration (Hooper and Benton 2022), particularly for lifestyle migrants. Under conditions enabled by COVID-19, access to remote work and digital labour has enabled increasing numbers of individuals to work outside the traditional workspace and be mobile across national borders (Hermann and Paris 2020). Furthermore, while concerns over the root causes of contemporary migration from Latin America have led scholars to analyze the multiple factors influencing the departure of migrants to the Global North (e.g. Abrego 2014; Galli 2023; Menjívar and Abrego 2012), vastly underrepresented in migration scholarship is the documentation of migration to Latin America, and specifically how European and North American migration in the region is increasingly hypermobile.

Drawing from multimodal ethnographic research in Guatemala, I argue failing socioeconomic policies within North America and Europe encourage individuals to find alternative locations for their lifestyle aspirations, but often at the cost of more vulnerable Indigenous populations in the Global South. I explore what I term a digital migration divide, wherein technology and nationality directly implement a divided and unequal migration experience: as Central Americans face increased digitized surveillance and control, European and North Americans gain ease and access to international mobility. Lastly, I show the growing influence of digital economies and the necessity to understand this new face of inequality.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 3 - Room 1.219

**Decolonial Approaches to Pedagogy, Transnational Scholarship, and the Re-Structuring of Discussions on Equality, Gender and Knowledge Production in the Classroom**

*Ninutsa Nadirashvili*

*(Coventry University)*

Higher education practices have long been subject to feminist critique, contesting traditional practices, with calls for transformative pedagogies that empower marginalised students, address social injustices and promote gender equalities. Despite these critiques, most classrooms in Western European universities remain largely unchanged, with educators grappling with the difficulty of imagining and / or enacting decolonial futures within their curricula. However, some progress has been made, particularly in the addition of transnational scholarship to syllabi and a turn to transformative pedagogies which allow for alternative ways of interdisciplinary knowing to enter academia. Considering this milieu, our paper asks how decolonial approaches to pedagogy in higher education contexts can enable transnational scholarship to re-structure discussions on equality, gender and knowledge production in the 'classroom'.

This research examines how transnational feminist scholarship offers ways for pedagogy to engage with complex themes including in/equality in global contexts, migration and colonialism. It also explores how and in what ways such scholarship can/is influencing higher education pedagogy through perspectives and narratives traversing cultural contexts and national boundaries, representing diverse voices and experiences which can serve to challenge gender inequalities and to broaden curricula.

Case study insights provide inspiration for vignettes/examples of decolonial pedagogy working in tandem with transnational thought. In particular, the methods/tools used to enable/enhance the capability of transnational scholarship to facilitate more open and richer discussions to transform and/or reshape staff and student perspectives of gender, equality and knowledge production will be shared and discussed.

**Perceptions of Black Women's Childbirth Pain: Race, Gender and Human Rights**

*Angela Loum*

*(Goldsmiths University of London)*

In 2021, the UK government revealed that Black women are almost four times more likely to die in childbirth than White women. Despite being a substantial illustration of systemic racism, the UK's National Health Service and Government have refrained from setting a target to reduce maternal health disparities or adequately investigate the causes. The lack of investigation is evident in the 2023 Women and Equalities Committee report, which stated that the reasons for maternal health disparities are complex and remain unknown.

My previous research revealed a vital clue: one of the earliest and potentially most significant signs of trauma during childbirth is pain, and it appears that the way pain is subjectively experienced, perceived, and responded to is racialised. Building on the assumption that ignoring pain can lead to death, the significance of this project is that it will contribute new, more nuanced knowledge about how perceptions of pain are racialised and the implications of this for morbidity and mortality. The central concern is

whether Black birthing women are seen and believed when they present their pain to childbirth professionals.

Through the lens of critical race theory and post-colonial feminism, the research employs qualitative interviews with Black women and midwives to contribute new knowledge about racialised perceptions of childbirth pain. I aim to propose a more direct consideration of perceptions of pain and seek to contribute to social transformation by making perceptions of pain central to medical training and interdisciplinary academic knowledge, including human rights and justice, feminism, and antiracism.

## Black and Queer: Podcasting and Discursive Renegotiation of Race

*Neha Doshi*

*(London Metropolitan University)*

While the narrative of race is often told through the lens of whiteness, comparing outcomes or treatment of peoples based on perceptions of 'race', racialisation as experienced by those who bear its burden is rarely studied, including how people communicate about race within their own communities. In this paper, I consider the opportunities of podcasting to create space for 'subaltern counterpublics' - communities who seek to express counter discourses on, here, dominant narratives of race (Vrikki and Malik, 2019). Vrikki and Malik contend that participatory media created by and for community enable those previously silenced to voice their lived experiences. Using discourse analysis of six episodes of the podcast, "Black and Gay, Back in the Day" (Thompson, 2022), I consider how race, gender and sexuality are negotiated through this discursive medium. Based on the Instagram photo archive of the same name created by Marc Thompson and Jason Okundaye (2021), the podcast describes itself as "an intergenerational journey focusing on a key photograph from the archive - joining stories of the past, with those of today." (Thompson, 2022). The conversational element of podcasting enables nuanced discussion that draws on internalised shame, conflicting perceptions of belonging, and a recognition that the double-bind of experiencing both racism and homophobia requires more effort to create 'safe spaces' of acceptance. This work provides insight into how those racialised negotiate the experience of being racialised and how this significant form of communication helps people to find place in an otherwise alienating (media) landscape.

## Genealogies of Dispossession and Marginalisation: Case of Kalbeliyas of Rajasthan, India

*Ruchika Ranwa, Suruchi Thapar Bjorkert*

*(Manipal Academy of Higher Education Dubai)*

Drawing on Anibal Quijano's concept of "coloniality of power" and Maria Lugones's concept of "coloniality of gender", this paper analyses the historical genealogies of marginalization experienced by nomadic Kalbeliya women dancers of Rajasthan and its ongoing manifestations in structuring power relations, social hierarchies and "unfreedoms" in post-independent India. Despite being recognized as heritage bearers by UNESCO in 2010, Kalbeliya dancers continue to face social stigma. This stigma is historically rooted in dominant colonial discourses of morality and respectability concerning women in the 20th century, reflecting Indian upper caste and class anxieties about moral transgressions. Paralleled with colonial notions of the 'excessive' sexuality of low caste women, dancers, in particular, were constructed as "common" women (Thapar, 1993), who transgressed normative regulations of sexuality, marriage and domesticity. These forms of marginalisation have re-configured in the post-heritage recognition phase for Kalbeliya dancers as they are encountered with new forms of exploitative economic relations and unequal power dynamics, which reflect conditions akin to "modern slavery". Despite UNESCO's emphasis on improving local heritage bearers' participation in safeguarding their heritage, the dominance of Indian state institutions in these processes has led to a) dispossession of Kalbeliya dancers of their rights and responsibilities as heritage bearers and b) commercialization and extraction of Kalbeliyas' heritage through private sector led tourism (Ranwa, 2021) This puts their heritage at the risk of erosion and exacerbates their vulnerability to exploitation. The paper draws on ethnographic field work conducted by first author between 2018- 2024 in Jodhpur, Jaipur and Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

# Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 2.219

**Beyond the Ceasefire: The Persistence of Rape Culture in Northern Ireland**

*Kim Mcfalone*

*(University of Manchester)*

Northern Ireland is now considered a post-conflict society after the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. However, Northern Ireland has also been recently deemed the country with the third-highest rate of femicide in Western Europe and is experiencing an alarming rise in sexual offences against women (Belfast Telegraph, 2024; PSNI, 2023). This paper will examine empirical data collected through both surveys and interviews concerning Northern Irish women's experiences of unwanted male behaviour in everyday life. The survey will be open to any Northern Irish woman aged 18+, while the interviews will focus on and compare the experiences of two age groups - women born 1960-1970 (so having lived through the height of The Troubles) and women born 1990-2000 (so having been born after the ceasefire). Swaine (2018) notes Northern Ireland is an example of the gendered continuum of violence, which is where the forms of gendered violence which exist prior to conflict influence the forms of gendered violence which can take place during conflict; this then influences the forms of gendered violence which persevere after conflict. My research aims to understand how the mundane, seemingly normal forms of male intrusions in everyday life reproduce a rape culture in Northern Ireland which allows more 'extreme' forms of sexual and gendered violence to take place with impunity.

**Transforming Rape and Serious Sexual Offence Investigations in England and Wales: A Review of the Specialist Learning and Development Needs of Police Officers**

*Linda Cooper*

*(University of Suffolk)*

For victim-survivors of rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) to be supported effectively and appropriately, police officers need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to undertake this specialist role. Following a ground-breaking police and academic collaborative research project, Operation Soteria, a new National Operating Model (NOM) in rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) investigations has been developed. The research underpinning the RASSO NOM is supported by a revised programme of learning and development across all 43 forces in England and Wales. Data for the change aspect of the L&D review were collected across a two-year period via interviews, focus groups, workshops and masterclasses with officers in 19 forces. A lack of investment in RASSO specific training was identified. Where training is provided, under resourcing and an increase in reporting results in officers routinely missing their training to attend to their workload. The lack of L&D provision has the potential to reflect on the support offered to victim-survivors and a loss of public confidence and trust. We share the experiences of two forces who are overcoming these barriers to begin to implement change successfully. Recommendations are made to enable a shift from transactional learning offers to enable transformational change in RASSO investigations.

**In Terms of Responses to Crimes of Sexual Violence, Procedural Justice is Failing Women: An Exploration of Social and Systemic Harms to Inform a Model of Transformative Reform**

*Laura Machin*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

Despite a steady rise in reports of male-perpetrated sexual violence within the criminal justice system of England and Wales over the last decade, the associated conviction rate remains at less than 1% (Office for National Statistics, 2023). 61% of cases are discontinued at the behest of the victim-survivor (Victims Commissioner, 2024). This disparity and lack of confidence in the pursuit of justice suggests that current provisions are unfit for purpose. This further indicates a need for transformative reform in the response to a criminal behaviour that disproportionately effects women. The question being, however, what should this look like?

This study has utilised a Zemiological-Feminist theoretical framework to examine these systemic failings. 20 narrative or semi-structured interviews (dependent on type of participant) have been conducted with Victim-Survivors and Sexual Violence Support Service Practitioners who have engaged

with the prosecution process to a greater or lesser extent. The aim being to identify criminal justice principles and responses that are outmoded and unsuitable, inflicting further harm upon those whom which they are designed to protect, and creating barriers to the pursuit of justice.

Pertinent themes have been drawn from the collected and analysed data to inform a 'Better Response/Harm Reduction for Victim-Survivors' model. This will ultimately be disseminated amongst interested stakeholders (3rd sector, local government and community lead initiatives with whom I have spent considerable time building relationships), in the hope that it will inform gender-based violence discourse and policy discussions.

**Examining the Impact of Sociology Influenced Research on Women's Healthcare Decision-Making following Sexual Violence in the United Kingdom**

*Marie Swettenham*

*(University of Nottingham/Canterbury Christ Church University)*

The autonomy of adult women in the United Kingdom (U.K), to make informed healthcare decisions following sexual violence, is often promoted as a self-directed process characterised by person centred and recovery orientated care.  However, Foucauldian discourse and power imbalances influence contemporary Public Health research, result in negative normalised practice, highly influenced by societal norms, gender roles, cultural expectations, and stigmatisation. This highlights the dominance of narratives not always in the best interest of victims in practical settings.

Whilst it could be assumed the impact of Health Sociology research in this field serves its intended purpose of informing on social practice, it often results in literature no more conducive than concluding what is already known, thus stunting progression. Additionally, there a lack of substance in proposing implementation strategies conducive to implementing theory into practice in this delicate area.

A rapid review was undertaken to find publications focused on the experience of UK women's decision-making experiences following sexual violence and included both qualitative and quantitative sources.Results found that quantitative literature tended to focus on sociologically underpinned intersectionality as its key methodology, however further identified that such papers overlooked the exploration of underlying exploratory mechanisms, thus missing a key principle of intersectional research.

In a discipline where social and political influences cannot be ignored pertaining to changing health landscapes, the value of these findings advocate for empirical contemporary lived experience research in order to move beyond reviews and analyses of theory, thus creating real sociological underpinning conducive to improved workforce development.

# Science, Technology & Digital Studies – Room 2.220

**Making Space for Life Science: Using On-the-Move Methods**

*David Skinner, Will Brown*

*(Anglia Ruskin University, University of Cambridge)*

While sensitive to the multiple relationships between science and its publics, science and technology studies has paid relatively little attention to locale. Studying contemporary science in its place entails an appreciation of how it can be part of significant changes to the social and material fabric of an area. Similarly, how and why are certain locations deemed particularly auspicious for science?

Cambridge, UK is the locus of rapid expansion thanks in part to the massive economic, political, and emotional investment in the life sciences. The Cambridge Biomedical Campus is a striking manifestation of this: it brings together major medical, scientific, and commercial initiatives on the southern fringe of

the city and is set to become the largest site of its type in Europe. Further expansion is planned until 2050.

Our on-going project considers the past, present and future of the Campus from the perspective of the communities around it. We have used walking interviews and guided walks designed to improve the local conversation about the growth of the campus. This paper reflects on the value of on-the-move methods as means of exploring science, location, and the construction of publics. Growth in Cambridge is an exemplar of a wider trend where life science futures are used as a driver of planning decisions and economic growth. Our project highlights the challenges that people face when voicing their ambivalence about developments on their doorstep justified at one and the same time as 'world-leading' science, 'game changing' medicine, and crucial to national economic renewal.

## Emerging Technologies and Social Transformation: Public Insights into DNA Data Storage

*Lenka Pelechova*

*(Newcastle University)*

As societies face unique transformations due to technological advancements, DNA data storage technology emerges as a revolutionary solution to the increasing demand for sustainable data archiving. Yet, the public perceptions to this technology remain largely unexplored. This study explores public attitudes toward DNA data storage, shedding light on the concerns and expectations tied to this emerging technology. Through an exploratory qualitative survey involving 54 participants, the findings reveal a mix of curiosity and apprehension. While many view the technology as futuristic and innovative, concerns about ethical considerations, data control, misuse, safety, and unequal access prevail. The findings also highlight the knowledge gap, where some respondents hesitated to share their view due to complexity of the technology.

The study situates these public perceptions within the broader sociological context of technological change. As we navigate this new era of rapid advancements, it is crucial to engage the public early, ensuring responsible development that addresses societal concerns. The article advocates for deeper sociological inquiries into how early public engagement can shape more equitable technological futures. By highlighting the interplay between optimism for progress and fears of unintended consequences, this research contributes to critical discourses on the role of sociology in understanding and influencing the societal impacts of technological innovation.

## Framing COVID-19: Quantifying Risk through Numerical Narratives on Weibo and Twitter

*Yumeng Guo*

*(University of Sheffield)*

This paper investigates how official accounts used numerical data to frame the Covid-19 pandemic on Weibo and Twitter/X. It examines how government accounts narrated Covid-related risk and impacts of social media politics on official discourses. The central question is: how were numbers and related calculations mobilised by government accounts in China and the UK to communicate Covid through Weibo and Twitter respectively?

This paper employs an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that spans the sociology of risk and digital platform studies, drawing on Ulrich Beck's perspective of 'risk society'. Methodologically, it conducts a thematic analysis of a stratified sample of over 600 Weibo posts and tweets providing pandemic updates from government-related accounts in China and the UK, between January 2020 and March 2022.

This paper focuses on 'which numbers were given' and 'how they were given' in official discourses, conceptualising numbers as essential 'framing devices' that synchronise national narratives of risk. Findings indicate that Weibo posts featured detailed, text-heavy numerical breakdowns by regions, while Twitter relied on infographics to present trend-based summaries of pandemic statistics. These variations reflect broader media systems, cultural factors, and platform logics: Chinese communication emphasising authority and factual completeness, and UK accounts prioritising accessible, trend-based information that invites individual interpretation. This paper also discusses how these number practices were further complicated by platform affordances and regionality of Weibo and Twitter.

By examining numbers as social-media-friendly translations of risk thinking, this paper provides insights into the complex interplay between risk, government communication, and digital platforms.

**Digital Inclusion and Survivors of Modern Slavery: Exploring the Perspectives of Organisations Supporting Survivors and of Survivors Themselves**

*Simeon Yates, Jeanette D'arcy, Rebecca Harris, Simeon Yates, Gianfranco Polizzi*

*(University of Liverpool)*

Our societies are increasingly digitally mediated, with digital technologies presenting opportunities (e.g., for participation) and risks (e.g., misinformation). While this suggests digital literacy skills are imperative to use these technologies safely and with confidence, digital inequalities are still prevalent in the UK. Since gaps in digital access/skills affect much of the population in conjunction with socio-economic inequalities, promoting digital inclusion, especially among marginalised groups, is much needed.

Survivors of modern slavery – people who have experienced trafficking/exploitation – are more likely to be digitally excluded (which hinders their ability to access/receive support and reintegrate into society) and face specific risks in terms of (digital) safety. This paper presents key findings from a project conducted at the University of Liverpool along with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA), and funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (MSPEC). Based on semi-structured interviews with civil society organisations supporting survivors in the UK and with survivors themselves, this project explored how survivors receive support through digital technologies and use these as part of their everyday life.

Key findings suggest that survivors need digital technologies and skills to be safe online, access support (e.g., counselling), undertake everyday activities and reintegrate into society. However, funding for the provision of digital technologies is limited and inconsistent and digital skills/safety training often lacks balance between tailor-made support and formal training. This paper provides practical recommendations for policymakers and organisations to facilitate the digital inclusion of survivors.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 1 - Room 3.210

**Authoritarianism as a Divisive Force: Chinese Feminists' Aversion to LGBTQ Activists**

*Yi Wang*

*(University of Bristol)*

Despite the growing body of studies investigating the coalition built by feminists and LGBTQ activists in transnational politics, little attention has been given to the tensions between the two groups. This is particularly true in China, where social movements are profoundly constrained and shaped by the state's intervention and control.

Based on interviews with feminists and ethnographic data from online feminist communities, this research explores the tensions between Chinese feminists and LGBTQ activists from the former's viewpoint. The finding reveals an antagonistic attitude of feminists towards LGBTQ activists, especially towards gay and transgender activists. They regard LGBTQ activists as competitors rather than potential allies for mobilisation. I argue that the feminists' vigilance over LGBTQ activists is primarily a result of the party-state's propaganda and surveillance of public speech. The state's nationalist propaganda and dominant masculinist cyberculture portray LGBTQ activism as an 'import of the West' that is detrimental to China's traditional culture and the stability of the regime. Chinese feminists' opposition to LGBTQ activism is informed by such nationalist sentiments.

Meanwhile, I discovered that feminists in China find a lack of trust in other social actors, due to the sensitive political climate. Instead of building solidarities, they are inclined to compete with other activists in the discursive arena, in order to gain access to the limited political resources and greater

public attention. With this research, I aim to contribute to the relevant literature, and call for further studies on the tangled dynamics among social movement actors in authoritarian contexts.

## Who are We? Youth, Mobilization and Transpatial Identity in Modern China

*Lingzhou Cheng*

*(Zhejiang University)*

The emergence of 'youth' as a distinct age group is both requirement and result of modernization, driven by social protests, political movements, and cultural negotiations. The rise of modern Chinese youth is interconnected with China's new democratic revolution in 1919 and geopolitical shifts. In the post-war years, substantial upheavals such as the Cultural Revolution in China, the May Storm in France, the Anti-War Movement, the Beat Generation, prompted governments to reevaluate youth as intergenerational conflicts erupted globally. Through a historical genealogy, we investigate center-periphery dynamics of modernization, examining the extent to which it relies on energy of youth, shaping every occurrence of them, and how this ideology is glocalized and reconstructed. With three major approaches: ⅰ) starting with May Fourth Movement in 1919, inspired by March 1st Movement in Korea, to re-examine working-class youth identities beyond Asian context; ⅱ) focusing on youth collective behaviors to reassess their roles as self-aware leader grouping in nation-building during worldwide protests around 1968; ⅲ) analyzing comparative cases of supportive environments in regions and world, embedded in contemporary transnational heritage of the 19th Asian Games and the Paris 2024 Olympics, to re-imagine youth mobility as a variable in a shared future evolving sociocultural transformations. By highlighting the nature of youth, we aim to illuminate how young people create diverse rituals and symbols that transcend spatial boundaries and power, envisioning new narratives through cross-border consensus. Concurrently, it challenges the heterogeneous approach by exemplifying initiatives in youth-building mechanisms, offering promising landscape for cooperation and discourse among civilizations.

## "An activist organisation. A feminist organisation. A service provider": Feminist Service Provision as a Site of Sociological Inquiry

*Ilaria Michelis*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Studies of the NGOisation of feminist movements describe linear trajectories from social justice-oriented movements to apolitical service providers complicit with state and other forms of power. In neoliberal transitions, the argument goes, feminist organisations adopted hierarchical structures and took on service delivery roles on behalf of withdrawing states (Alvarez 1999; Bernal and Grewal 2014; Smith 2017). They abandoned feminist politics and structural analyses of inequality to instead meet individual needs and reshape women's behaviours and desires in line with neoliberal ideologies (Jad 2004; Lehrner and Allen 2009).

This paper is based on a multi-year qualitative study of feminist organisations providing services to migrant, refugee and asylum -seeking women, survivors of gender-based violence and trafficking in Italy and Serbia. It counters simplistic narratives of NGOisation and depoliticisation, contributing to a better understanding of social movement trajectories and providing a more accurate grounding for critiques of feminist action. It proposes the concept of feminist service provision as a specific form of feminism which considers material, emotional, and social support towards women and other marginalised groups as a fundamental component of feminist politics.

Driven by three interconnected forces (activism, service delivery, and feminist anti-violence principles) which are in constant tension with each other, feminist service provision is a space of complicity with and struggle against oppressive systems. Feminist service provision is a distinct site of sociological inquiry where relations of power between differentially situated individuals are both reproduced and contested with direct repercussions on social hierarchies.

**The 'Faceless': Young People's Counterpublics in the UK's Hostile Environment**

*Grainne McMahon*

*(Independent Researcher/Refugee and Asylum Participation, Action, Research, Manchester)*

This paper will explore the campaigning work of a group of young activists against the UK's 'hostile environment'. The young people were all living without status in the UK and had all been failed by the asylum system and cast as the 'abject' (Tyler, 2013). Building upon decades of protest against racist and 'othering' policies in Britain, the work illustrates a powerful example of young people who are neglected and disbelieved by the state, and vilified by wider society, coming together to activate and find a voice in public to call for justice and change.

Utilising Voloshinov's (1929/1986) method of 'language creation from below' to create a shared understanding of their lived experiences in the UK's 'hostile environment', the young activists engaged in consciousness-raising together to explore the commonality of their lives as '(young) people seeking asylum'. Rejecting the dominant ideological sign of 'asylum seeker', they created a play, 'Faceless', to depict the reality of their experiences and to present a counterstatement to the public. Drawing on ideas from Fraser's work on counterpublics and the public sphere, and social movement literature, the paper explores the young activists' grassroots movement-building from the margins.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 3.211

**Neurodivergent Agency as a Critique of Neoliberal Selfhood**

*Nuzhat Khurshid*

*(University of Toronto)*

Using a feminist perspective, this paper will critique ableist notions of agency that do not take into consideration neurodivergent forms of thinking and behaviour. I will utilize the strengths of feminist theory, which has long tried to dismantle the liberal model of white male autonomy, to critique the way that neurodivergence is marginalized under neoliberalism. I will argue that neurodivergence is pathologized under capitalism when it does not conform to ideals of efficiency and productivity. Neurotypicality can function as a social norm that is governed by economic drives and that serves to limit the potential of those who do not fit this norm. To further examine this statement, I will first examine the liberal idea of selfhood that has been critiqued by feminist philosophers who argue for relational and embodied forms of agency. I will then show how the liberal ideal has transformed into the neoliberal ideal, which utilizes some of the attributes of liberalism but transforms them for economic gain. Unlike feminist theory, which emerged many decades ago, neurodiversity theory is a more recent phenomenon that has had to contend with neoliberal societal imperatives. Various authors have showed that this has created hurdles for a more authentic understanding of neurodivergent personhood that can define its own potential and self-understanding.

**Disability Price Tag 2024: Living with the Extra Cost of Disability**

*Serena Wright, Craig Moss, Leticia Veruete-Mckay, Sally Field*

*(Scope)*

In 2024, disabled individuals and their families continue to face significant financial and emotional challenges. Disabled households incur unavoidable extra costs related to managing disabilities and ensuring accessibility, spending more on essentials compared to non-disabled households. The latest Disability Price Tag calculations from Scope, the national disability equality charity, reveal that these extra costs have risen in the 2022-2023 financial year. On average, disabled households require an additional £1,010 per month to achieve the same standard of living as non-disabled households, even after accounting for disability benefits like Personal Independence Payments. This figure increases to £1,067 when adjusted for 2023-2024 inflation.

This paper discusses the calculation of the Disability Price Tag figure, and its implications, based on a national UK dataset of over 38,000 households. Framed within the social model of disability, this economic analysis is presented alongside findings from a recent small-scale, mixed methods study on the lived experience of these extra costs, during which we spoke with 31 disabled households across the UK. Data from this study exposes the ongoing financial strain of daily life for UK disabled households, and the challenges they face in trying to maintain an acceptable standard of living, manage financial shocks, and plan for the future.

These financial pressures force disabled households to make difficult decisions, often going without essential items, which negatively impacts their mental and physical health. The constant financial struggle can lead to stress, anxiety, social isolation, and even suicidal ideation.

We conclude with recommendations for policy.

**Navigating the Transition to Adulthood: Experiences, Challenges, and Support for Adults with Learning Disabilities**

*Tuba Gokpinar, Ewen Speed, Konstantinos Roussos, Jack Taylor, Anne Steinhoff, Aaron Wyllie, Denise Largin, John Day*

*(University of Essex)*

Research on transitions to adulthood highlights various complex and challenging experiences for young people, including focus on independence, employment, relationships, and living arrangements. Despite this focus, there is limited research on the understanding the experiences of adults with learning disabilities in making such transitions. Working with a learning disability charity and by employing participatory methods and photo-elicitation techniques (photovoice, drawing, communication cards, etc.) to co-facilitate inclusive engagement of more vulnerable respondents, this paper explores problems and support in the experiences of adults with learning disabilities and their families/carers after transition to adulthood (and adult services). Our research draws from sociological accounts of youth transitions, disability, and special education to investigate processes that hinder or enable transitions to adulthood with an emphasis on employment, independent living, and general issues around health and social care. Despite best efforts towards inclusive approaches and practices, many adults with learning disabilities face significant barriers to accessing equitable opportunities which negatively impact their health and wellbeing, often due to structural inequalities in the UK education, healthcare, and employment systems. This research highlights the need for policies and services that enable people to have a more active role in these transitions, allowing them to be more directive in negotiating these changes. It is hoped that providing an account of students and family experiences will increase our understanding of broader structural constraints and disadvantages faced by adults with learning disabilities, and of the processes that can meaningfully promote opportunities for inclusive and equitable transitions.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 3 - Room 3.212

**The Face of Another: Beauty as a Pedagogy of Habitus with Aesthetic Professionals**

*Sanne Pieters, Anne-Mette Hermans*

*(Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)*

This paper looks at the beauty-related bodywork of plastic surgeons and aesthetic doctors in Belgium to examine how their aesthetic habitus (re)produces classed and gendered beauty ideals. Combining 20 expert-interviews and ethnographic observations during international plastic surgery conferences and consultations for cosmetic procedures, we find that bodywork can serve as a pedagogy of habitus (Wacquant, 2011). Thematic analysis illuminates that most professionals claimed to prefer 'natural looking' procedures over 'artificially looking' beauty and actively advocate their beauty taste to attract a matching clientele. Yet the observations demonstrate the struggles that take place in establishing this beauty taste. Professionals pass on their beauty taste to patients/clients and non-European colleagues

by micro-level practices that reinforce cultural status beliefs (Ridgeway, 2014). These practices draw symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont, 1992) and demonstrate symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1977) particularly related to gender, race and class.

Bringing together insights from Lamont et al.'s (2014) cultural process model of inequality with work on bodywork (Sassatelli, 2010), habitus and the body (Shilling, 1993; Vandebroeck, 2016), symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002), and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1982; Burawoy, 2019), cosmetic bodywork is explored as a process by which a specific type of aesthetic habitus is learned and passed on that helps to solidify and reproduce social inequalities. This research contributes to our understanding of the importance of status in contemporary inequalities, which are increasingly shaped by appearance.

### 'Clocking In and Clocking Out': The Social and Emotional Labour of Non-Drinking Students within a British Higher Education Institution

*Ellie Moore*

*(Loughborough University)*

While drinking remains a dominant feature of university campuses, an increasing number of young people are choosing to limit or abstain from alcohol. Despite this, research on non-drinking students' experiences remains limited. This interdisciplinary paper, integrating discussions from Sociology, Geography, and the Built-Environment, explores how non-drinking students experience British Higher Education Institutions, shaped by marketisation and consumerism impacting inclusion and well-being. Drawing from three focus groups with eleven non or low-drinking students at a Midlands university, this paper reveals the emotional and practical labour these students exert to navigate social spaces often dominated by alcohol and driven by consumer pressures. Participants described engaging in performative strategies, adopting alternative identities, and taking on caregiving roles to minimise social exclusion. While some find these strategies empowering, many experience them as physically and emotionally taxing, marginalising non-drinkers within alcohol-centred spaces. Within this context, this paper extends the concept of emotional labour and impression management, revealing how university drinking culture, reinforced by the commodification of student life – perpetuates social inequalities. Universities should use this research to revise policy and student support services, ensuring equitable access and fostering inclusion for all students. These findings enhance our understanding of how drinking cultures influence student behaviour and how consumer-driven expectations reinforce social inequalities.

### Voices from the Margins

*Shehla Khan, Sandra Dettmer*

*(Swansea University)*

This study explores the intersectional challenges faced by women from ethnic minority communities in Wales, focusing on their experiences navigating identity, career progression, and workplace obstacles related to racism and gender discrimination. Using Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality as a theoretical framework, the research examines how various aspects of social identity—including gender, race, ethnicity, and religion—interact to shape personal experiences and institutional structures in Welsh workplaces.

To augment existing intersectionality research, this study explores the lived experiences of women by breaking up the traditional boundaries of organisations (Atewologun, 2018). It uses the grassroot activist research approach of photovoice (Burris and Wang, 1997) to unpack the complexities of intersectionality impacting on individual experiences of women from ethnic minorities in the workplace as they progress in their careers.

Using a participatory action research methodology based on empowerment education for critical consciousness and feminist theory (Freire, 1973) provides a novel approach to gain further insights into the intersectionality question and also takes contextual factors into account. This helps us to better understand critical intersection points to analyse the influence of organisational structures and management practices on career progression, job satisfaction and work-life balance, while also exploring the effects of diversity and inclusion policies.

The findings from our mixed-method study based on photovoice methodology and focus group sessions with 15 participants will contribute to the Welsh Government's anti-racism action plan and offer recommendations for policymakers and organisations to enhance diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Inequality Perceptions in South Africa: An Investigation**

*Johan Zaaiman*

*(North-West University)*

South Africa is viewed as economically the most unequal country in the world according to its Gini coefficient score. Such inequality poses a threat to the quality of life of people and the political stability of a country. This inequality relates to the South African double economy. On the one hand, an advanced economy employs high-skilled workers, and on the other hand an underdeveloped economy consists of low-skilled jobs. Generally, South Africa's income and expenditure information is quite dated. Studies on the perceptions of the population of South African on their unequal situation are rare. This paper therefore contributes to knowledge on this matter by analysing the Human Sciences Research Council South African Social Attitudes Survey (SASAS) 2020. The survey was conducted among 3032 sampled respondents representative of the larger population. Interviews started before the Covid-19 virus lockdown in 2020 and were completed in 2021 after the lockdown was lifted. The data analysis will focus on how the respondents evaluated their socio-economic status and how this relates to gender, race, age and various other relevant variables. This is interpreted using insights of Thomas Piketty and other theorists as well as the network and interpretation theories. The network theory highlights the role of small-world character and homophily of networks on individual perceptions of inequality. The interpretation theory looks at the cues people use to evaluate the perceived inequality of people. This paper presents therefore a perspective on inequality views in South Africa and contributes to knowledge about it.

# Sociology of Education 1 - Room 4.204

**Social Haunting in First-Generation Student Accounts of Higher Education: A Bourdieusian Feminist Analysis**

*Juliette Wilson-Thomas*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

This paper critically engages with higher education policies in order to examine the purpose and functioning of higher education in the UK. Using a Bourdieusian Feminist theoretical framework, and the concept of 'social haunting', this paper evidences the personal and institutional value of 'widening participation' students that is in conflict with policies such as 'graduate outcomes.' Using epistolary (use of letters), and semi-structured interview methods, longitudinal data comes from the accounts of 11 working-class women studying on an education-based foundation course at a university in England. These experiences evidence the complexities 'non-traditional' students may navigate in relation to prior educational experiences (social haunting), and what value they perceive in, and contribute to, higher education. The central argument is that inconsistencies in policies demonstrate a conflict in the rationales framing UK higher education, and the evidence herein provides an opportunity to understand the impacts and potentials of how we structure and provide higher education.

**Be that Dark Horse: High-Achieving, Working-Class Girls and the Complexities of Academic Success in Their Pathways to High-Tariff Universities**

*Katherine Davey*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

In the UK, higher education is positioned as a site of opportunity for young women. However, the path to accessing it can be particularly challenging for those from working-class backgrounds. Set against a backdrop of neoliberalism and postfeminism, this paper focuses on a group of sixteen high-achieving girls from working-class class backgrounds, all striving to attain top grades and places at high-tariff

universities. The paper considers how the stereotype of an academic 'supergirl' incites these young women to construct their pathways to high-tariff universities individualistically and to invest in aspirational futures beyond where they grew up. However, the paper also highlights how this stereotype compels this group of girls to take sole responsibility for their academic outcomes. As high-achieving, working-class young women, they are under significant pressure to always do more and do it better to stay on top. Only excellence will act as enough of an insurance to guard against failure. Through the lens of Margaret Archer's concept of 'autonomous reflexivity,' the paper explores how the girls experience tensions between the enabling and constraining effects of their social class, gender and academic success. The findings illuminate the complexities and contradictions inherent in striving to be a high-achieving, working-class girl, which remain underexplored in both the research literature and the widening access and participation agenda.

### Lucky Breaks? Unplanned Graduate Pathways and Fateful Outcomes

*Richard Waller, Nicola Ingram*

*(University of the West of England, Bristol)*

Graduating from university has traditionally been viewed in both policy terms and public discourse as a way to reduce the chances of young people being exposed to precarity in the employment market (Harrison, 2019); if not a guarantee of significantly enhanced employment prospects and consequential financial security, then at least a way to boost the chances of this for people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The reality however, is markedly different for some young, working-class graduates, as demonstrated by the latest published findings from the longitudinal Paired Peers project (Ingram et al., 2023; Bradley, Waller and Bentley, 2022). Paired Peers followed a cohort of 90 young undergraduate students studying at either of two universities in the UK city of Bristol from 2010 onwards, gathering primarily qualitative data on their experience of university and the subsequent transition into and progress through the graduate labour market. The last data was gathered in 2021, by which time participants were around 30 years of age. This presentation critiques the notion of 'luck' in narratives of finding a job, how it is a far from 'random' influence. It explores how young peoples' ability to negotiate their way through post-graduation lives is significantly framed by their classed and gendered backgrounds, and by their access to, and ability to deploy, a full range of capitals.

# Sociology of Education 2 - Room 4.205

### Care-full pedagogies: Navigating a hostile environment for gender and sexuality teaching in Higher Education (HE)

*Asan Mohammed, Charlotte Morris*

*(University of Portsmouth)*

Increased social divisions, 'culture wars', and the politicisation of gender can be said to have ushered in a new era for teaching gender in HE (Burke et al., 2022). In the UK, HE has increasingly become assailed by media pundits and politicians (Read, 2018), with provocative 'gender-coded' language (Shaw, 2002), exacerbating the potential for harm towards academics in this field (Morris, 2021). Through social media, the hostile landscape created by far-right thinkers has emboldened Internet users into harassing, threatening, and doxing academics for their views (Oksanen et al., 2021). This can particularly affect marginalised academics, who may also experience microaggressions from their students (Cueva, 2014).

This research unpacks the discourses that have led to intensified hostility towards academics in this field (Toldy & Garraio, 2020), and how this discursive environment has affected academics and students learning about gender. This qualitative study also addresses the complex challenges for academics and students in navigating this social landscape and makes recommendations for potential strategies. Neoliberal ideology has caused HE institutions to become less caring and prioritising care-full sociological practices is one way to counteract this (Lynch, 2010). Drawing on participants' perspectives, this paper suggests that to enact care-full practices, there needs to be attention to self-care, creating communities and greater solidarity to support those affected and enable transformation.

We hope to open up a conversation among those in the sociological field of gender studies to see how, as a community of scholars, we can best keep staff and students as safe as possible.

**Mature Students Returning to Education: Stigma, Symbolic Violence and Moral Project of the Self**

*Sarah Mclaughlin, William Baker*

*(University of Bristol)*

This paper extends the sociological study of educational inequalities, both empirically and theoretically, by exploring the experiences, narratives and perspectives of a group of eight mature working-class single mothers who returned to education, via an Access to HE Diploma course in England. In the UK, higher education (HE) is often valorised as a ticket to social mobility, wealth and well-being, assuming working class individuals aspire to move 'up' and 'out of' their class. Government discourses still present HE as a largely unproblematic and straightforward means of achieving upward mobility. In much of the literature on class inequalities in HE, the experiences and outcomes of mature working-class students are not well represented even though they are a target group in many widening participation strategies. This paper constructs the women's aspirations for HE around desires to remove stigmatising labels relating to claiming welfare, rather than move 'away' from their class. Neo-liberal and meritocratic discourses are connected with notions of stigma and symbolic violence as a framework to understand the effects of stigmatisation. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is applied to understand how the women engaged in the process of 'othering' as a way to distance themselves - social and morally - from other 'fractions' of their social class. We evidence how the widening participation agenda's implicit meritocratic and neo-liberal narrative further embeds the stigma of being working class and claiming welfare. Moreover, this paper extends our understanding of the formation of classed identities and mature students' aspirations for HE.

# Sociology of Education 3 - Room 4.206

**An Investigation of International Students' Negotiation of the Common-Sense "Rules" of the Internationalised Higher Education Environment**

*James Sumner*

*(University of Bristol)*

The ideal of an internationalised higher education environment offering an inclusive culture of teaching and learning can be compromised by the need international students have to adhere to the normative patterns constituting a traditionally Western hegemonic higher education setting, particularly in Anglophone countries. Consequently, discrepancies may emerge between the competencies and expectations these students possess and the practices they are required to undertake or interpret in their interactions with others within these settings. This research argues that in these situations students need to engage in extra-ordinary sense-making of the normative patterns constituting these interactions, conceptualised here as negotiating the "rules" (ten Have, 2004). Theoretically informed by ethnomethodology, negotiation occurs within an interactional space, one where time and space merge to give meaning to the actions occurring within it (Blommaert et al., 2005; Pennycook, 2010). The spaces comprise "rules" representing different normative scale-levels relating to the extent to which these actions are understandable. Negotiation is therefore made more complex due to the multi-layered nature of the "rules" which need to be made sense of. Presented here are the negotiation experiences of five non-native English-speaking Master's international students over their year of study at a UK university, offering qualitative data from diaries and interviews analysed both thematically and longitudinally. Results show that although the student negotiation was easier in more local spaces, this process was compromised by the expected requirements for their behaviour to index higher translocal "rules". Such tensions underscore the implications for different academic stakeholders which will also be discussed.

**Racial Inequities in HE Assessment: From Conceptualising Barriers to Measurable Solutions**

*Paul Campbell*

*(University of Leicester)*

There is a current dearth of sociological and empirically substantiated evidence as to what works with regards to equalizing the uneven educative experiences of racialized students in higher education. There are even less empirically substantiated answers to what works with regards to addressing the barriers specifically manifest within HE assessment and related practices that are experienced by domicile students of colour in UK Higher Education Providers (HEPs).

Drawing on the findings of the first holistic, large-scale, UK, multi-institution and mixed-methods evaluation of an intervention explicitly designed to reduce the racialised barriers that exist within HE assessment, presented in my recent book 'Race and Assessment in Higher Education' (Emerald), this paper explores the answers to these questions. Utilising Ahmend and Cushing (2021) 'ideal student' frame, this talk shines light on the Racially Inclusive Practice in Assessment Guidance Intervention's (RIPIAG) impact for improving (1) Teaching staff's ability to identify and reduce the racialised inequities that are manifest in their assessment practice. (2) Students from minority-ethnic backgrounds' experiences of assessment. And (3) its capacity to foster a reduction in the race award gap in student outcomes in assessment at the module level across all types of assessment in all disciplines. In doing so, this paper provides a case-study example of how to move from sociological enquiry to measurable change.

**The First-Generation College Student as Ideological Tool: A Critical Perspective on a Ubiquitous Category**

*Tina Wildhagen*

*(Smith College)*

University students whose parents/guardians did not complete college are known as "first-generation (FG) college students." While students who fit the definition of this category have existed as long as universities have, the category itself is a relatively recent phenomenon. I argue that as this category has become a ubiquitous way of talking about and measuring socioeconomic status in higher education, it has come to serve ideological imperatives of neoliberalism. Thus, as opposed to asking questions about how being a first-generation college student shapes college experiences and outcomes, the conceptual approach that I offer engages with how the category functions ideologically. I argue that the FG category offers higher education a way of discussing vast inequalities in cultural, material, and symbolic resources among students without invoking a conceptualization of social class that acknowledges its antagonistic and exploitative features. The discursive meanings of the category cohere around images of heroic individualism, assimilation, and upward mobility. Questions of redistribution or class conflict simply are not evoked by the meanings of this category. Drawing upon the work of critical sociologists of education, I also uncover the category's utility for two pillars of neoliberalism in higher education: meritocracy and diversity. Finally, I consider the ways in which students themselves might respond to this category. Though temporary for the individual, the FG category appears to have staying power at the institutional level, applied anew to entering populations of students as graduating cohorts make their exit. In addition to micro-level effects on individuals, I explore macro-level implications.

# Theory - Room 2.217

**Towards a Theory of the Role of Collective Memory in Struggles over Hegemony**

*Simina Dragos*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Many social transformations currently unfolding transnationally – the growth of nationalism, the rise of right-wing populism, democratic backsliding, threats to women's and LGBTQ+ rights, increased racial violence – can be understood from a Gramscian perspective as struggles for/over hegemony, or

attempts to reshape/rebalance (perceived) hegemony. Such struggles have something (though of course not the only thing) in common: they mobilise visions of the 'collective past' in a way that justifies the negative characterisation of the present. Right wing and fascist politicians talk about making America great 'again', reviving what Britain once 'used to be', 'returning' to Hungarian values, or taking 'back' control; indeed, the use of narratives about the past in populist and racist imaginaries has been well documented with regards to Brexit (e.g. Campanella & Dassu, 2019). Yet, the reasons why the past figures in so many conservative movements is scarcely theorised beyond notions of affect. Building on Hall's work on the relationship between culture and ideology, coupled with an understanding of the importance of ideology for hegemony, I propose a theory of the role of collective memory in hegemonic projects. I understand collective memory not as an affect (e.g. collective nostalgia) or a collective psychological state, but rather as the result of specific social practices (Olick & Robbins, 1998) which have ideological purchase. In this presentation, I explore the role of collective memory in hegemony in relation to nationalism, showing how articulations of collective memory are crucial to the nation as a hegemonic project (Miley, 2018).

### Unveiling the Dynamics of Social Transformation: Insights from Stanley Cohen's Legacy

*Yoav Mehozay*

*(University of Haifa)*

In an era of unprecedented social flux, this presentation revisits the seminal works of Stanley Cohen, a once-distinguished member of the British Sociological Association, emphasizing the enduring relevance of his contributions to understanding social transformations. The talk primarily underscores how Cohen advanced sociology's critical role in analyzing the forces that both drive and impede societal change. The presentation focuses on three key areas of Cohen's work: First, his concept of moral panics, which provides a critical lens for understanding societal reactions to perceived threats and their impact on social dynamics. Second, his insightful analysis of the transformation of social control mechanisms, offering valuable perspectives on how societies manage deviance and conflict. Third, his examination of societal denial and inaction in the face of social atrocities, which remains remarkably relevant today. Particularly, with respect to states of denial, the talk considers current social upheavals in the face of multiple humanitarian crises and the rise of populism. By applying Cohen's theoretical frameworks to these contemporary challenges, the presentation demonstrates how his work continues to provide valuable insights into the complexities of social transformation and stagnation. This analysis not only honors Cohen's intellectual legacy but also illustrates how sociological theory can illuminate pathways for understanding and potentially addressing pressing social issues in our rapidly changing world.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.204

### The Dynamics of Traditions in Markets: Institution, Network and Knowledge in Xibo Industry of Chencun Town,China, 1949-2021

*Yuxuan Chen*

*(Renmin University of China)*

How do traditions persist in a market Drawing from the literature on the cultural perspectives of markets sociology, the author proposes an explanation for the mechanisms of traditions within an interactional framework of institutions, networks and knowledge, explaining the dynamics of Xibo(a kind of ritual good) market in Chencun Town, China. With oral history data from fieldworks and pieces from the archives, I contend that traditions manifest as knowledge at the individual and inter-individual levels, guiding market interactions and leading to the spatial embeddedness of markets. In contrast, at the collective level, traditions appear as a legitimizing attitude towards historical practices, interacting with state-level ideological pressures, causing narrative struggle and thereby inducing institutional and network changes. Within the narrative struggle, new pieces of knowledge emerge, navigating actors in subsequent interaction, while enabling the detachment of tradition from its production basis.

### Organisation, Materiality and the Hospital Bed

*Paul White, Jocelyn Finniear*

*(Swansea University)*

Based upon an ethnography of UK intensive care units, we trace fabrics of relations that flow from and surround a hospital bed. Whether technical or natural, sets of assumptions are imbued within objects through their design and development (Latour, 1987). A gun is inscribed with assumptions around death, accuracy, recoil, whilst a stone in a stream may transform into a technology that enables a dry route across flowing water (Heidegger, 1977). We examine the ways in which relations are inscribed into objects pre, peri and post priori through the very core of the hospital all hospital infrastructure, the bed (Armstrong, 1998). Micro-politics surrounding status and gender are played out across unconscious bodies, reproducing a wider set of discourses. We envisage the bed as an interface object that makes explicit far broader social worlds than those simply at the bedside. Ideas, politics, assumptions are inscribed into the bed where we explore the social worlds that emanate from the bedside and illustrate how the bed itself is figured. Whilst we examine the mundane hospital bed and the bed side as a space of material relations, this is an empirical expediency and a vantage point for the study of organisation. Crucially, we show the ways in which objects refract, produce and reproduce broader social relations. Assumptions are not simply held within objects through design, but are emplaced upon them, where we suggest objects of themselves may produce novel insights into the realities and relationality of organisation.

### Accumulating the Economic Capital: Professions and Savings

*Karina Pavlisa*

*(University of Bristol)*

Scholarship in financialisation of everyday life established the subjectivity of the investing and saving subject, yet limited attention is paid to collective subjectivities. The propensity to accumulate economic capital is socially defined, and the social and cultural conditionings in professional domains alongside the capabilities derived from occupational fields, contribute to management of personal finance. Through the lens of cultural class analysis - an approach that links the systems of social structures with the systems of socially defined dispositions - the paper theorises the mechanism of professional socialisation that underlines professional identities. The paper then examines the saving behaviour of professional groups, identified with reliance on the logics of Bourdieusian theory, and empirically tests the differences in accumulation behaviours of the fractions of the professional managerial class, as part of investigation into financial identities. Using the British Understanding Society survey (2010-2019) data, this paper explores the relationship between occupational membership and personal savings. It finds some significant between-occupational contrasts in individuals' propensity to save and the levels of savings within the professional-managerial domains. The paper argues that cultural class analysis rooted in Bourdieu's theory is a valuable perspective for the analysis of financial identities with implications for understanding inequality.

### Networking Capital and Labor: The Role of Deep Interfaces in China's Creator Economy

*June Wang*

*(City University of Hong Kong)*

Studies on the human-machine interface, particularly in Ergonomics, highlight a shift where machines increasingly control information flow and decision-making, raising questions about the future role of human subjects. This paper argues for an epistemological shift towards a "deep interface" perspective, adopting "threshold thinking" to conceptualize the interface as an assemblage of interconnected, potentially infinite interfaces, which create pathways for the relay of information, goods, people, and ideas (Bratton, 2015). This STS-inspired approach reveals hidden labor essential to maintaining media and material infrastructures, as well as the uneven power dynamics in these processes.

I will illustrate the "deep interface" through the case of China's creator economy, which redefines intellectual property (IP) as an "accumulated effect" that grows in value through replication across various forms—fiction, movies, mobile games, tourism attractions and more. In 2011, tech giants Tencent and Alibaba set out to build a creator economy that integrated cultural production, publicity,

and dissemination into a cohesive supply chain. The liquidation of IP validates and necessitates the establishment of a value chain that taps into the extensive pool of individual creators and consumers distributed across various sectors. This economy constructs a subjectivity apparatus that demands self-transformation, as digital laborers adopt entrepreneurial mindsets to assemble ever-expansive cooperative networks. These networks generate new subjectivities, reshaping society while highlighting the inseparable link between digital capitalism and the creative energies of its workforce. Through the lens of the deep interface, the case of China's creator economy reveals the mutual constitution of capital and digital labor subjects.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.205

### Welfare Recipients' Access to Activation Programs from 2008 to 2022: A Gender Study

*Veronika Knize*

*(Institute for Employment Research)*

Across welfare states, welfare recipients can participate in "activation" programs to improve their chances of finding employment. While a few studies have found that women's participation was lower than men's during the 2000s, we do not know whether program participation has changed over the last years amid normative changes in gender roles and the rise of individualistic policies. I attempt to fill this research gap investigating whether, how, and why program participation in Germany changed from 2008 to 2021. Preliminary findings show that the gender gap in program participation has been declining. Since women's reduced participation translates into lower chances of (re)training and employment for them, a real decline in the gap would be an advancement toward gender equity. I shed light on whether the change is due to quantitative changes (e.g., women's participation would increase if relatively fewer mothers collected benefits) or qualitative changes. Are today's parents of young children more gender egalitarian, meaning that being available for job search is no longer as gendered? Are public employment services more gender neutral in what they promote? I consider the dimensions of policies, public employment services, and family and individual in the analysis. Empirically, I draw an inflow sample from administrative data every year from 2008 to 2019 and apply regression methods on each year to explore program participation within the two following years. A key distinction is made between parents and non-parents of younger children. Ultimately, this paper studies whether gender is becoming less important in the welfare state.

### (Mis)Recognised Capitals as Barriers to Employment in Activation Programmes

*Helen Tracey*

*(Northumbria University)*

Stigmatised groups face labour market devaluation of their capital (Hennekam et al., 2023; Joy et al., 2020) and institutionalised attempts to instil recognised forms of social and cultural capital (Clouet et al., 2022). Activation approaches to unemployment seek to promote individual employability as a positive disposition towards work. Typically, activation programmes emphasise participant malleability in meeting labour market demands for low-paid, low-skilled workers. This is especially problematic for participants experiencing multiple and entrenched barriers because it places the onus on their agency and capacity for change rather than on stakeholders' willingness to adapt to participants' needs.

This paper analyses ethnographic data from two hospitality-focused activation programmes seeking to help people with multiple barriers, including homelessness, disability and substance use, transition into training and employment. Building on a Bourdieusian perspective, we examine how participants were required to engage with the activation programme according to its institutionalised logics and conditions. Our analysis emphasises how participants' capitals, including skills, experience and other forms of cultural and social capital, were simultaneously devalued or misrecognised according to the perceived expectations of labour market demands. Although participants were not necessarily expected to achieve stable employment, programmes sought to instil and ascribe capital associated with particular

labour market norms, for example through focusing on appearance and psychological disposition. Our critique explores how diverse programme-related actors conceived and negotiated forms of capital, and we question the implications of adopting and mobilising different framings of capital for social transformation.

**Return Migration, Employment Absorption and Gentrification: A Micro Perspective of "Chinese Dream" in Rural Tourism**

*Tongming Wang*

*(University of Southampton)*

Under the current call and wave of China's rural revitalization, the country's development strategy is gradually shifting from the traditional urban focus to rural areas. As China's rate of urbanisation accelerates, rural areas face the dual pressures of population exodus and economic backwardness. The development of rural areas urgently needs the injection of talent and the activation of intelligence. At this critical turning point, how to attract and retain talents has become a crucial task. Therefore, this study aims to explore how return migrants are attracted back to the countryside. Rural tourism villages in Zhejiang Province were selected as fieldwork sites for this study, and through a total of seven months of in-depth observation and interviews using ethnographic methods, the study aims to unravel how the processes of gentrification may form micro-practices that shape the "Chinese dream" of rural tourism. Importantly, there is a research gap on the concept of gentrification in China. In Western sociological literature, gentrification usually carries negative connotations, such as displacement of local people and social exclusion. In the real context of rural revitalization in China, however, gentrification is mostly presented as a positive process. In the process of urban-rural migration, rural gentrification and lifestyle migration with unique Chinese characteristics have been formed. For example, this combination of macro-level guidance with individuals' social networks and place attachment provides an insightful case study for examining the micro-practices of individuals' choices to return to their home villages in China's rural revitalization.

# PLENARY
# 13:30-15:00
## Lecture Theatre B

# Vron Ware

## LETTING THE LAND SPEAK

If we are to grasp the multiple crises we face today, we might do well to begin with the ground beneath our feet, wherever we find ourselves. If the soil itself can promise a rich source of knowledge about the social, cultural, environmental, political and economic ordering of planet earth, how might this perspective also offer shared understanding of the multiple crises that threaten the diversity of all life forms? A focus on the local, the small place, can, for example, lead to discoveries about the sediment of wars past and current as well as the likely impact of organised violence to come. It can also lead directly to the urgent question of what we are to eat and how to feed each other in a society that, in Murray Bookchin's words, has gone mad in its need to grow.

**Vron Ware's '**lifelong project has addressed the politics of gender and race, colonial history, national identity, militarism, peace, the cultural heritage of war, and ecological thought.' She is a writer, photographer and researcher with an international reputation for her work on race, gender, peace, militarism and ecology.  She is currently a visiting researcher and the Department of Gender Studies, London School of Economics.

Her recent books include Return of a Native: Learning from the Land (Repeater Books, 2022) and England's Military Heartland: Preparing for war on Salisbury Plain co-authored with Antonia Dawes, Mitra Pariyar and Alice Cree (Manchester University Press, 2025).

*England's Military Heartland: Preparing for war on Salisbury Plain* is the first in-depth study of everday life in the environs of one of the largest army bases in the UK.  By investigating the military bootprint on the unique ecology of Salisbury Plain, the book illuminates the ways in which the drive to war is fostered at home.

*Return of a Native: Learning from the Land* challenges the dominant meanings of the word 'rural' as an idea that contains and conceals a vast amount of history. Central to fantasies of English ethnicity in the anglophone world of settler colonies, today the question of rurality animates divisive expressions of national identity, not least in the politics of food, farming and environmental harm. And while there is an expanding literature on the phenomenology of place, the cultural power of landscape, and the importance of being attentive to the natural world, we are often left with a depiction of the English countryside that overlooks decades of struggles over belonging, exclusion and recognition. Written in experimental form, Return of a Native views the world from a small place in southern England. From the soil to the horizon, it offers an ecological reckoning with the country's future as well as its deep history, from Bronze Age ruins to the fall-out from Brexit.

**Chair: Vanessa May, University of Manchester, BSA Publications Trustee**

British Sociological Association Annual Conference 2025
University of Manchester

# PAPER SESSION 3
## 15:30-17:00

# BSA Special Activity 1 - Lecture Theatre A
# Journal Special Event

**Navigating the Publishing Process: Insights from Journal Editors**

*Vicki Harman, Robert Meadows, John Solomos*

*(University of Reading, University of Surrey, Warwick University)*

To publish in academic journals, it's hugely helpful to have a clear understanding of what makes a strong submission and how the editorial processes operate. This session, led by experienced editors of *Ethnic and Racial Studies* – John Solomos – and BSA Journal *Sociology* – Vicki Harman and Robert Meadows – will provide invaluable insights into factors that influence the journey of a paper within a journal.

The editors will cover topics such as what makes a good manuscript; what editors are looking for in their initial editorial assessment; and the rationale behind desk rejections, so that attendees develop a sense of why some papers do not proceed to peer review and what you can do to increase your chances of getting out to peer review. The editors will also cover engaging with peer reviewer comments, being a peer reviewer and learning from that experience to support your own writing practice.

With ample time for audience questions, this session provides an opportunity for delegates to gain behind-the-scenes insights into the publishing process.

# BSA Special Activity 2 - Room 4.206
# Applied Sociology Special Event

**Building Sociological Futures: Career Pathways Built on the Sociologies**

*Nick Fox, Tom Genillard, Tina Basi, Katie Powell, Sunny Gunessee, Steve Raven*

*(University of Huddersfield, OCR, University of Cambridge, University of Sheffield, Jewish Community Secondary School, University of Birmingham)*

This special event is a call to action for all sociologists attending the conference to transform the impact sociology can and should make across society and build the sociology family.

Our objective is to build a connection for the wider public with sociology through tangible actions we can take to embed sociological knowledge into career pathways, starting with its place in the school curriculum and making the case for sociology at the degree level.

Following the 2024 Conference session on developing public sociology – this 2025 event brings together four panellists to discuss four actionable perspectives:

1. Making sociology-focused links with schools through the A-level syllabus
2. Engaging with career pathway qualifications, state exams and vocational training
3. Exploring sociology triggers that support the professional's decision-making in the workplace
4. Developing careers advice by exploring sociology-packaged careers

Nick Fox will make the case for "Why sociology in the workplace matters". Followed by the panellists:

1. Tom Genillard Sociology & Criminology A Level Subject Advisor, will speak about connecting with school-based sociology
2. Tina Basi will speak on Applied Sociology: Mindsets and Skills
3. Katie Powell will speak on place-based health inequalities, triggering sociological decision-making amongst the wider public health workforce
4. Sunny Gunessee will introduce case studies from his Sound Sociology podcast series, focusing on sociological knowledge packaged career pathways

**Discussant:** Steve Raven, University of Birmingham, BSA Trustee Public Engagement

# Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 2.218

**Commercialisation versus Transparency in Urban Regeneration? The Case of Plymouth City Centre**

*Mike Sheaff*

*(University of Plymouth)*

In July 2023 the government identified twenty towns and cities for "regeneration and renaissance" involving "densification of our inner cities". In one of these cities, Plymouth, in August 2023 the City Council announced, "plans to power up the city centre's regeneration" with its Cabinet approving the establishment of a 'Strategic Investment and Regeneration Board'. The terms of reference state it, "will provide the strategic direction for both the physical and the social regeneration of the city centre." In addition to city council nominees, Board membership includes the Department of Housing & Communities, and Homes England. The latter, an arms-length government agency, experienced what a 2023 Public Bodies Review report described as a "broadening" of it remit "into placemaking and regeneration." This now embraces commercial infrastructure as well as housing. The Strategic Board has since approved a Non-Disclosure Agreement, making public scrutiny of its discussions and decisions difficult.

Beginning with a brief background, including secrecy around the felling of over one hundred trees in March 2023, the paper moves to more recent developments. Particular attention is given to the withholding of information from the public domain on grounds of "commercial interests". With the Strategic Board's remit extending beyond physical infrastructure to "social regeneration", implications for accountability and local democracy are considered.

Using documentary sources, including official reports, and disclosures through freedom of information requests, I briefly reflect on developments since the 1995 BSA conference (with its theme 'Contested Cities') when I presented a paper also using Plymouth as an example.

**'We've lost the doctor's, we've lost the village hall…now you've taken the pub': Pub Closures, Community Decline and the Sociology of Endings**

*Thomas Thurnell-Read, Robert Deakin*

*(Loughborough University)*

Pubs have been an important feature of British society for generations and are still widely acknowledged as important hubs for social interaction. Yet pubs have been closing at an alarming rate, with one in four pubs in the UK closed permanently between 2000 and 2020. While pub closures involve the loss of livelihoods they also represent a long-term weakening of social connections for individuals and communities. In this paper we use case study data from new research on the causes and consequences of pub closures to understand their impact at a personal, social and cultural level. In this analysis, we take inspiration from Crow's call for a 'sociology of endings' that foregrounds processes of social change involving decline and loss. Examining the stories used to frame pub closures highlights the emotions and affective charges involved in processes of social decline and cultural change. In particular, such narratives illuminate how individuals and communities must navigate the transitions from one form of social organisation to another.

**Seeing Urban Governance like a Community Organisation**

*Helen Traill*

*(University of Glasgow)*

Over the past 15 years, during a period of deepening local cuts, austerity, and rising inflation, community growing has seen a remarkable resilience, despite acute difficulties within the funding landscape. Despite the pull to act as "little platoons" (Peck, 1995) in support of the march of neoliberal governance, it is not clear that local organisations have fulfilled this role; often acting as life rafts of radical imagination as much as sites of governmentality, and often home to conflicting dynamics of both welcome and exclusion. Building on visions of community spaces as ambivalent and contextual, this paper develops a perspective on urban governance from the ground up to explore the hardiness of community growing and the exploitable tensions at the level of the local state available to localised actors. Drawing early conclusions from a project mapping community growing sites over time, participant observation, and interviews with long term incumbents in Glasgow's community scene, this paper explores the current conjuncture as a site of urban exhaustion (Madden, 2022) and opportunity, to probe how radical and regulatory tensions emerge and move over time. In this, it aims to develop a sense of urban governance from the everyday, as what Beveridge and Koch (2019) call the source, site and stake of urban politics.

**Engaged Publics: Organising in Crisis**

*Imogen Bayfield*

*(Coventry University)*

This presentation of a monograph-in-progress provides a critical examination of the cultural norms of collective organising in contemporary Britain, through the lens of three community groups engaged in a 'community empowerment' programme, called Big Local. The groups had formed to make decisions about funding allocated to their local neighbourhoods. In keeping with the intention of Big Local to 'empower', they were given freedom and autonomy to decide how to work. This presented the opportunity to examine the societal norms of organising that had 'rippled out' to these community spaces. Fieldwork straddled the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, generating insights into how groups change when crisis hits, and the challenges, and surprising benefits, that arise.

The book presents 'group habitus' as a powerful theoretical tool for analysing how groups organise themselves and their work, and the ways in which broader sociopolitical contexts pattern group life. A timely study of collective organising as community groups navigated emerging community needs amidst the disruption of the pandemic, this ethnographic account is used to develop conceptual insights into the sociocultural norms that inform how diverse publics work together, and what this means for our collective capacity to address society's most pressing problems.

# Culture, Media, Sport & Food 1 - Room 4.213

**Where are the Working Class in the British Film Industry? Data from the British Film Institute**

*Peter Campbell, Dave O'Brien, Mark Taylor*

*(University of Liverpool)*

A range of research, including analyses of quantitative data, has demonstrated the existence of inequalities for women and people of colour in the screen sector's workforce. There has been less data collection in relation to class inequalities, and therefore less analysis of this aspect of the workforce. This paper considers this historic absence of data relating to class and considers a new source of data. Analysis of applicants to the British Film Institute's Film Fund provides new insight into class inequalities and how they intersect with other demographic categories. This analysis demonstrates the classed patterns of application and success in relation to funding for screen industries in the UK, with the dominance of those from middle class origins throughout each stage of funding. Intersectional analysis of these inequalities shows which groups, at the intersection of class, race, and gender, are more likely to receive funding. Drawing on Nwonka's groundbreaking work on race and data in the screen sector,

this paper also considers the limitations of solely 'data-driven' responses to screen- and creative- sector inequalities, and the need for broader considerations of the structural factors in play.

### Side Jobs as Shields against Precariousness, Compromission and Entrepreneurialism among Independent Musicians

*Jeremy Vachet*

*(Audencia Business School/LabSIC Université Sorbonne Paris Nord)*

This presentation contributes to debates on the meaning and standards of career success among cultural workers. While precariousness is widely recognised as a feature of working lives in the cultural and creative industries, literature documenting cultural work often portray side jobs as 'humdrum' or 'bad', if not outright as a sign of failure at making it as an artist. Although distributed differently depending on gender, sex, class and race, this presentation takes a different approach by suggesting that people may resist contingency, dull activities and compelled entrepreneurialism by opting out from a full-time career without quitting their music activities nor considering it as a failure. Unveiling different types of side jobs related and unrelated to music, the presentation presents the struggle and ethical dilemmas resulting from being pulled between a calling for music and economic imperatives. Based on more than 60 interviews of musicians and participant observation in metropolitan areas in France, Sweden, Iceland and the United States, our findings suggest that people resort to more 'classical' forms of work, i.e., waged labour unrelated to music, because (1) it provides a relative security that balances out the uncertainty of music activities, entrepreneurial pressures and bad working conditions and (2) it maintains their sense of ethics, artistic legitimacy and ontological security. Put differently, participants are willing to trade off some of their independence and autonomy – symbols of expected individualisation and self-realisation through occupation – for the relative security of waged labour.

### What is the Relationship between Education and Inequality in the Cultural and Creative Industries?

*David O'Brien*

*(University of Manchester)*

Cultural and creative industries are well known for inequalities within their workforce. There is a rich history of research on this subject. Most recently, academic (e.g. Brook et al 2022, Comunian et al 2024) and policy (Comunian et al 2023) research has turned to look at the role of Higher Education (HE), particularly creative HE courses, in those workforce inequalities. This paper extends that emerging literature by synthesising the findings of 3 research projects. The first section of the paper is focus on entry to creative HE. Here, it demonstrates significant class inequalities in access to creative HE. It offers an intersectional understanding of these class inequalities, looking at the intersection of ethnicity, gender and class on who gets in to do creative courses. The paper then looks at graduate outcomes, finding significant inequalities when creative graduates enter the labour market, particularly for those seeking to enter artistic occupations. The final section of the paper draws on a longitudinal qualitative dataset to illustrate the importance of creative HE to sustaining artistic and cultural careers. As a result, the paper shows the paradox of HE in sustaining careers whilst sustaining inequalities.

# Culture, Media, Sport & Food 2 - Room 4.209

### Beyond Meat & Memes: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Vegan Social Media Activism

*Christopher Till, Jessica Drakett, Joseph Ibrahim, Ruth Woolsey*

*(Leeds Beckett University)*

This paper will present findings from an ongoing multimodal critical discourse analysis of vegan social media activist and promotional posts on Instagram and TikTok; two of the most widely used and influential social media platforms today. It will suggest that prominent in this discourse is a construction of veganism as rational, caring, vibrant and (often) aligned with femininity and motherhood. The

avoidance of animal products has moved closer to the centre of mainstream culture in recent years with social media often a key site for debates over its ethics and efficacy (Hughes, 2022; Marshall, 2021; Morgan, 2022; Oltermann, 2021; Rivera, 2022; Vernelli, 2022; Webber, 2021). This project explores how the affordances of these platforms are used to mobilise positive discourses of veganism by investigating how meaningful connections are made between text, image, and audio in discursive formations. The findings suggest consistencies or connections between posts of diverse genres (activist, lifestyle, celebrity, recipe) in their broad messaging, lexical construction, use of composition, colour, and constructions of subjectivity. The analysis helps to develop understanding of how veganism is portrayed and promoted and to whom, and how cultural, ethical, and political debates and dichotomies are constructed in this context. More broadly it also helps to better understand the impact of image and video based social media on the formation of lifestyles and movements and how media influence functions in contemporary society.

## The Intersections of Race and Gendered Stereotypes in Digital Women Footballers in FIFA22

*Paul Campbell, Marcus Maloney, Anika Leslie-Walker*

*(University of Leicester)*

This article examines the ways in which the numerical values, that are the foundations upon which digital worlds are built, of football sports video game(s) (SVG) align with, disrupt or present new stories of race and gender in sport. We employ Bogost's (2007) 'procedural rhetoric' frame to explore the ways in which the numerical values which constitute FIFA22's 'Top 100' Black and White digital women footballers reflect or challenge the exclusionary discourses that have, thus far, shaped the experiences of White and Black female sporting athletes in the social world. Findings demonstrate considerable differences between the construction, sporting competencies and artificial emotional and sporting intelligence assigned to Black and White digital players within the game. They also demonstrate the ways in which the numerical foundations of racialised digital women footballers are informed by, and reflect, processes of both sporting misogynoir and Whiteness, which intersect and underpin the markedly anti-Black and anti-feminine framings and sporting competencies of digital Black female footballers within this digital sports world.

## Between Shadows and Silences: Rethinking the Politics of Non-Participation in Anti-Poverty Activism

*Barbora Adlerova*

*(Independent Researcher)*

Intensifying food inequalities in the UK have highlighted questions of 'participatory justice' for people with lived experience of food insecurity and their inclusion in decision-making across different scales and spaces. Despite an increasing interest in co-design and participation as a key for social transformation, one less understood challenge of mobilising lived experience in decision-making is non-participation. Therefore, in my contribution, I will offer a gentle re-reading of non-participation in storytelling-based anti-poverty activism. Building on the criticisms of individual empowerment, where non-participation is often understood as participants lacking confidence, time or skills to engage, I draw on the metaphor of non-participation as a shadow of participation (Power et al. 2020). Through the shadow lens that changes, protects and transforms, I propose that there are certain aspects of non-participation that should be understood as a self-care practice and a potential resistance to the participatory spaces shaped by intersectional oppressions Such resistance may or may not be intentional, remains uncertain and even unknowable, but still has the potential to disrupt participatory business-as-usual by rendering certain activities impossible or at least preventing organisations from accruing value from being seen as experts in engagement. I suggest that recovery and more just participatory mechanisms may be still possible by shifting the perspective from individual responsibilities to scrutinising participatory structures and practices. I discuss the shadow of participation by drawing on two vignettes from my doctoral research exploring how local food partnerships and member organisations involve so-called 'experts by experience' in food decision-making across different scales.

**Workplace Eating and the Influence of Work on Eating Practices in Contemporary Urban China: Findings from Individual Routines of Guangzhou Residents**

*Eric Yan*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

Existing debates on workplace eating and the influence of work on eating have mostly focused on eating occasions within work schedules, especially workday lunches. Less attention is paid to how work extensively influences individuals' routines and experiences of eating both in and out of the workplace and working time. Furthermore, there is little research outside Euro-American societies, particularly in China, despite its specific foodscapes and work culture. My research, in light of China's overtime work culture, fills these gaps by drawing on Bernard Lahire's perspective on the conflict between individual dispositions and contexts and practice theories' approach to depict routines. Focusing on current residents of Guangzhou City, China's economic "southern gate," data was collected through interviews, participant observations in the participants' workplaces where possible, and their 24-hour food diaries. The participants vary in occupation and social stratum.

The findings reveal that eating at or around the workplace, or with work-related purposes, is experienced by my participants as controlled by the workplace hierarchy, regulations, social obligations and time frames, bolstering their negative judgements and sensory comments on the food eaten. Meanwhile, work rhythms and workplace relations, resented as sources of pressure, stolen time, and loss of agency and control over one's body, also determine their eating practices outside work, especially compensatory eating on workday evenings or even midnights. In this way, my research extends the focus on the tension between work and eating to the broader scope of work-life conflict and balance based on instructive cases of individuals' multi-contextual culinary routines.

# Environment & Society - Room 3.209

**Radical Enough for Change? Divestment and the Mainstreaming of Climate Action**

*Carol Richards*

*(Queensland University of Technology)*

Around a decade ago, climate activists laid the foundations of a new fossil fuel divestment campaign to discourage investment in the industry due to its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and its impact on the climate. Driven by a coalition of environmental NGOs, the commitment to fossil fuel divestment from multiple sectors has elicited significant attention, with pension funds, banks, universities, the faith and the philanthropic communities publicly divesting their interests or making commitments not to invest in fossil fuels. By many accounts the campaign has been effective, with claims that USD$6 trillion has been withdrawn from coal, gas and oil globally. Drawing on New Social Movements theory, this paper explores how divestment as a climate change campaign strategy has evolved over a decade to current expressions of activism and resistance at the interface of markets and fossil fuel industries. The empirical basis of this work is two qualitative data sets collected in 2015 and 2023-2024, comprising of face-to-face interviews with a total of 92 respondents in Australia and the UK. The findings highlight how activists initially created new spaces of engagement to enrol various publics into non-radical forms of climate action, and how divestment has more recently been viewed as 'mainstream' requiring more radical forms of direct action to disrupt flows of capital around fossil fuel, and related industries.

**The Making of Climate Denizens: Everyday Rhythms and Citizenship Incapability**

*Jacob Nielsen*

*(Robert Gordon University)*

This paper argues that to understand the creation of citizens and denizens it is necessary to examine the interlinkages between everyday rhythms and citizenship capabilities. Drawing on Lefebvre's work on capitalism's colonisation of the everyday and Sen's capability approach the paper argues that due to the intensification of state-capitalist reconfigurations and intensifications of everyday rhythms, people are being disposed of their capabilities to actively participate in citizenship practices. The paper argues

that recent economic, political and social transformations have increased the precarity of work, place, welfare and social relations. As life gets increasingly precarious people increasingly are stuck in their everyday rhythms of survival. This also means that people are increasingly disposed of their capabilities to utilise their citizenship rights and participate in citizen actions.

To illustrate these dynamics the project will focus on the issue of deliberative citizens involvement in climate change initiatives. Most research has focused on examining the power dynamics and impacts of these deliberative climate change initiatives, however, everyday rhythms and unequal patterns of people's capabilities to participate in these initiatives have been less explored. To address this gap, the paper draws on interviews and ethnographic findings from deliberative activities from an EU project on the social acceptance of Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage. The findings indicate that people's pressured everyday rhythms of navigating, work, social isolation, and welfare systems disposed them of most of their capabilities to participate in even limited deliberative initiatives such as town hall meetings, focus groups, and deliberative workshops.

### At the Frontline of Climate Activism: An Ethnographic Exploration of the Gendered Dynamics within Contemporary Climate Movements in Ireland

*Edith Busteed*

*(University College Cork)*

Utilising a gender lens, this research explores the dynamics of contemporary climate activism in the Republic of Ireland. Climate related disasters are increasing in severity and frequency at an alarming rate, resulting in the reactionary emergence of new climate activist movements on a global scale aiming to hold governments and corporations accountable for climate catastrophe. A gendered analysis of climate activism can aid the development of novel understandings of how gender identity and relations inform and transform approaches to tackling the climate crisis.

Ethnographic observations followed by semi-structured interviews with members of contemporary climate movements are used to gain insight into how gender is embedded in climate movement identity, participation, and tactics. This research incorporates visual ethnography through photo documentation of the props and banners used during demonstrations. The theoretical underpinning of this research is informed by feminist interpretation of social movement theory, providing a systematic analysis of how social movements are gendered (Kuumba, 2001; Einwohner et al.,2000). This theoretical synthesis combines new social movement theory with ecofeminist theory to develop a distinct gendered analysis of contemporary climate activism.

My empirical research will inform and advance understandings of the under researched relationship between gender and contemporary climate activist movements. Investigating how gender informs our responses to and approaches to climate action can help 'challenge the patriarchal systems that perpetuate climate change to leave behind a more gender-just and ecologically sustainable society for future generations' (Iglesias, 2022).

# Families & Relationships - Room 4.214

### Becoming Fathers: The Surrogacy Journey of Chinese Gay Men

*Congwei Zheng*

*(University of Glasgow)*

This study explores the experiences of Chinese gay men who pursue fatherhood through surrogacy, offering a unique perspective on the intersection of sexual identity, family formation, and surrogacy technology in a socio-cultural context where LGBTQ+ rights remain limited. Based on in-depth interviews with 30 sets of 32 Chinese gay fathers who had children born through surrogacy arrangements, this research examines their motivations, decision-making processes, and the challenges they face while navigating surrogacy.

The study highlights how traditional Chinese values of marriage, family, and parenthood influence these men's decisions and experiences. Participants recount their journey through legal, financial, and

emotional hurdles, as well as the ethical considerations involved in choosing a surrogate mother. These narratives reveal a complex negotiation between personal desires, familial expectations, and societal norms.

Through the lens of surrogacy, this research uncovers how Chinese gay men are reshaping family structures and pushing against the boundaries of traditional fatherhood. It also addresses broader issues such as the legal and policy constraints on surrogacy in China and the growing global surrogacy industry. By providing an in-depth analysis of their lived experiences, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of LGBTQ+ family formation in contemporary China and fosters discussions on the evolving concept of fatherhood within non-traditional family structures.

## The Family Life and Social Adaptation of Chinese Queer Women Families Having Children via Assisted Reproductive Technology

*Xinzhe Hu*

*(University of York)*

Since 2016, children born out of traditional heterosexual marriage in China can apply for permanent residence registration, provided they possess a birth medical certificate and written support to explain their birth. Also, by September 2024, sixteen provincial governments in China have included ART services in health insurance to promote fertility willingness. Still, couples will need a marriage certificate (which is only available to heterosexual couples) and proof of infertility to use this service. These policy changes offer Chinese queer people who are pursuing parenthood a greater degree of flexibility. However, as a result of both the cultural incongruity due to the traditional Chinese family structure, the absence of legal protection and the disputed technology use, same-sex attracted parents using ARTs can be dragged into social and legal quagmires and thus become vulnerable. My research aimed to help create a more supportive and inclusive environment for this new type of family in China by exploring their family life and social adaptation. My findings were based on data from 25 in-depth interviews with Chinese non-heterosexual women who were or planned to become mothers. These findings shed light on how they chose different ARTs, how they divided reproductive and family responsibilities, and their experiences inside and outside their family, including those in broader family, social networks and the public system and showed how heterosexual hegemony shapes Chinese lesbian women's decisions, experiences and reflections on reproduction, family and even their lives.

## Queer Kinships, Spreadsheet Fertility and Social Class in Gay Surrogacy in the UK

*Marcin W. Smietana*

*(Ca' Foscari University of Venice/University of Cambridge)*

This paper first introduces the concept of spreadsheet fertility as an emergent kind of fertility that is mediated by monetised spreadsheets, and thus by social class, and which is well visible in surrogacy arrangements undertaken by gay men living in the UK. It captures the complexity of fertility planning and deliberation involved in having children by gay men using surrogates. And it is exacerbated by persistent heteronormativity of public funding for fertility treatments within the NHS. However, the spreadsheets also act as condensed signifiers of an important form of fertility change, a shift toward deliberate, proactive and calculated approaches to achieving desired fertility goals, which increasingly characterise many heterosexual couples and singles as well.

The paper then takes a step further to illustrate empirically the challenges inherent in spreadsheet fertility, as well as alternatives to it. It does so by using ethnographic cases representing different kinds of non-heteronormative and queer kinships that are created through surrogacy in the UK, including altruistic traditional surrogacy arrangements that are unique to the UK model. I draw on qualitative interviews with 30 families of gay men I carried out in 2020-2023 in the UK.

The paper closes with the question: if spreadsheet fertility is here to stay, what can we do to mitigate its paradoxical affects? I argue for queer reproductive justice that considers how social class, sexuality, gender and race shape access to reproduction and determine what kinds of queer families and relationships are built.

# Lifecourse - Room 3.212

**Social Backgrounds and Future Aspirations: Examining Variations in Future Aspirations across Hukou, Class, and Gender in China**

*Yongyi Wu*

*(University of Manchester)*

The economic and higher education transformation in contemporary China necessitates sociological research to understand social inequalities in a nuanced account. Exploring social inequalities in China helps to examine the effectiveness of existing social inequality theories in a fast-changing society. This paper presents empirical results from twenty-seven interviews with students studying in universities and vocational colleges in Guangdong Province, China. It aims to understand the association between social backgrounds and future aspirations among the sample when they were faced with graduation. Following Bourdieu's approach to class analysis and theory of social reproduction, the research demonstrates how social inequalities could be reproduced or transformed in China due to uneven distribution of cultural resources across class, Hukou, and gender. The findings show that class inequalities among the sample are connected to the economic resources, educational resources and broader cultural resources in family, also connected to Hukou status. Moreover, uneven access to economic and cultural resources shapes the sample's aspirations, with the rural sample members having more 'modest' or 'realistic' aspirations than the urban sample members. Some female rural sample members reported a lack of cultural resources and social support in the pursuit of upward mobility. Overall, rural sample members were likely to achieve upward mobility, but likely still in a disadvantaged position compared with urban sample members. The findings highlight the need to consider social transformation dynamics when understanding social inequalities in different social contexts.

**Caught In-Between: Youth Masculinities, Mobility and Immobility in Urban India and South Africa**

*Shannon Philip*

*(University of Cambridge)*

Within the lifecourses of young men, the idea of becoming 'breadwinners' by working outside the home, are an important aspect of becoming an appropriately gendered subject. However in postcolonial contexts of India and South Africa, deep rooted inequalities often mean that many young men do not achieve 'breadwinner' status, even with education and degrees. In such contexts, how do educated young men negotiate and manage their upward social mobility and immobility? And how does this mobility and immobility shape their youth masculinities as well as their gendered relationships with women?

In this paper, I seek to explore these questions and make a theoretical contribution through the idea of young educated men being 'caught in-between'. I reveal the ways in which transforming economics of India and South Africa provide some mobility for young men, yet the deep inequalities of race, class and caste continue to produce deep immobilities. In doing so, I argue that youth and masculinities scholars need a decolonial understanding of gendered lifecourses, and critical reflection on the continuing colonial legacies shaping youth lives in postcolonial contexts. Hence this paper makes both theoretical and conceptual contributions around furthering research on youth, gender and masculinities through the idea of being 'caught-in-between'.

Methodologically this paper draws on empirical qualitative material from long term fieldwork in New Delhi, India and Johannesburg, South Africa. Qualitative data was collected through ethnographic observations as well as interviews with 'middleclass' and educated young men and women in India and South Africa from 2020-2022.

**Engaging Trans Young People in Research: An Exploration of Ethics and Consent**

*Max Kirk*

*(Sheffield Hallam)*

Navigating research consent with minors is incredibly complex, through ethical application/review and implementation. Traditionally, review processes are not designed to facilitate more contextual, reflexive, and/or community-driven conceptualisations of ethics (Brydon-Miller & Coghlan, 2014). Reviewers' judgements are value-laden, not neutral (Fisher & Mustanski, 2014), and can impede queer/trans research.

I present from my doctoral ethics application, to deliver an examination and evaluation of the challenges faced when researching with trans youth, without guardian/proxy consent. I briefly cover the relevant context of research ethics, including academia's tendency to pathologize any queer/trans research topics as 'at risk', inherently vulnerable; as well as the discourse around young people's involvement, ethics, and power dynamics in youth studies more broadly. I summarise the critiques of proxy guardian consent in general, before examining and evaluating the challenges specifically in my doctoral context: compulsory guardian consent for trans youth either excludes those whose guardians are unaware of their identity, and/or asks them to out themselves to possibly hostile adults. When the only alternative to requiring young people to come out to participate is to exclude those young people from participating, the proxy consent model is fundamentally flawed: it infantilises young people, limiting rather than empowering their autonomy, and 'further marginalises the [already] marginalised' (Pickles, 2020; 28).

I use this, and further critique, to present my argument for waiving proxy consent, in favour of a youth-centred consent model, drawing on reflexive examples from my doctorate, to discuss and reflect on how I operationalised my approach.

**Intersex and Anti-Gender Discourse**

*Adeline Berry*

*(University of Huddersfield)*

Furore surrounding participation of boxers Imane Khalif and Lin Yu-Ting in the 2024 Olympics highlighted intersections between anti-gender discourse and intersex people. A key component of the anti-gender movement's campaign has been the generation of a moral panic surrounding irreversible genital surgeries and hormonal interventions performed on transgender children. It is rare for transgender children to receive gender affirming surgery of any sort; however, intersex children are regularly subjected to irreversible genital surgeries and other harmful procedures without informed consent. Secretive medical practices mean that childhood medical histories are often kept hidden from intersex people and there is little literature on adult and later life outcomes. Because of secretive medical practices, stigma, and misinformation, little is known about how intersex people, including intersex people who are transgender, are impacted by societal sex and gender expectations. Drawing on original field data from semi-structured interviews with intersex people older than 50 years of age from across Europe, this paper examines how intersex people with gender identities different from their sex assigned at birth are impacted in key areas of their lives from healthcare settings to education, employment, community, and relationships. This research shows that binary societal expectations and how they are policed can have devastating effects on the lives and wellbeing of those who cannot meet those expectations. These findings shed light on some of the direct and indirect consequences of binary societal expectations and policing of them on intersex lives.

# Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 4.211

**Do Marginalised Groups Experience Barriers to Accessing Yoga and Its Health Benefits?**

*Sally SJ Brown*

*(University of Leeds)*

Yoga is a mind-body activity originating from South Asia and offering health and wellbeing benefits. Yoga in the UK is socially prescribed on the NHS. However, marginalised groups, who experience health inequalities, are significantly under-represented.

The author is a white, female, higher-educated yoga teacher who is also autistic and disabled. The study arose from her experience of teaching in northern city neighbourhoods amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. The literature indicates specific marginalised groups experience access barriers in the US. However, no research has been carried out looking at yoga access for a broad and intersectional range of marginalised identities or in the UK.

Data was collected via 1-1 online interviews, during Covid-19 pandemic conditions, from 17 individuals who participated in yoga in northern UK cities, did not consider themselves to be yoga 'insiders' and self-identified with one or more of seven marginalised identities. These were established with reference to anti-discrimination legislation and included people of colour, disabled and older people.

Thematic analysis identified nine yoga access barriers including cost, location in well-off areas, expectations around clothing and body type and feeling alien in a yoga environment. A critical theory-based approach identified a further eight areas of barrier effect associated with the social institution of UK Yoga. These included belief in the 'loveliness' of yoga people and environments and lack of acknowledgement of potential cultural or religious appropriation.

These findings offer information for yoga delivery and social prescribing bodies to help improve yoga accessibility and reduce health inequalities.

**Just Breathe? Mindfulness and Wellbeing in Uncertain Times**

*Mark Cieslik*

*(Northumbria University)*

This paper reports on findings from an ethnographic study in Northeast England into the impact that mindfulness had on the wellbeing of long-term participants of a small group meditation programme. Mindfulness has become popular around the world delivered through videos, phone apps and face-to-face classes. Some evaluations suggest mindfulness can enhance wellbeing by developing cognitive skills and ethical practices that target stress, anxiety and low-level depression.

Sociologists have been far more sceptical of mindfulness suggesting meditation encourages introspection and obsession with a superficial personal happiness that undermines the sociability and critical thinking skills important to authentic wellbeing. Mindfulness is often viewed as creating the acquiescent subjectivities necessary for our neoliberal times as citizens are sold seductive psychological remedies for complex social ills. However, by studying the biographies and shared experiences of participants ethnographically, using concepts such as habitus and capitals, I generated empirically 'thick' accounts showing mindfulness being used as a creative response to austerity. Rather than introspection participants developed greater awareness of social connections and integrated mindfulness techniques into everyday routines to aid sociability, critical thinking and better wellbeing. Over several years mindfulness supported participants to transition from illness and social isolation to healthier, happier and more socially engaged lifestyles.

The research illustrates the diversity of mindfulness practice and how self-care can support surprisingly collaborative, altruistic ways of living that had wider social benefits. By documenting the shared efforts to live well it revealed more nuanced, creative subjectivities than previous studies that associated mindfulness with a culture of narcissism.

**The Transformational Hit and Shake Hymn Sheet: Measuring Happiness and Value in Interactive Music Community Charity Sessions for Vulnerable Adults**

*Philip Miles*

*(University of Bedfordshire)*

This paper draws on recent ethnographic data exploring the perceived effect of musical-therapeutic sessions run by the 'Music24' community-based charity in Luton, UK and the essence of retained value of such effect within the individual, carers, and community. Engaging individuals suffering ill-health and/or disability (usually dementia, mental health issues, or learning disabilities) via performance and/or active in-situ consumption of music led by trained and experienced music therapists and 'community musicians', the primary aim of such sessions is to seek to reduce individual loneliness and isolation, improve generic wellbeing, build self- and social-confidence and, when possible, to celebrate a mutuality of values, moral codes, and societal norms. The research was designed to measure impact, build a framework of 'Best Practice' emerging from understanding 'social value', and demonstrate how this may directly inform policy development and implementation (cf. Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry, 2017). The findings build upwards from a localized foundation involving the arts as generators of improved individual and group confidence and wellbeing (Miles, 2023; 2019; Reigersberg, 2017; MacDonald, 2013; et.al.), and representative of communities and their norms, values, and mores, while existing alongside a constructive, though fluid, policy discourse (vide: the 2019 WHO Report on Arts and Wellbeing; Fancourt, Warran, and Aughterson, DCMS, 2020; Arts Council, 2022). What begins with a noisy, haptic, motile 'hit and shake hymn sheet' arguably resonates beyond the church hall and community centre and into meaningful and transformational agency, fraternity, and release for vulnerable people in society.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Room 1.218

**The Cultural Imaginary of the 'Windrush Generation': Britain's Moment of 'Eternal Return'**

*Sharon Walker*

*(University of Bristol)*

This conceptual paper discusses the discursive construct, the 'Windrush generation', circulating in the contemporary British cultural imaginary. In the present, it tells a story of 'happy arrivals' of Caribbean migrants at Tilbury Docks in Essex, England, in the mid-twentieth century, of hardworking migrants and an opportunity for Britain to conceive of itself as tolerant and fair-minded (Mead, 2009; Peplow, 2019; Taylor, 2018). In contrast, it also conjures images of a rupture with a homogenous white British past, and the elision of an imperial history that renders the migrants' arrival as unexpected (Peplow, 2019). This paper extends this discussion by arguing that the 'Windrush generation' represents a 'moment' that Britain struggles to move beyond; its point of Nietzsche's 'eternal return' (Warren, 2017) as it continues to come to terms with 'blackness' on its shores. Drawing on perspectives from nationalism studies, afro-pessimism and afro-futurism with its theoretical re-imagining of Black citizenry and humanity, it argues that the construct 'Windrush generation' serves a political and ontological purpose of 'fixing in place' possibilities for black existence in Britain, particularly those of Caribbean heritage. Through its narration, Black lives in Britain continue to be told as exogenous to 'Britishness', as a fungible existence that is never fully *here* (Moten, 2013). The paper asks what this means for successive generations of those of Caribbean heritage in Britain – will they always be unexpectedly docked at Tilbury or are there other possibilities of *being*?

**Diaspora Nodes and Nodal Mobilities: Revisioning Diaspora with the Hindu Sindhi Merchant Community**

*Radhika Mathrani Chakraborty*

*(University of Manchester)*

This paper offers an alternative framework for theorizing diaspora ties, through a focus on diaspora nodes and how particular places emerge as meaningful sites or nodes in diaspora network. Nodes and the mobilities mapped through them offer a way to reframe diaspora's reliance on ethnicity, nostalgia

and a shared history of displacement – thus far contested aspects of diaspora scholarship. This paper instead frames diaspora nodes a 'points of convergence' - in space and time, where people, things, goods, and ideas collect, and as 'points of articulation' – (or, to extend a corporeal metaphor, as 'joints') for articulating and experiencing belonging, as well as orienting and facilitating movement and connections to elsewhere. The Hindu Sindhi diaspora in Hong Kong has emerged through a range of mobilities and connections, including sojourning for trade, displacement from Sindh during the 1947 Partition, and migrations for business, employment, and marriage. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Hindu Sindhis from Hong Kong, ethnographic data, and archival resources from the 1940s to present, this paper explores how Hong Kong became a meaningful node in the Hindu Sindhi diasporic network. Theorizing the emergence of Hong Kong as a diasporic node offers insight into how a historical 'merchant network' has translated into contemporary diasporic formations, by focusing on how particular sites become meaningful over time in diaspora networks.

### Emerging Postcolonial Sociology in Japan: Bridging Western and Non-Western Perspectives

*Akino Oshiro*

*(Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)*

In recent years, there has been ongoing debate challenging dominant narratives in social theory and exploring new approaches that recognize imperial and colonial legacies in modern culture and knowledge, as highlighted by sociologists like Gurminder K. Bhambra, John Holmwood, and Julian Go. However, these discussions are often confined to Western academic circles, limiting understanding how they are perceived in non-Western contexts, particularly in Japan. This presentation reviews recent sociological research from Japan that engages with postcolonial critiques and discusses three key questions: (1)What motivates sociologists in Japan to incorporate postcolonial critique? (2)What are the implications of postcolonial sociology in Japan? (3)How does it differ from Western approaches? While the significance of empire and colonialism has been recognized in historical studies of Japan—especially regarding Korea, Taiwan, and China—a concept known as colonial modernity—this recognition has been largely absent in sociology due to tensions with postmodernism. Recently, however, sociologists in Japan have begun integrating postcolonial approaches into their analyses, influenced by interactions with overseas scholars and interdisciplinary efforts in women's studies and Indigenous studies. This development is particularly notable in studies of Okinawan and Korean societies, which are embedded in a colonial relationship with Japan. These findings highlight the transmissibility of postcolonial sociology from the West to non-Western contexts like Japan and underscore the importance of fostering dialogue to expand possibilities and address its limitations.

Bhambra, Gurminder K., and John Holmwood. 2021. Colonialism and Modern Social Theory. John Wiley & Sons.

Go, Julian. 2016. Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory. Oxford University Press.

### The Value of 'Westoxication' as a Sociological Concept: Retrieving a Decolonial Approach in the Global South

*Morteza Hashemi*

*(University of Nottingham)*

Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (1923-1969) was an Iranian public intellectual and writer mostly known for his concise, modern prose and politically relevant, bold critiques. One of his books was a famous monograph on the 'plague of our time' which he called westoxication. The Persian word for it is 'Gharbzadegi' which has been also translated into 'Westoxification', 'West-struck-ness', and 'Euromania'. This article tries to respond to this question: could we narrow this concept down to a more specific sociological phenomenon? I will argue for using it to refer to the subaltern/non-Western resistance toward decoloniality of knowledge or epistemic decolonisation in the Global South. Reviewing a few incidents in the Middle East, the argument is that Westoxication could be sociologically redefined to explain the social aspect of the internalised Eurocentrism in the Global South which creates a web of social confabulations about a non-existent past. The result is a fabrication of memories of sharing the privileged position of superiority with the colonisers in the mind of the colonised.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 1.219

**Negotiating Transnational Identity: The Role of Chinese Food in the Lives of Second-Generation Chinese Youth in Glasgow**

*Keying Li*

*(University of Glasgow)*

This study investigates how second-generation Chinese youth in Glasgow negotiate their transnational identities through Chinese food practices. Using qualitative research methods, including field interviews and observations with fifteen participants, fourteen of whom were from Chinese takeaway backgrounds, the study examines their food-related experiences in family, school, and social contexts. The findings reveal that Chinese food plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural heritage, especially within family environments. However, intergenerational differences in dietary preferences reflect the tension between adhering to traditional Chinese food and adapting to local Scottish customs. In public and social settings, participants reported feeling embarrassment due to the distinctiveness of Chinese food, yet some embraced these differences, using food as a tool for cultural exchange. Overall, the study highlights the pivotal role of Chinese food in shaping transnational identities, balancing cultural preservation with adaptation to mainstream society.

**Gendered Phenomenon of Re-migration Choice: A Case from China's Internal Migration**

*Luping Wang*

*(University of York)*

Migration theories was primarily centered on the role of economic motivations in migration choices, often overlook female migrants' distinct experiences, shaped by gender roles and limited career mobility. Recent studies position migration as a gendered process, highlighting how gender interweaves with migration outcomes. This paper examines the gendered phenomenon of re-migration within China's internal migration context, examining how gender societal expectations and institutional constraints shape re-migration decisions, through a life-course lens.

Drawing from 35 semi-structured interviews in Shanghai, this study explores how men and women experience contrasting trajectories in their re-migration expectations and decisions. Male migrants often view return migration through an economic lens, driven by the desire to reduce the financial burden of family support in high-cost cities. In contrast, female migrants may find fewer economic opportunities but also experience less pressure to be the primary earners for their families, making it more feasible for them to remain in cities or relocating to other places, and they are more likely to mitigate the disadvantages of non-local Hukou status through marriage. At the same time, care-giving duties, social expectations, and barriers to career advancement often push women toward returning to their hometowns.

This research highlights how the different opportunities and challenges faced by male and female migrants are closely linked to gender norms and the institutional constraints of the Hukou system, a form of civic stratification. By adopting a life-course perspective, the study provides deeper insights into how gender and institutional structures together shape re-migration choices across different life stages.

**"Being Born in China Wasn't My Choice": 'Semi-Elective' Belonging and New Attempts at Civic Engagement**

*Boya Li*

*(Western Sydney University)*

This paper investigates the relationship between migrants' semi-elective belonging and their new attempts at civic engagement, drawing on the case of young Chinese migrants (aged 20-35) in Sydney. Different from 'choice over history' (Savage 2010), semi-elective belonging also emphasises choice but involves a process of pedagogical training to negotiate with one's history. For the purposes of this paper, civic engagement includes political engagement, such as participation in political parties, and forms of everyday civic engagement, including religious practices and queer advocacy. The paper develops the

notion of a 'pedagogy of homing,' facilitated by the theory of affect, to explore these migrants' ongoing negotiation of the tension between 'being Chinese' and finding a sense of home in Sydney. It examines the phenomenological and pedagogical perspectives of elective belonging, through migrants' everyday socialisation and civic engagement. The project employed a mixed-methods research design, including surveys, interviews, and ethnographic observations. The findings show that, to form elective belonging, migrants need to make ongoing efforts to negotiate with their history and unfamiliar environment(s), which involves an awareness of 'multi-layered differences' and the development of strategies to overcome them. The civic engagement they participate in helps them, to some extent, mediate these tensions or inequalities, but at the same time, it also reinforces ethnic stereotypes, both for others and for themselves. By understanding migrants' pedagogy of homing, the paper foregrounds the inequality embedded in transnational migrants' everyday socialisation and unpacks the process of reproducing ethnic stereotyping and cultural essentialism among new migrants.

**Transnational Study of Humanitarian Exodus: Deskilling of Highly Skilled Professionals: The Case of Hong Kong Sports Migrants in the United Kingdom**

*Ka Chun Au*

*(University of Essex)*

The 2020 National Security Law in Hong Kong (HK) sparked significant migration to the UK, accelerated by the humanitarian British National (Overseas) (BNO) visa's launch in 2021. This qualitative study examines the BNO visa's impact on skilled Hong Kong migrants, particularly sports professionals facing career changes due to employment restrictions under the visa regulation. Notably, sports employment is the only occupation restricted within the scheme, resulting in life-altering uncertainties and mental health challenges for thousands of affected migrants and their families.

Building on my prior research (Au & Holland-Smith, 2024) on the migration of Hong Kong sports elites, this study broadens the scope to include a diverse range of sports professionals. It contributes to the literature on transnational skilled migration, analysing migrant decision-making and extending the theoretical models on migration transitioning and retirement from sports. The research addresses themes such as deskilling, income loss, identity crisis and credential recognition; it advances the understanding of marginalised and understudied professional migrant groups.

The study begins in two phases: a policy analysis and a historical review of UK migration policies. Then, semi-structured interviews with sports professionals will be conducted to explore migration experiences, identity shifts, and integration strategies. Using purposive and snowball sampling, this study seeks to identify challenges and recommend policy improvements for greater diversity and inclusion in UK migration practices. The findings also hold relevance for diverse migrant populations, encompassing sports migrants, individuals moving under humanitarian visa programs, and highly skilled migrants, highlighting their migration uncertainties, crises and coping strategies.

# Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 2.219

**University under Terror: Analyzing Deviant Behavior in the Tribhuvan University**

*Tek Nath Subedi*

*(Tribhuvan University, Saraswati Multiple Campus)*

Political violence stemming from unequal, oppressive and unjust social practices has increasingly spilled out of its traditional place of occurrence and entered peace-zones such as schools and universities. Universities in Nepal have recently been marked by violent activities of politically-inspired students targeting professors and other high-ranked university-officials. Social discourse in Nepal depicts the relationship between teacher and student as sacred and harmonious, and the university as a space where purely academic activities take place. This has been challenged by the rise of violence, including some blatant attacks, against teachers made by students with the support of political partisan institutions. The attacks on teacher, and the degrading relationship between university and students have not only jeopardized the teaching-and-learning environment in the University, but also raise questions on what makes a student deviate from social norms around the teacher-student relationship,

and why the academia has been a space of increasingly violent contestation. To answer 'what makes a student deviant', this paper makes direct observation of students on some constituent Campuses or Departments of the University to minutely mark what they do, and interviews some professors, officials, and students, who have experienced threats or attacks, about how and why they have been terrorized. This research finds that the student-led violence in the university has been an extension of deviant activities in their political life outside.

## University Spaces, Feminist Struggles: Legal Consciousness and Responses to Sexual Violence in Turkey

*Yagmur Cagatay*

*(University of Cambridge)*

This paper investigates the diverse practices of sexual violence disclosures (publicly naming the perpetrator) employed by survivors at universities in Turkey. It views these acts not only as personal revelations but also as feminist interventions and calls for solidarity. It explores how, despite holding different notions of justice, survivors have a shared distrust and skepticism towards both the state and university justice mechanisms, which is the main reason for seeking justice in alternative spaces and choosing disclosures. Grounded in this collective legal consciousness, the paper argues that these practices challenge dominant narratives while simultaneously creating alternative spaces for resistance and support and thereby generate counterpublics across digital, discursive, and spatial levels. In addition to exploring the empowering aspects of disclosure, the study also addresses its inherent challenges, including victim-blaming, social ostracism, and desensitization towards sexual violence. Ultimately, the paper emphasizes the critical role of solidarity, analyzing how survivors both engage with and shape solidarity networks, and how these networks provide spaces for collective resilience. However, it also highlights the internal challenges within these solidarity efforts while revealing that even though solidarity is often invoked as a moral imperative, its practice is neither straightforward nor unproblematic. Through these insights, the study contributes to broader discussions on feminist activism, survivor agency, and the intersections between legal frameworks and social responses to sexual violence in higher education settings.

## Shame, Violence and the Stigma Machine: Reckoning with the Ethics of Forensic Psychiatry

*Piyush Pushkar*

*(University of Manchester)*

Forensic psychiatry aims to minimize future violence by focusing on individual perpetrators, thus overlooking the root causes of violence. This paper examines forensic psychiatry's complicity with the carceral apparatus of the state, highlighting that marginalized individuals are disproportionately involved with the justice system and consequently, forensic psychiatry.

Drawing on the works of James Gilligan and Frantz Fanon, I critique the narrow focus of forensic psychiatry. Gilligan formulates shame and humiliation as key drivers of violence. Although he recognises that certain demographic groups experience more shame, he fails to recognise the societal structures that contribute to that shame, and the work such shaming does to keep marginalised people down.

Gilligan's model prioritizes reducing violence but does not consider that overcoming social injustices like inequality and discrimination might necessitate violence. Furthermore, Fanon's view was that violence can be a means of reclaiming dignity and overcoming colonial alienation. Fanon's approach suggests that violence might be both strategically and psychologically necessary for the oppressed.

Fanon advocates for collective resistance to build group consciousness and reconstitute individual humanity. Organising as a people allowed a group consciousness to be built, through which the humanity of each individual could be reconstituted. Part of this process was Fanon's sociogenic approach, which turned the clinical gaze on its head. Rather than listing a patient's symptoms to understand their diagnosis, Fanon instead sought to address the structural causes of suffering and engage with institutional change beyond the clinic to better serve patients.

**Embracing Emotions and 'Messy Research': Methodological Reflections from Research on Adult Family Violence**

*Lily Graham*

*(University of Central Lancashire)*

Feminist standpoint theory asserts the need to centre research around the voices of marginalised communities (Harding, 1991). However, research on gender-based violence has consistently highlighted and critiqued the responses conducted by 'professional elites'. Therefore, it has become increasingly pertinent to explore the perspectives and decision-making of 'the powerful'. Less is known, however, on the emotional journeys of feminist researchers in undertaking this work.

This paper is based on a PhD project exploring the 'public story' of domestic abuse (Donovan & Hester, 2014), and the impacts of this discourse for relationships of adult family violence. Using a 'messy methodology', including policy data, police data and qualitative interviews, this PhD explores the relationship between policy discourse, organisational practice and interactions between victim-survivors and professionals.

This paper explores the messiness of 'doing' research, particularly conducting research on the 'powerful' from a feminist framework. This paper reflects on conflicting feelings of frustration, powerlessness and guilt which arose from analysing policy and police data whilst also making central the role of power in domestic abuse. However, emotions are not necessarily a detriment to research but when acknowledged and supported can signal the value of the research. Closeness to data and subsequent emotions is thus advocated as an integral part of feminist research.

Donovan. C, & Hester. M, (2014), Domestic violence and sexuality: what's love got to do with it? Bristol, Policy Press

Harding, Sandra (1991). Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 269–270.

# Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 2.220

**Doomscrolling and Vortextuality in the Trans Affective Commons: UK Trans Youth Experiences of Social Media**

*Drew Simms*

*(Sheffield Hallam University)*

Trans youth and their use of the internet have been under increasing scrutiny in recent years, with anti-trans social contagion fears reaching the level of government in the UK, e.g. recent draft school guidance recommends frequent social media use be counted against any child seeking to transition. In this context of being frequently talked about but rarely heard from, I sought to ask trans young people in the UK about their experiences of using social media by holding asynchronous online focus groups with 17 self-identified trans youth, aged 17-24, over 2023.

Findings revealed, rather than an echo chamber of "queer utopia" that LGBT+ people describe online in other research, many participants described a deluge of negativity made up of a combination of bad news, transphobic hostility, and other trans people expressing negative emotions. They attributed this to a combination of algorithms that prioritise engagement over wellbeing, and the obligation felt by trans people to "raise awareness" by sharing bad trans-related news. Many participants felt a responsibility to the community to stay engaged "doomscrolling" this content and described having to weigh up the benefits of taking breaks from these feeds against the detriments of missing out on the many positives of online trans networks. Taking Malatino's (2022) model of a trans affective commons, Cavalcante's (2020) formulation of vortextuality and Chun's (2016) development of Berlant's (2011) impasse into the update, I used this data to develop an affect-driven model of trans youth engagement with negative social media content.

**Disciplinary Power and Phenomenology of Dating App Use in Digital Capitalism**

*Aleksandr Lange*

*(University of Manchester)*

In my research on the structure of digital capitalist subject formation, I focus on the changes contemporary digital technologies, in particular dating apps, bring to everyday experiences of intimacy as well as on the knowledge and technologies of the self related to them. Drawing on Michel Foucault's conceptualisation of disciplinary power, I analyse how digital technologies reshape experiences of intimacy, while also scrutinizing the underlying economic and power structures. I argue that digital capitalist society operates as a profoundly disciplinary environment, characterized by a synthesis of surveillance, self-policing, and datafication. Contrary to narratives of fluidity in digital life, I contend that rigid categories persist and taxonomies of the self become ever more precise, fragmenting individuals into manipulable data points. The design of dating apps embodies a disciplinary apparatus that maximizes user engagement through behavioural conditioning to optimize participation. Through preliminary empirical findings, I demonstrate how intimate experiences become integrated into disciplinary systems, shaping subjectivities in ways often obscured by the narratives of choice and authenticity. Users, believing they have "found themselves," remain vulnerable to the subtle coercions of digital capitalism, with their desires and emotional experiences are co-opted and rendered legible to algorithms. In my presentation, I will outline the mechanisms of power at play in the construction of digitized selves, emphasizing the significance of intimacy and emotions. By situating dating apps within the larger context of digital capitalism, I aim to reveal the complex interplay between technology, subjectivity, emotions, and power.

**Digital Transformations for Young Adults Living with HIV and Key Populations in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Vietnam: A Participatory Action Research Study**

*Sara Davis*

*(University of Warwick)*

The application of digital technologies in health information and healthcare is reconfiguring knowledge, creating new forms of digital connectivity and intimacies, and new access to information and services (Henwood and Marent 2019) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). But the digital transformation is also shaping new forms of inclusion and exclusion of marginalised young adults. The design, utilisation and governance of digital technologies and data are shaped by commercial and political agendas; young people in LMICs, the "end users" of digital health, have little meaningful voice in priority-setting or governance (Wong et al 2021; Storeng et. al 2021).

Using a transnational participatory action research (T-PAR) approach (DHRP 2021), this study engaged over 300 young adults living with HIV and key populations, in rural, urban and peri-urban settings, in Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Vietnam. Using focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, community researchers at national universities and civil society organisations probed the barriers to digital inclusion and intersecting inequalities; participants' views and experiences of surveillance and abuse; their access to remedy for harms; and their imaginings of digital human rights in the future. Study participants participated in the research design and implementation, electing representatives to a global project steering committee, co-designing and piloting digital literacy training, and representing the project in national and high-level global advocacy. This paper shares findings from the collaborative analysis of the data, and observations of the process as a whole.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 1 - Room 3.210

**"I did not have that role model": LGBTQ+ Olympians and Public Narratives of Sexuality, Gender Identity, and Minority Representation in the Olympic Stage**

*Gabriel Brew*

*(University of Hull)*

From London 2012 to Paris 2024, the number of publicly out LGBTQ+ Olympians jumped from 23 to 199, yet many of these athletes believe there are many more who still do not feel they can safely come out. These sportspeople's perception of their own impact on changing sportive landscapes, particularly for LGBTQ+ youth, can reveal valuable insights around the role of sportive mega-events in the advancement of debates around social justice. This paper will examine through a multi-level narrative analysis the stories of eight publicly out Olympians from Brazil and the UK who took part in semi-structured interviews between April and October 2024 for the Team LGBTQ doctoral research project. Their experiences trace out patterns of increasing agency, especially for sexual minorities in the Global North, whilst also highlighting how the persisting stigma against sexual and gender minorities continues to impact ultra-visible LGBTQ+ people. They also share about the emotional labour that comes with being ultra-visible in their sexual and gender identities, but also of the duty they feel in becoming the role model they wished they had growing up, and the hope they are providing youths with tangible examples that being LGBTQ+ does not have to equate to negative outcomes. More broadly, their stories reflect how the Olympic stage articulates public narratives of sexuality, gender identity, and minority representation, particularly as they relate to perceptions on sportive activism and the impact of their Olympic visibility on the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights.

**What does 'Trans Sisterhood,' Tell Us about Transforming the Workplace? Trans Women's Workplace Interactions in the LGBT+ Charity Sector.**

*Sylvia McCheyne*

*(University of Sheffield)*

This presentation will focus on exploring the testimonies of trans women in the LGBT+ charity sector in the UK, as part of my PhD research project. This will include discussing what is meant by 'trans sisterhood' and establishing the ways in which trans women in the LGBT+ charity sector are positioned in a unique workplace environment (an 'employment sanctuary') and how they manage to build relations with other work colleagues (trans women or otherwise) and what this means for their overall experiences of working in this sector.

By considering these testimonies, themes will emerge on the ways in which trans women 'transform' the LGBT+ charity workplace depending on if and how they interact with other trans women. This includes categorising interactions based on if they were the only trans women in the workplace or if they were engaging directly or indirectly with other trans women and how these experiences determine their overall experiences with the charity workplace.

All of this will consider how 'trans work' and 'gender discipline' contribute to the overall experiences of trans women and their interactions with others, as well as how social reproduction theories are impacted by the processes of 'professionalisation' that occur for trans women who begin working in the LGBT+ charity sector. Overall, this presentation will help understand the social transformations that undergo the labour relations between trans women when engaging in a 'professionalised' form of advocacy-based labour situated in the LGBT+ charity sector.

**The Ways in Which They Exist and Resist: The Kachchi Pakki/Jannani and Hijra/Kinnar Identities of Prayagraj City in Uttar Pradesh, India**

*Mansi Sonkar*

*(Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee)*

The umbrella term Transgender gained prominence in India with the opening up of the Indian Economy to transnational funding for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The term even though inclusive of gender-variant identities is now mostly associated with the binary notion of transness rather than those who contest the gender binary. In the case of India subcultural groups like Hijra, Kinnar, Aravani, and Jogappa, placed within the transgender grouping comprise individuals whose gender identity and characteristics are not in congruence with one's sex assigned at birth. However, the existence and experiences of the gender/sexual variant identities like Janani/ Kothi and Kacchi Pakki seen within the ambit of the larger subcultural groups like Hijra and Kinnar get marginalized.

The present study deals with exploring how the Kacchi Pakki and the Jannani identities present in Prayagraj city in the state of Uttar Pradesh, navigate their ways of existence and resistance within the trans* community and the society at large. Using in-depth interviews and focused group discussion, the study also tries to look into the role of structures of domination present in the everyday life of marginal identities and how these identities negotiate with the status quo and sometimes become a part of it.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 3.211

**Entrepreneuring Legitimacy: The Justifications and Boundary-Makings of the Tech Elite**

*Robert Dorschel*

*(University of Cambridge)*

How do those who are pulling away economically justify their advantageous positions? This issue has acquired salience in the context of rising inequalities and propelled a reflourishing of sociological analysis focused on elites. This talk contributes to this literature by inquiring into the boundary-makings and interconnected status legitimations of one particular class fraction: the tech elite. Even though this elite is at the forefront of a transformation of the field of power, it remains surprisingly underexplored in the social sciences. To address this lacuna, I make use of recorded interviews and lectures as well as essays and blogs from the online library of the influential startup accelerator "YCombinator". This data facilitates an analysis of how established tech entrepreneurs and experts seek to mentor and guide early-stage tech entrepreneurs. Based on qualitative analysis (n = 60), my study reconstructs three central codification principles from the data. Firstly, succesful tech entrepreneurs are treated as missionary selves which goes hand-in-hand with moral boundaries vis-à-vis actors who are deemed materialist and risk-averse. Secondly, the discourse imagines the ideal tech entrepreneur as talented rather than just hardworking. This creates a cultural boundary which operates within the logic of merit-scarcity and thereby allows to legitimate extreme inequalities and the winners-take-all-markets that dominate the tech industry. Thirdly, tech entrepreneurs are construed as builders and creators of essential and highly demanded services. This serves to establish a boundary vis-à-vis other elite fractions, such as finance, and is deployed to counter public criticisms levelled at the tech industry.

**Legitimising Inequality: How Elites Navigate the Symbolic Market for Ordinariness and What It Means For Concerns about Economic Inequality**

*Aaron Reeves*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

British Elites want to come across as ordinary and regular people in part because there is a symbolic market for ordinariness which means elites are seen as more legitimate and authentic if can convince others they are just like them. One implication of these findings is that, at a basic level, the illusion of solidarity forged by expressions of ordinariness potentially obscures very real class inequalities. The

existence of this symbolic market raises two important questions for research around social polarization. First, does the performance of ordinariness reduce concerns about the level of economic inequality, that is, does it reduce affective polarization because people are more likely to accept that these inequalities are grounded in notions of merit? Second, what happens to perceptions of legitimacy and affective polarization when the performance of ordinariness fails? We examine these data using experimental data from a UK sample, finding that ordinariness does reduce concerns about high levels of inequality and that perceptions of legitimacy are undermined when the performance of ordinariness does not land or indeed is shown to be only partially true.

### Elite Accreditation, Exclusivity and Sociability: A Qualitative Study of CEO Peer groups in Johannesburg, London and Mumbai

*Katie Higgins, Ujithra Ponniah*

*(University of Sheffield)*

In the current context of extreme economic inequality and rising concentrations of income and wealth at the top, the social processes through which elites restrict the wider population's access to resources and opportunities, and the role of exclusive organisations in maintaining cohesion among a select few, have important implications for social inequalities. This paper examines a new and under-researched site where business elites connect - CEO peer groups. In a more complex, globalised society, CEO peer groups provide their members with credibility and access to a range of personal, professional, and business networks and opportunities in local and international contexts. Through an analysis of interviews with 120 business elites and their intermediaries in and across three locations - Britain, India, and South Africa - we examine CEO peer groups as an educational project and a network that reveals new trends in how business elites' approach and experience secrecy, self-optimisation, exclusivity, and (trans)local connections with one another.

### Performing Britishness for the Transnational Elite through Formal Domestic Service

*Matt Reynolds*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

From P.G. Wodehouse's Jeeves and Wooster to Julian Fellowes' Downton Abbey, the deference and hierarchy of formal domestic service is associated with 'Britishness' around the world, but is this simply historic fantasy, or does it endure in the homes of contemporary elites? This paper draws upon 90 interviews with wealthy employers in Britain ('high net worth' individuals, aristocrats, and residents in London's wealthiest neighbourhoods), the staff who serve them (e.g. butlers, housekeepers, concierges, and porters) and the intermediaries who mediate these relationships (e.g. recruiters). From these conversations, it seems that formal domestic service has not disappeared, despite being perceived as anachronistic. Aristocrats reject this institution as 'outdated' whilst recreating the lives of servants and masters by opening their homes to tourists and film crews. Staff and recruiters reference texts like Downton Abbey as the inspiration behind their transnational elite clients adopting formal households, with traditional uniforms and forms of address. I situate my findings within the longue durée to counter the idea that 'new' or 'foreign' elites superficially mimic upper-class British idioms. This highlights how the Britishness of formal domestic service has always been a performance influenced by global imperial powers: the architectural segregation of pre-revolutionary France, the employment of racialised British imperial subjects, and the luxury hotels of the United States. The 'Britishness' performed to transnational elites, as described by my interviewees, is itself transnational, and formal domestic service endures in wealthy households in London and Southeast England today.

# Sociology of Education 1 - Room 4.204

**Exploring 'Drama' as a Transformative Arts-Based Pedagogy for Marginalized Children in an Indian Preschool**

*Gopika Gopakumar Moothedath*

*(University of Bath)*

In India, 68.2% of Scheduled Tribe (ST) and 62.6% of Scheduled Caste (SC) children drop out before upper primary school (Census, 2011). Addressing this issue, India's 2020 National Education Policy emphasizes the education of historically marginalized groups, recommending contextually relevant, play and arts-based learning at the preschool level. This PhD research explores the use of drama as an arts-based pedagogy to provide contextually relevant learning for preschool children from marginalized communities. Collaborating with an NGO, this study will be conducted in a South Indian preschool using an ethnographic approach combined with an action research phase. Studies indicate that tribal communities experienced oppression during colonial and nationalist phases, resulting in linguistic and cultural alienation (Sundar, 2010; Xaxa, 2021). This study employs the sociological theory of "alienation" to support the empirical understanding of the present pedagogic environment of the preschool classroom with marginalised children, from a micro-level and macro-level perspective. Further, Heredia (1995) argues for a "transformative and liberative pedagogy" for tribal communities, a goal this study seeks to explore through drama-based interventions. Using reflections from the ethnographic phase as a foundation, the action research phase will engage teachers in spirals of cycles of self-reflection (Carr and Kemmis, 2003) exploring the possibility of using drama to provide a transformative pedagogic environment. This presentation intends to bring forth some reflections and findings that will be derived from the study's ethnographic phase, allowing for a critical discussion that can support the second phase of the research.

**Who Goes to Elite Schools? Class Fractions, Geography and Race in Elite Schools in the United Kingdom**

*Sol Gamsu*

*(Durham University)*

Who goes to elite schools in Britain? This paper throws back the curtain and provides a detailed analysis of the contemporary intakes of elite private and state schools. For the first time this includes administrative data on parental social class on a systematic, national scale. It provides a descriptive and exploratory analysis of the intake of elite schools, drawing on HESA data to create proxy student populations for schools and applying a Principal Components Analysis followed by a Hierarchical Cluster analysis. Using SOC2010 occupational codes, class fractions are also explored in this analysis allowing us to identify the schools attended by corporate, business-owning, financial/legal, cultural, educational and engineering/scientific occupational groups. This allows to disaggregate and burrow down into fine-grained micro-distinctions amongst the middle class and the elite and their choice of schools. A typology of schools is also suggested and an analysis of the field of elite schools across the UK provides the means to distinguish both the blurred lines and the clear divisions between state and private schools. Theoretically, this paper allows us to distinguish the role of elite schooling as a spatial class strategy and a central infrastructure to fashion the 'British' state and national elite and middle-class identities across the UK and the North of/Northern Ireland.

**From Successful Self to Authentic Self: A Study on Elite University Experiences Amidst Field Transitions**

*Ge Zhang, Binli Chen*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

Amid China's economic slowdown and stagnating social mobility, the devaluation of educational credentials has sparked "involution" in the education sector, characterized by excessive competition and investment. In secondary education, meritocracy and exam-oriented practices are deeply intertwined, driving students toward academic success while also generating negative consequences.

This study, based on in-depth interviews with 33 elite university students, examines the impact of this system on self-identity. The findings reveal that although exam-oriented education cultivates a "successful self" through academic achievement, it simultaneously suppresses authentic self-development. As students transition from exam-oriented environments to elite universities, they experience a rupture in their individual experiences. This dual disembedding involves not only leaving a system defined by singular goals, rigid rules, and strong norms but also losing the comprehensive support of family and community. In the more loosely structured university setting, students must navigate identity crises and existential challenges, including redefining the meaning of life and education, adapting their learning habits, and coping with diminishing collective support. By reflecting on participants' educational experiences, the research uses individual reflexivity to examine the evolving context of social structures and highlights key areas for future educational policy interventions. Focusing on China's ongoing educational reforms, this study provides a case that integrates the traditional cultural characteristics of East Asia with the emerging features of modernity, exploring how to break away from the unidimensional orientation and standardized pathways of the current exam system, while promoting a more diversified and deeply ingrained evaluation framework in practice.

# Sociology of Education 2 - Room 4.205

**A New Materialist Approach to Exploring Minoritized Undergraduate Students Experiences of University Systems and Processes**

*Sarah Parkes, Kate Dudley, Ben Johnson*

*(Birmingham Newman University)*

Generating a sense of belonging at university is seen as central to a student being able to be successful (Ahn and Davis, 2019) and reflects a basic human need of mattering (Flett, 2018). Scholars of relational pedagogy, such as Gravett and Ajjawi (2021, p. 1), tell us that belonging can be framed as a 'situated, relational, and processual' phenomena that is always being renegotiated 'depending upon our context and what interaction we are having'. Belonging is thus a complex, entangled phenomenon, never static but constantly in a state of perpetual (re)creation. Focusing on the problems of situated practice not 'problem students,' this presentation explores an Appreciative Inquiry (AI - Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987) process occurring across three workshops with 17 undergraduate students from minoritized backgrounds. These followed the 4-D cycle of an AI that generated our data, and 'played with' a diffractive process employed during data analysis. The AI encompassed a process of defining and discovering 'blockages and flows' followed by a mixed media exploration of what systems and processes work, what these could look like when they work well and culminated in the creation of student-built artefacts representing that vision. The diffractive process involved three colleagues entangling their responses to-with the workshop creations and reading insights through each other with-in-through Mind-Meister. Participants attending the presentation will gain a deeper understanding of how to employ new materialist approaches that can underpin investigations driving social transformations in Higher Education settings.

**Exploring the Harms of English Post-Compulsory Education Policy from 2010-24: Is a Zemiological Lens Useful?**

*Jon Rainford*

*(Open University)*

Changes to post-compulsory educational policy in England over the past fourteen years have significantly impacted upon the life chances of the population. Whilst changes such as removing the student number cap in higher education have created new opportunities, others, such as increasing tuition fees and have caused harms. Often the impact of these harms is examined at an individual level, however a zemiological approach enables an examination of how structures and institutions cause social harms in a way that not only makes them visible but aims to challenge and address them.

This paper deploys a zemiological approach to examine how three policy developments in England related to marketisation have generated social harms. Namely: The use of Longitudinal Education Outcomes data as a measure of the value of higher education, the 2017 Higher Education and

Research Act and its role in expanding the market for Higher Education and the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, soon to come into force which will shape how individuals can engage in both further and higher education throughout their lives.

In examining these issues through a zemiological lens, this paper will make visible the different types of social harm that post-compulsory education policy over this period has created whilst at the same time offering a demonstration of how this approach might be used more widely in the sociology of education to examine the role of structures and institutions in causing social harm.

### Boys Will Be Boys? Educators' Perceptions of Engagement with Young Men in the Classroom

*Alex Blower, Jon Rainford*

*(Arts University Bournemouth)*

Nationally, boys who experience socio-economic inequality face a significant disparity in their likelihood of achieving a grade 9-5 in GCSE Maths and English. Links between teacher's gendered perception of pupils' abilities and learning potential has also been documented in research for many years In particular Jones and Myhill (2004:553) identified that perceptions were often stereotypically framed with boys being seen as 'confidently immature, disruptive and disinclined'. Whilst this study was over twenty years ago, many of these stereotypes persist. Conducting an exploration of how these perceptions have endured and changed, this paper reports on a national survey of educators conducted in 2024 with over 400 educators across England, Scotland and Wales. Providing a conceptual location for the research, the survey mobilises the Taking Boys Seriously principles, positioning relational pedagogy as a foundational instrument in creating conditions for learning which may help reduce some of the gender-based inequalities in educational outcomes for young men (Hamilton et al., 2024). Exploring both quantitative and qualitative responses to this survey, the paper explores the ways in which educators talk about engaging young men. It discusses the limitations formal curricula place upon educators when engaging with issues of masculinity, mental health and the challenges of trying to engage in relational pedagogy within the formalised, stratified UK education system.

# Theory - Room 2.217

### First African American Social Movement for Justice: "Womanist" Paradigmatic Anchor

*Jualynne Dodson*

*(Michigan State University)*

This presentation will report on research findings that theoretically re-conceptualize colonial African Americans' collective protest activities as the community's first social transformation that developed in what became the United States of America. Based on systematic historical-sociological research, the presentation asserts that the social movement emerged despite the reality that the vast majority of colonial African descendants were imported and enslaved, none were citizens, and most european migrant citizens considered all African descendants inferior if not outside of the human race.

Theoretical understandings of "social movement, social order, and social forces" were used in the research as analytical clarification of structures that thrust African Americans into collective protest of social and ecclesiastic injustice. The movement emerged, as activities and organization, long before the popularized 20th century African American Civil Rights Movement or the 21st century appearance of "Black Lives Matter;" each purported as authentic ideal models of the community's collective protest. The presentation is an historical and theoretic challenge with accompanying research findings to support the assertive proposition.

Unlike most other topical considerations, the presentation incorporates African American's distinctive cultural persona of "womanist" as the cultural anchoring of paradigmatic practice that strengthened and helped sustain the social movement's organizational reality.

### In Search of American Socialism? Oliver Cromwell Cox and Talcott Parsons on Race and Citizenship

*John Holmwood*

*(University of Nottingham)*

The fate of socialism (social democracy) is usually addressed in terms of issues of class formation and agency. Writing 20 years apart, Oliver Cromwell Cox in Caste, Class and Race (1948) and Talcott Parsons, in 'Full citizenship for the Negro American?' (1967) came to a similar conclusion that American socialism depended on recognising the leadership provided by the political agency of African Americans in overcoming racialised divisions for the benefit of all. Cox and Parsons are usually seen as diametrically opposed – one a Marxist, the other a structural-functionalist – but I shall argue their arguments share Weberian assumptions that de-centre economic class (assumptions that Cox later left behind), albeit differently articulated. Parsons asked the question, "Why 'freedom now', not yesterday?", highlighting the agency that had produced the Civil Rights Acts, while identifying the possibility of reaction. For Cox 20 years earlier, it had also been 'freedom now' similarly based on ideas of political agency against racial inequality. By the time that Parsons declared America to be once again ready for freedom, Cox's arguments were forgotten, including those of possible resistance to freedom for all. The paper will address the different approaches of Cox and Parsons to identify the racial obstacles to socialism. It will conclude that Cox's arguments are more cogent. They have been neglected within sociology, but the paper will argue that they are central to providing a sociological understanding of the possibility, finally, of freedom now.

### Towards a Hybrid Democratic Culture: Moral Codes in Public Narratives about COVID in Taiwan

*Ming-Cheng Lo*

*(University of California-Davis)*

A key question regarding democratic consolidation in non-Western societies concerns how Western democratic cultures interact with local traditions. This article analyzes the (anti-)democratic potentials of the hybridization of diverse cultural values by examining public narratives surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in Taiwan. Drawing on a civil sphere theory (CST) perspective and a qualitative analysis of 327 news reports, I demonstrate that during the early phase of the pandemic, the democratic code of liberty was blended with caring and efficient bureaucracy—codes rooted in neo-Confucianism and East Asian developmentalism—resulting in a successful civil repair. However, these same codes were later co-opted by populist discourses during Taiwan's first major COVID outbreak, promoting illiberal causes. In response, the state's counter-populist performance reinforced liberty and caring, while also expanding civil solidarity to the international sphere. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing understanding of interactions between multiple cultural codes in non-Western public spheres. While previous research has illustrated code competition, less attention has been given to how these codes are hybridized. By exploring how noncivil codes such as caring and efficient bureaucracy can be combined with liberty to strengthen civil solidarity, this study advances discussions on the role of non-Western cultural values in democratic resilience. Furthermore, I argue that for marginalized democracies, sustaining a 'vital civil center' may depend on their cultural imaginations about international support—an aspect that populists can exploit.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.204

### Class and Work-Family Overspill: A Multi-Relational Analysis

*Will Atkinson*

*(University of Bristol)*

This paper offers an overview of results from a large-scale research project on class and work-family overspill, i.e. the extent to which thoughts, worries and constraints from paid employment spillover into

family life and vice-versa. Research connecting class and work-family overspill is rare, and that which does draw the connection usually rests on occupational, unidimensional or fragmented views of class. Conversely, this project employs Pierre Bourdieu's multidimensional, relational view of class as a 'social space' defined by forms of capital. Drawing on an original survey fielded in the US and using multiple correspondence analysis and related statistical techniques, it constructs a model of the social space and then documents the correspondences with indicators of work-family overspill. Going beyond the usual Bourdieusian geometric approach, however, I also use regression analysis, cautiously handled, to consider the interplay of class position with systems of relations bearing relative autonomy from it, including age, gender, family structure, occupational effects and desires for different forms of recognition. The effects of class do not disappear but it becomes clear that family and employment status are crucial, necessitating closer conceptual attention to people's multiple social positionings and interests.

### Freedom and Family in the Fens: How 'Small Trader Nostalgia' Continues to Animate Agro-Industrial Livelihoods in South Lincolnshire

*William Kendall*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

In recent years, the town of Boston, Lincolnshire, has attracted scholarly and media interest in the high levels of migration from Eastern Europe and overwhelming support for 'Brexit'. My doctoral research centres work and economic life across South Lincolnshire, where since the 1980s, a process of 'supermarketization' has reconfigured relations of production and reproduction across farms, factories, and logistics firms. While neighbouring regions have experienced de-industrialisation, a different transition has taken place here, where the changing political economy of the industrial food system has intensified the local labour regime. As an agro-industrial landscape, South Lincolnshire therefore contributes to – and complicates – our sociological understandings of both rural and post-industrial economic life and livelihoods.

In this paper, I explore how residual moral sentiments from an older order of work continue to animate social meanings of contemporary work. Alongside the intensification of the labour regime, notably for temporary migrant workers, is the disruption of a system of small traders organised through kinship networks, such as small 'council farms' and family-owned haulage firms. I draw upon my interviews with older workers across the supply chain to show how an ethic of work grounded in ideas of freedom, family, and 'graft' remains salient. I explore their lasting cultural effects and how people make sense of the tensions and antinomies in these nostalgic sentiments. I conclude by considering how we can make use of Raymond Williams' 'structure of feeling' to improve how we understand economic life.

### Precarity and Temporality: Perceptions about the Future and Employment Management among Self-Employed Professionals

*See Pok Loa*

*(University of Leicester)*

Precarity represents a chronic and pervasive state of temporal uncertainty – the inability to predict a well-defined future. In labour markets where job insecurity intensifies, as in the case of many advanced economies, anticipating an accurate future becomes increasingly unfeasible. However, this temporal dimension of precarity has not been adequately examined in the sociology of work. This article studies how self-employed professionals who work as freelancers perceive the future, and how these beliefs orient them to deploy varied strategies to cope with precarity. The analysis is based on interview data with self-employed professionals (i.e. freelance workers) working in consulting, programming, creative work, finance, human resources, research etc. The article focuses on Japan, a context characterised by condensed labour precarization and strong cultural expectations of temporal stability. The findings show that despite the difficulty in projecting a well-defined future because of employment precarity, workers managed their employability to recover a sense of control over temporal ambiguity and to enact a desirable and stable future alternative to precarity. Three sets of strategies are identified: propelling, retaining, and adaptive. Each type constituted a specific orientation about the future, leading to varied strategies to manage employability with different time horizons. The finding that workers emphasised

the need to roll out prospective employment management to survive precarity is particularly striking, revealing the prominence of a future-oriented temporality underlying precarity.

# Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.205

### Economic Democracy in Participatory Workplaces. Insights from Emerging Popular Economy Labour Movements in Argentina

*Emilia Arpini*

*(University of Glasgow)*

Recent research on economic democracy proposes an expansion of democracy beyond the narrow realm of political institutions (elections and political parties) towards the functioning of the wider economy. It does so by considering experiences where the broader public can participate in how the economy functions. However, these conceptualisations have been primarily informed by cases in Europe and North America. In my presentation, I explore how participation in a Latin American context complicates economic democracy theory, needing to make it inclusive of wider and variegated socio-geographical contexts.

To offer a more comprehensive characterisation, I build on qualitative research on labour movements' participation at the municipal level in Argentina. Throughout the country's history, labour movements have historically been at the forefront of social mobilisation. In the 21st century, the transformations of the labour structure led to the emergence of a new sector, identified as popular economy. It is formed by workers who have been excluded from the formal labour market, who find new ways of making a living with the creation of workplaces. These workplaces have a participatory and cooperative character, do not have an employer, and are driven by principles of horizontality.

My findings suggest the need to incorporate the specificity of subaltern participation to the economic democracy theory. These groups rebel against the erasure of conflict and contention from the political arena. In addition, I analyse participants' efforts to defend and reclaim public spaces as a way of strengthening economic democracy, by challenging the privatisation of common spaces.

### Social-Democratic Trade Unions and 21st Century New Unionism: An Effective Synthesis

*Carl Hughes*

*(University of Liverpool)*

This article analyses the tension that exists between the strategies of large, TUC-affiliated 'traditional' trade unions (termed 'social-democratic trade unionism') and the emerging strategies of small grassroots, non-TUC affiliated trade unions (termed '21st century new unionism'), within the context of the UK. The term 21st century new unionism, is reflective of the shift to focus on largely unorganised groups of workers, the development of new strategies and tactics and the focus on 'associational' rather than 'structural 'power of workers, that shares parallels with the 'new unionism' of the late 19th century. It considers ways in which organisational strategies and tactics associated with 21st century new unionism, can be integrated into the strategy of social-democratic trade unions, in order to enable the effective organisation and mobilisation of precarious workers. The organisational capacity of small, grassroots unions and their ability to provide a serious challenge to managerial and capitalist authority is limited by their small scale and lack of resources. Such resources and organisational capacity are available to large unions, however their bureaucratic structures designed for 20th century forms of work organisation and their small-c conservatism, limit the extent to which they are able to reach into precarious workforces and develop new and innovative tactics. The question arising from this, is how to arrive at an effective synthesis between the strongest elements of both approaches: the organisational capacity, experience and resources of social-democratic trade unions, with the militancy, innovation and greater political consciousness associated with 21st century new unionism.

**The Dynamics of Labor Resistance: Polanyi's Double Movement in China's White Collar Workforce**

*Boyang Liang*

*(University of Leeds)*

Karl Polanyi's concept of "double movement" describes the dynamic tension between market forces and social protection, which refers to market forces pushing for economic liberalization and commodification, while on the other hand, society attempts to counteract these effects to protect itself from excessive market influence. In recent years, due to the economic uncertainty brought by the pandemic and the devaluation of higher education degrees resulting from their increasing prevalence, competition in China's white collar job market has intensified. Despite rising living costs, wages have remained stagnant, and the number of available positions has decreased, leading to further commodification of office labor. Many young people start to reflect on the meaning of work and their career, some choose to "tangping (lie flat)," reducing work responsibilities, intensity, and consumption, seeking a more comfortable and relaxed lifestyle, while others opt for "bailan (slack off)," merely doing the minimum required to avoid being dismissed, silently resisting the culture of hard work promoted by the Chinese government and traditional culture. Based on fieldwork conducted in Beijing (2023-2024), including semi-structured interviews with 30 IT professionals, supplemented by reliable news articles available online, this study argues that these practices represent a form of social transformation against excessive marketization and increasing social pressure. These behaviors illustrate Polanyi's double movement, demonstrating the self-protection actions of Chinese office workers as they navigate the tensions between market forces and their own well-being. This study contributes to the understanding of social transformation in the context of office labor markets in contemporary China.

**The New Form of Trade Unionism and Dindigul Agreement: A Paradigm Shift or Transient Remedy**

*Asika V M*

*(University of Hyderabad)*

Trade unionism initially focused on the economic interests of workers but has evolved to address broader issues like gender, social identity, and the impact of neoliberal markets. This initiates a transition in trade unionism and its philosophy of collective bargaining. This study analyzes a new form of "neoliberal trade unionism" in South Asian garment industry, exemplified by the Tamil Nadu Textiles and Common Labor Union TTCU, a union representing Dalit women workers. The TTCU signed the Dindigul Agreement, a unique labour welfare measure implemented outside state regulation. This agreement, involving global brands, a South Asian supplier, advocacy networks, and the TTCU, aimed to promote a moral economy in the transnational textile trade and address gender-based violence. Corporate-initiated collaborations can be seen as attempts to reintegrate labour and its product (defetshising) or to address ethical consumer concerns such as infamous 'sweatshops'. While the agreement aims to address labour rights violations comprising gender-specific exploitation, it is vital to consider systemic labour rights violations, wage theft and the risk of corporate paternalism. The study addresses the viability of trade unionism within the neoliberal economic framework, the significance of the Dindigul Agreement as a non-state mechanism for labour welfare, the distinctive approach of the TTCU to trade unionism, the TTCU's ability to address gender-specific exploitation, its bargaining power regarding worker wages, and the potential risks associated with corporate involvement in labour welfare movements. The inquiry explores these contours through the narratives of women labourers, union members in Dindigul, and advocacy network personnels.

# STREAM PLENARIES
## 17:15-18:15

# BSA Presidential Event - Room 4.204

**The Future of Higher Education**

*Jana Bacevic, Janja Komljenovic, Aline Courtois,*

*(Durham University, University of Edinburgh, University of Bath)*

The past academic year has been marked by crises in higher education. Within the UK, numerous universities have faced challenging financial circumstances, with sociologists often bearing the brunt of voluntary and, in some cases, compulsory redundancies, and students are graduating with increasing levels of debt. While the incoming Labour government has expressed some sympathy with the plight of universities, and has been more welcoming of international students than its predecessor, no action has yet been taken to address the deep-seated problems the sector faces.

Informed by this context, this session explores what the future holds for higher education – from three different, yet intertwined, standpoints. First, drawing on a political economy perspective, Jana Bacevic (Durham University) questions whether higher education is sustainable in light of the climate crisis and widespread extractivist practices. Second, Janja Komljenovic (University of Edinburgh) explores the likely impact of digital infrastructures and technologies on higher education, including the increasing dominance of BigTech and value capture by private sector companies. Third, Aline Courtois (University of Bath) considers changing migration infrastructures, the changing landscape of international higher education, and diversification in the profiles of internationally-mobile students — and the implications of these for the future of higher education. All three speakers will examine how we might envision a more ethical and equitable future.

**Chair:** Rachel Brooks, University of Oxford, BSA President

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration - Room 1.219

**The New Racial Regime: Recalibrations of White Supremacy**

*Alana Lentin*

*(Western Sydney University)*

As Robin D.G. Kelley puts it, 'anti-wokeness is the perfect example of the functioning of the racial regime.' Taking the reader beyond the distracting framings of culture wars and moral panics, Alana Lentin shows how the attacks on Black, Indigenous and anticolonial thought and praxis reveal the processes through which racial colonial rule is ideologically resecured.

Throughout the book, the often chaotic and contradictory restitching of the racial regime is traced through the attacks on Critical Race Theory; the 'whitelash' against the teaching of histories of slavery and colonialism; the counterinsurgent capture and institutionalisation of antiracism, Indigeneity and decoloniality in the interests of Zionism, settler colonialism, and imperialism; and how the state mandated 'war on antisemitism' reforms white supremacism at an acute time of genocide.

While the racial regime undergoes constant recalibration, its inherent instability is the consequence of continual resistance from below. Maintaining and deepening that resistance is vital at a time of rapidly mounting fascism.

**Chair:** Narzanin Massoumi, University of Exeter

# Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 2.220

**Tracking AI Transformations: What Generative AI Means for Social Research Now**

*Karen Gregory, Addie McGowan, Meenakshi Mani*

*(University of Edinburgh)*

In October 2024 we held a symposium 'Generative AI and the Future of Social Research: Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications'. At that time, we were responding to how 'The rapid advancement of Generative AI presents both exciting opportunities and profound challenges for social research in the digital age.' In this way the symposium set out 'to explore the methodological implications of generative AI tools for social inquiry.'

In the subsequent months Trump was re-elected to power, his inauguration front row comprised four technology company leaders all involved to some degree in the development of AI. Elon Musk has been given an extraordinary leadership role within the Trump Government as the Head of the Department of Government Efficiency and in February of this year announced his attention to acquire one of his main competitors, OpenAI. In January, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that 'Artificial intelligence will deliver a decade of national renewal' and in common with the United States the UK has not signed the Paris 'Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet'.

Tracking AI transformation then in digital sociological terms is not just a matter for research methodology but also asks profound questions about the nature of our relationship to the companies supplying the products we may use in digital enquiry and those companies' role in global politics and democracy. The global political arrangements are shifting as immense power through accumulated wealth pours into these companies. At this time, we hope to discuss what this means for the planning of future research agendas moving forward and to ask how, if at all, we can continue to engage with these companies. Bringing together academics across career stages in the field we will discuss what lies ahead for our ways of working and how we might in protect our disciplines during the disruptions of the emergence of this new technological political order.

**Chair:** Phillip Brooker, University of Liverpool

# Theory - Room 2.218

**Theorising Sociodigital Futures: Spatial, Temporal and Analytical Scales**

*Susan Halford, Dale Southerton*

*(University of Bristol)*

Digital technologies are increasingly implicated in ongoing social transformations across all fields of sociological research, from those that focus on major societal challenges such as climate change and inequality through to substantive questions about everyday practices of consumption, care, mobility, learning and organizing (for example). This talk will sketch out a theoretical framework to explore this broadening and deepening of intra-actions between the social and the digital, and what these might mean for future transformations.

To do so we draw on a range of cognate perspectives, including actor network theory, social practice theory and theories of time & temporality. Building on their shared commitment to a practice-based ontology, the talk sketches a novel theoretical approach to researching, analysing and acting on sociodigital futures in the making. In doing so, we confront some fundamental questions about spatial, temporal and analytical scale, illustrating our argument with empirical examples to demonstrate the theoretical purchase of our approach. Ultimately, the talk places sociological theory at the heart of an effort to extend capabilities and capacities for thinking about digital technologies, social transformation and the interventions we might make in this as Sociologists.

**Chair:** Debbie Watson, University of Bristol

# Work, Employment & Economic Life - Room 3.204

**Occupational Inequality and Social Transformation: "We need to talk [more] about work"**

*Marek Korczynski, Viviane Galata, Caroline Barrett, Karen Tatham*

*(University of Nottingham, Hellenic Open University, University of York, University of Leeds)*

In the 2020s, occupational inequality has intensified and taken on new dimensions in response to the challenges posed by multiple economic and social crises since 2008. Some scholars argue that crises are catalysts for social change and new opportunities, while others emphasise the potential for increased inequality and social unrest. This plenary is led by Marek Korczynski, author of The Sociology of Contemporary Work: What It Is and Why We Need It and Editor-in-chief of Work, Employment and Society (WES). We illuminate the socio-economic, cultural, geographic and political factors that shape workers' employment, and how their experiences influence broader societal structures of agency, life choices and inequality.

*Marek Korczynski*
We need the sociology of work in these times of crisis.  I will draw on my recent book, *The Sociology of Contemporary Work: What It Is and Why We Need It*, to make this argument, highlighting particularly the key strengths of the sociology of work in relationship to corresponding weaknesses in related disciplines and fields.

*Viviane Galata*
Occupational groups in low-skilled jobs have been among the most affected by crises. Using Relative Deprivation as a key concept and Work Histories of migrant workers, my research emphasises the relative condition of inequality, shaped by social relations and comparisons. In analysing the causes of dissatisfaction, and interpreting shifts in people's attitudes, the paths through which inequality is experienced are illuminated during periods of rapid change.

*Karen Tatham*
Progression prospects, and the reproduction of inequality in the mid-skills space is under-recognised. My research explores vocational routes to higher skilled work, in which I argue that sector traditions and norms of 'who progresses and how' reinforce stratified education and occupational processes for early adults in new and continuing forms of opportunity and constraint.

*Caroline Barrett*
Alternative pathways to elite occupations have the potential for social transformation. My research explores inequalities in access to the legal profession, as an elite space, in England. Rational action theories and social practice theories help in understanding how individuals' educational and career decision-making varies by social background, and how social class influences their strategising for their future employability and well-being.

The 2025 Conference is a chance for us as sociologists to reassess what we do as Sociologists of Work, and what our relationship is, or could be to these changes:
- In this time of social and occupational upheaval, how do sociologists understand what emerges?
- Existing occupational and workplace inequalities abound. Are new inequalities emerging?
- What new social narratives and ways of being are developing?
- How can we respond positively and critically to these challenges?

**Chair:** Helen Norman, University of Leeds

# PUBLISHERS' RECEPTION
# AND
# POSTER PRESENTATIONS

## Wednesday 23 April 2025
## 18:15-19:15
## The Drum

Please join us to tour the publisher exhibition stands and view our conference posters. Publishers and poster authors will be available for questions and discussion. Refreshments will be provided.

# POSTER PRESENTATIONS
# 18:15-19:15

Posters will be on display throughout the conference in The Drum. Authors will be available to discuss their posters on Wednesday from 18:15-18:45.

# Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space Posters

**The Role of Social Media Affordances in Constructing Transnational Religious Identities: A Case Study of Young Nigerian and Zimbabwean Migrants in the UK.**

*Sarah Kazira*

*(University of Glasgow)*

This paper examines how the social media affordances of connectivity, visibility, and spreadability mediate transnational religious engagement among young Nigerian and Zimbabwean migrants. Drawing on Costa's theory of affordances-in-practice (Costa, 2018), which highlights the social and cultural context of affordance use, the study explores how factors such as gender, ethnicity, and religion shape migrants' use of these affordances to practice and express religion on social media. It argues that young transnational migrants adopt and utilise social media in unique ways that reflect their lived experiences as transnational migrants Additionally, the paper investigates how, while these social and cultural factors influence engagement with social media, young people also leverage these affordances to challenge and resist the very structures that shape their online religious practices. This will be achieved through the use of digital ethnography on social media sites and biographical interviews with young Nigerians and Zimbabweans in London and Birmingham.

**Gendered Space in Contemporary Beijing**

*Xinfei Zhao*

*(The University of Sheffield)*

The process of rural-to-urban migration has dramatically transformed urban landscapes, rendering cities more complex and multifaceted. Importantly, cities offer women opportunities for liberation. In the context of China, the significant demographic shift observed in 2022, marked by a declining population, coincides with trends of delayed marriage and childbirth. It seems that after so many years of living in the city, city has changed women as well. Therefore, the research seeks to understand how contemporary women are formed in the city, and what roles are city/space played in 'her' transformation. Specifically, it investigates how urban spaces reinforce or challenge gender norms and relations, using the concept of the wardrobe as a mediator in women's daily navigation between home and public spaces. Ethnographic methods, including interviews and observations, are employed to gain insights into these dynamics.

**Tasting China in a Teacup: A Sensory Anthropological Approach to Tea, Terroir, and Place-Making within the Chinese Diaspora in London**

*Yiran Tao*

*(University of Oxford)*

Following increasing flows of out-migration from post-Socialist China, tea and its associated practices have proliferated globally to become integral in Chinese communities abroad. Drawing on ethnographic data collected from three months of participant observation in a Chinese teahouse in central London, this study elucidates how food and foodways, crystallised in tea and tea-tasting sessions, serve as potent sites for the contrasting yet overlapping articulations of home and belonging within the Chinese diaspora.

Recent scholarships on ethnic communities have problematized cartographies of mapping ethno-racial minorities onto specific urban areas. Building on such developments, this paper examines the various channels through which place can be constructed by people across the permeable borders of communities, on both geographical and symbolic terrains. It investigates the ways in which gustatory and olfactory senses catalyse and mediate the process of place- and identity-making within the Chinese diaspora in London by juxtaposing experiences at the site of tea-consumption abroad with the imaginations of the site of tea-production in China as two entangled arenas where terroir is sensed, discussed, and practiced.

This study actively embeds the sensorial construction of terroir within the transnational network of Chinese diaspora to demonstrate an approach to diasporic place-making that acknowledges its multi-layered identities and constant reiterations. Moreover, by interrogating the amorphous notions of 'terroir' and 'China', this paper represents an anthropological engagement with the Sinophone school of literature. It concludes by stressing the inherent heterogeneity and hybridity of Chineseness, depicting the Chinese diasporic community as a place of superdiversity and seriality.

# Culture, Media, Sport & Food Posters

**Cosplay and Queerness in China**

*Weifeng Tao*

*(University of Oxford)*

Cosplay, short for "costume play," is a performance art where individuals portray fictional characters from various media, including movies, TV series, and anime. It is a popular cultural practice among Chinese youth, though sociological research on cosplay, especially regarding gender and sexual minorities, remains limited. To contribute to new knowledge, this study explores the fluid and diverse experiences of Chinese queer cosplayers, with a focus on asexuality, fictosexuality, and other non-normative identities. Using a combination of autoethnography and interview-based ethnography, this research examines how cosplayers, particularly those on the asexual spectrum, navigate their identities, intimate relationships, and queerness through cosplay. The study applies theoretical frameworks such as queer theory and Foucault's heterotopia to explore cosplay as a space for challenging heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and traditional gender norms.

The research aims to focus on underrepresented groups within the cosplay world, particularly asexual cosplayers, offering new insights into queer sexuality studies. It contributes to a broader understanding of Chinese cosplayers' experiences, enriching both Chinese queer studies and fandom studies. Additionally, the thesis emphasizes the value of autoethnography in sexuality research, especially within Chinese contexts, where sexuality is often viewed as taboo. My study also proposes directions for future research, including exploring cosplay's cultural differences across regions, the experiences of younger cosplayers, and how queerness is explored at various life stages.

**The Online Misogyny on Chinese Social Media Platform: A Qualitative Study of Weibo's Discussion of the Non-Provision of Sanitary Products on CHR**

*Chen Zhu*

*(University of Bristol)*

Along with the increasingly prominent digital feminism in China, digital society also witnesses a burgeoning misogyny backlash. Using thematic analysis to review Weibo comments on the event of the non-provision of sanitary products on Chinese High-Speed Railway (CHR) that was posted online in September 2022, this qualitative research explores the public reactions to the event. It investigates how misogynistic expressions are represented and circulated on the Weibo platform. This research explored diversified forms and themes of expressions of Chinese online misogyny, especially how misogynistic emotions are subtly and implicitly conveyed in Chinese online public discussions targeting a specific event that marginalizes women's needs and rights. Meanwhile, it contributes to the literature on how Chinese structural factors impact the expression and circulation of online misogyny. This research concludes three major themes of the online public discussion: Erasing the factor of gender by economic

considerations and humanistic care; Sanitary products should be self-prepared; Discussing selling sanitary products is gender antagonism. Among all themes, misogyny is both expressed in explicit and implicit ways, including trivialization of women's needs and marginalization of feminists' appeals, limiting issues related to women out of the public discursive spaces, differentiation and discipline of women, stigmatization of feminists, and men's self-victimization by blaming feminists. Chinese structural factors, namely the political, economic, and cultural factors and their intersections, strongly influence each theme and the misogynistic contents by replicating and reinforcing the patriarchal orders and rules in Chinese society.

## Sociological Theory and the Arts and Health: Exploring the Radical Possibilities of Sociology in a Field Dominated by the Search for 'Evidence'

*Katey Warran, Norma Daykin*

*(University of Edinburgh, University of the West of England)*

The field of 'arts and health' – which broadly explores how arts engagement can support the prevention, management and treatment of a range of health conditions – is rapidly growing and changing. The field has seen major shifts over the past 20 years, in part, reflecting the search by policymakers and researchers to seek solutions to problems facing developed welfare states in a time of 'permacrisis'. For example, the need to reduce the burden faced by health and social care services since the COVID-19 pandemic and how to address health inequalities that have grown in line with increasing economic instability. There has been a rapid growth of research exploring how the arts can meet such challenges, but the field has received scant attention from sociologists. While sociological theories have developed in some areas of arts and health, there is a need to bring this work together in order to highlight the relevance of sociological concepts, approaches and methods to the development of the field.

Aiming to stimulate interest in a future sociological research agenda in arts and health, we introduce key challenges facing the field of arts and health and outline how sociological perspectives may enable us to analyse these from new perspectives, identifying implications for future research. We move beyond polarized thinking about the 'benefits' versus the 'dark side' of arts and health, outlining how sociological theory can support to more deeply understand this socially constructed field and its radical possibilities.

## Transatlantic Soccer Migration from Caribbean: The Case of Trinidad and Tobago, 1933-2019

*Roy McCree*

*(University of the West Indies)*

This paper examines the changing size and destination of transatlantic soccer migration from the Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago in the period 1933-2019. Theoretically, it draws critically on several major perspectives that have been employed to examine soccer migration and sport migration in general, which have included notably, world system's, dependency, and globalization theories. However, this paper seeks to add to this theoretical menu though the use of post-colonial theory which has largely been absent from this discussion. Methodologically, it adopts an explanatory case study approach based largely on the triangulated, inductivist examination of media reports as well as reports of the International Center for Sport Studies and the transfermarkt.com website.

The study found several major trends that included: significant fluctuation in soccer migration from the island in the period examined; the domination of migration flows to the USA and Europe; a substantive increase in these flows from the 1990s by 2,100%, which was reflected in a notable increase in the number for destinations from 2 to 26 as well as in the diversity of destinations from 3 to 20 consistent with global trends. However, there was also a marked shift in destinations away from the UK to within Europe, as well to Asia and Central America owing largely to stricter requirements to enter the UK soccer market. The implications of the study for theorising on the subject as well as a future Caribbean oriented research agenda on transatlantic soccer migration are also discussed.

# Environment & Society Posters

**Participatory Interdisciplinarity Explored through the 'Branching Out – Treescapes Project'**

*Jordan Rydlewski*

*(Forest Research)*

To meet funders' expectations for societal and economic impact, researchers are increasingly adopting interdisciplinary and participatory approaches. This paper introduces Participatory Interdisciplinarity (PID)—the integration of interdisciplinary research with stakeholder involvement—to explore whether such methods can yield more holistic solutions, foster social learning, and contribute to long-term impact.

The Branching Out project is a case study. Developed to address the absence of social and cultural values in urban tree decision-making, it seeks to create new ways of mapping, predicting, and communicating these values to support evidence-based decision making and management of UK Treescapes. Set in three UK cities facing climate emergencies, the project facilitates collaboration between researchers, policymakers, public servants, and citizen scientists to uncover these social and cultural values of urban treescapes. These insights help local authorities make evidence-based decisions, including addressing inequalities in urban tree provision.

To evaluate the project's impact, we applied an adapted Research Impact Evaluation Framework, focusing on various impact types: instrumental, conceptual, capacity-building, network-building, and knowledge exchange. The findings show that PID fosters long-term, subtle shifts in understanding that can precede and catalyse measurable outcomes over time. Additionally, PID encouraged participants to challenge existing power dynamics and negotiate different epistemological viewpoints, leading to more integrated and equitable knowledge production.

This study concludes that PID is a valuable framework for breaking down barriers between researchers and stakeholders, driving both knowledge creation and societal change. It also refines the Research Impact Evaluation Framework, offering practical guidance for researchers aiming to enhance the societal relevance and long-term impact.

**Natures Benefits for Ageing and Forgotten Populations**

*Louise Mitchell, Shikha Ahuja, Michael Hardman, Michelle Howarth, Penny Cook*

*(Scotland's Rural College)*

Global populations and urbanisation continue to increase, putting pressure on resources, including healthcare and environmental services. Health services are being stretched beyond working limits, particularly in the Global North where there are longer life expectancies and comorbidity issues. Over the course of the Covid-19 lockdowns, older populations were categorised into a shielding group. However, populations illustrated an increased desire to get outdoors, and for some, take part in gardening activities, improving mental and physical health. Yet, as lockdown began to be lifted, and people were able to access green environments once more, the older populations were left shielding, preventing them from accessing community gardens, and consequently reaping the mental, physical and social benefits from doing so. Even after this time passed, projects such as community gardens continue to deal with life after closer and the cost-of-living crisis.

This paper reflects on investigating community projects working with older adults in Manchester, alongside their sustainability after the pandemic, through comparison with a case study bringing together South Asian populations based in Edinburgh. It reviews literature based on community growing projects and their impacts to health and wellbeing, while bringing evidence through in-depth interviews, and ethnography. This paper will explore and discuss the impacts with those affected by the closure of communal growing activity spaces, alongside the bounce back of the industry post pandemic while now dealing with the cost of living.

**Parental Narratives of Climate Futures**

*Emy Scheer*

*(Free University of Brussels)*

Increasing attention has been given to the «no children for climate» phenomena: people not wanting to have children because of climate change. The article focuses on those deciding to have children nonetheless and how they experience it in relations to climate futures.

Parents are identified as important players in climate action in several bodies of literature: consumption studies, environmental education, psychology, etc. They can act as barriers or enablers to behaviour change in households; can help manage eco-emotions and the overall adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, understanding parents' narratives and their perceived role in the climate change story is an essential step in adequately supporting them to deal with such challenges.

The research question is: «What climate futures are parents perceiving, and how do they position themselves in its unfolding?». Twenty-one semi-directed interviews were conducted with «climate conscious» parents of young children (under 6 years old), living in Brussels (Belgium), and analysed with narrative analysis. The analysis is centred around the types of climate futures parents perceive and how it influences their narratives of responsibility in climate action, the related emotions and how it is influencing their parenting life.

Results display different climate futures, with varying levels of dystopia and anxiety, and several strategies to cope with it. While perceived personal responsibility is mentioned, understandings of privileges and climate (in)justice bring nuances to it.. Avoidant coping strategies are also mentioned to manage the immediate demands of daily life in contrast with the future.


**The Material Aspect of Upcycling: How Worn Clothes Resist Their Wastage**

*Tetyana Solovey*

*(University of Manchester)*

My PhD research project on the upcycling of worn clothes develops critical lenses from the material and affective turns in social sciences. For a roundtable presentation, I would like to present the theoretical framework of reuse along with some preliminary findings as I'm in the process of collecting data.

I will examine the material aspect of upcycling. Approaching worn clothes as "things," not as "objects," aligns with the idea of upcycling. While objects are stable and fixed in meaning, things are relational (Joyce and Gillespie, 2015). Their relationality is informed by contextual assumptions about previous owners and affective relations. This perspective also reflects the proactive attitude of upcyclers who seek to "undermine the objectivity of objects" (Ibid: 5), opening up the potential for worn clothes to evolve and change, thus making remaking an integral aspect of things. Examining worn garments as things "in relations" (Woodward, 2020: 23) allows me to examine how different stages of clothing transformation are influenced by people's attitudes and how clothes have effects in the process of second-hand consumption. Furthermore, upcycling as a practice challenges the cultural meanings associated with materials, shifting the focus to "materials before objects" (Drazin and Küchler, 2020: xxv), thereby enabling to approach clothes as a certain period of the entire "social life of materials" (Ibid: 23).

Drawing on these theoretical strands I critically explore upcycling, investigating how the material agency of clothes manifests in subject-object relationships, how value is attributed to worn clothes, and how they resist their wastage.

# Emerging Themes & Special Events Posters

**In Increasingly Precarious Worlds What Can Sociological Methods Do? Experiments with Precarious Methods**

*Jacob Nielsen*

*(Robert Gordon University)*

This proposed poster presentation seeks to expand on my forthcoming book's experiments with precarious methods. The book "'You don't know': Precarious Methods and Life in a Workers' Hostel" experiments with precarious methods to enable more vulnerable and interdependent ways of apprehending and surviving wrecked worlds. Drawing on ethnographic research in a London hostel for precarious workers the book explores the political, analytical and practical limitations of using traditional methods when researching life in precarious worlds. It argues that in order to better apprehend precarious worlds it is necessary to experiment with precarious methods. This includes: 1)Enacting survivable methods to create room for immediate survival tactics and move towards other ways of being in the world; 2) Making the text precarious and unfinished to open up for more diverse analytical apprehensions, political reimaginings and collaborative potentialities; 3) Unsettling divides between academia and precarious worlds to facilitate a more intra-dependent exchange of methods, tactics and survival skills between people in precarious circumstances; 4) Resisting authoritarian knowledge by bringing forward and exposing analytical uncertainties and inconsistencies to disrupt academic and political desires for certainty and control and beliefs in glorified individual geniuses. Expanding on the book's experiments the poster presentation seeks to engage the audience to talk, write or post (on padlet) their own perspectives on the role of sociological methods in precarious worlds. The purpose of this will be to make my experiments with precarious methods more vulnerable and interdependent on the hands of others.

# Families & Relationships Posters

**Lone Mothers' Welfare Exits via Employment: The Role of Stepping-Stone Jobs and Jobcentre Counselling**

*Zein Kasrin, Cordula Zabel, Michaela Kreyenfeld*

*(Institute for Employment Research)*

In Germany, lone parents' economic situation is more difficult than for other family types. This is reflected in this group's high dependency rate on basic income support, where 37% of lone parent households depend on this welfare benefit compared to only 7% of two-parent households. These differences indicate a high level of economic inequality between family types, where the overwhelming majority of lone parents are mothers, adding a gender lense to this issue. This inequality cannot be confronted by merely encouraging any form of employment, as lone mothers on welfare already have high employment rates. The problem is that lone mothers often enter into employment providing insufficient earnings to cover their household needs, leading to continued dependency on welfare benefits.

In this paper, we adopt a long-term perspective on lone mothers' benefit and employment trajectories by studying the impact of stepping-stone jobs on lone mothers' exits from benefit receipt. We examine whether taking up a first, lower-paying job, while on benefit receipt, facilitates benefit exits in the long-term. We also look into the role of job-centre counselling, to determine whether the frequency of counselling sessions affects exit rates from welfare when taking up a job. Effects of stepping-stone jobs and jobcentre counselling are likely to be of interest from a policy perspective in times of growing socioeconomic flux, as they indicate the relevance of a longer-term approach when developing policies for lone parents. Our analyses rely on large-scale administrative data, to which we employ methods of event-history analysis.

**Embracing Gender Flexibility and Multiplicities in Professional Practice**

*Kate Dudley*

*(Birmingham Newman University)*

In an era of social unrest and deepening inequalities, the ways in which unique individuals understand and express gender have profound implications. This paper explores the transformative potential of gender-flexible pedagogy (Warin, 2023), framed through a New-Hermetic Materialism lens. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the entangled relationships between materiality, gender, and the esoteric principles of hermeticism, suggesting that gender identities are deeply intertwined within mental, socio-cultural, and universal physical matter.

Expression of self, a fundamental right recognized from birth (UNICEF, 1989), is intricately connected to the way we intra-act with both human and non-human aspects of the world around us (Barad, 2007). However, the suppression of gender expression, whether through societal stereotypes or the rigid binaries can lead to significant distress and marginalization for many groups social groups (Johnson and Mughal, 2024).

Therefore, by adopting a gender-flexible pedagogy, this research calls for the need for professionals across sectors to step into a state of superposition. This state of being, involves recognizing and embracing the multiplicities of gender (Linstead and Thanem, 2007), thereby enabling a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of self and others.

Through the adoption of a gender-flexible framework, applicable to professionals, parents and wider society, self-critical reflection on gender identities and expressions has the power to create fostering environments that challenge entrenched norms and promote social change. Embracing the multiplicities of gender can drive transformative change aligning with sociological goals of fostering more inclusive and equitable communities.

**How's Your Father? Using Research, Theatre, and Knowledge Exchange to Develop Social Work Practice with Fathers**

*Georgia Philip*

*(University of East Anglia)*

'How's Your Father?' (HYF) is an innovative and powerful approach to developing professional practice with fathers. The project combines academic research, by Dr Georgia Philip and colleagues from UEA and Lancaster University, with theatre in the applied setting of social work practice. It uses live theatre to communicate research findings and directly engage audiences with key messages. HYF consists of an ensemble theatre show and supporting professional development activities. The most recent phase of this work ran from January 2023 to January 2024 and involved working in partnership with Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex Children's Services to take live performances and related training workshops directly to practitioner audiences, in the workplace.

This presentation will share and discuss the process of developing the theatre show and related resources, involving collaboration and knowledge exchange. It will explore the value of sociological perspectives used in the primary research and in the HYF project, and the unique contributions a sociological lens enabled, both in the design and the delivery of 'How's Your Father?'. Evaluation of the project to date, and future directions for our work will also be presented. The aim of our HYF work is to foster greater empathy and curiosity around the topic of fathers and father inclusion, and to build conversation across academic, practice, and public contexts. The presentation will explore why, how, and how far, we have achieved those aims.

**STAIRS: A Resilience Framework Improving the Outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

*Carla Cordner*

*(Manchester Metropolitan University)*

The experiences of care leavers, individuals who have spent significant portions of their childhood in care, remain a concern for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners (e.g. The Black Care

Experience Conference, 2022; Voices from Care, 2022). Despite efforts to improve outcomes, care leavers still face multiple challengers such as, unintended teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, poor mental health, and involvement in the Criminal Justice System (see Dixon, 2008; Bellis et al., 2013; Newburn et al., 2013; Gooch et al., 2022). Some show resilience, while others struggle with the lasting effects of their experiences. Limited research covers the entire care journey, making it difficult to account for differential outcomes. This paper introduces and outlines the STAIRS model which offers a holistic approach to understanding and promoting resilience in looked after children and care leavers. The STAIRS model is empirically based, drawing on a mixed methods approach which captured the 'lived experiences' of 106 care leavers. The STAIRS model is a dynamic framework which identifies six key factors shaping resilience and positive outcomes in care leavers: stability, trust, accomplishments, independence, relationships, and support. Care leavers who demonstrate higher resilience scores report positive experiences across all these factors, both during and after their time in care, whereas those with lower scores encountered challenges in the same areas. Crucially, it provides a framework for researchers, practitioners and policymakers to develop resilience-focused interventions that fosters social transformation.

## Fairness Informed Practice and People with Intellectual Disabilities Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence and Abuse

*Gavin Hutchison*

*(Independent Researcher)*

People with learning disabilities have an increased risk of experiencing severe, frequent, and repeated incidents of domestic violence and abuse (DVA), the normalisation of violence and abuse throughout the life course, inquiries into their abilities as parents, and barriers to accessing effective support services.

To examine the relationship between fairness and unfairness, people with learning disabilities, and DVA services, it was important to explore how fairness and unfairness can be defined and experienced. The research culminated in experiential definitions of fairness and unfairness rooted in the narratives of the participants. Their definitions posit fairness as; as treating everybody with the same dignity, respect, and common humanity whilst ensuring that the aid required to make choices, undertake day to day tasks, and pursue goals and ambitions is provided without discrimination, and unfairness as; discriminatory treatment within relationships of unequal power which operate to maintain the unequal structure of aid. Unfairness can be experienced as vivid emotional responses to discrimination linked to the unequal structure of aid, this is often linked to experiences of discrimination throughout the life course.

The research culminated in the development of Fairness Informed Practice (FIP). Drawing upon relationship-based approaches, trauma informed care, anti-discriminatory practice, and reflexive practice, FIP seeks to offer a practice framework, developed through the interpretation of the participants narratives, that seeks fair and equitable access and outcomes from DVA services. The research advocates for the adoption of Fairness Informed Practice within DVA interventions with people with learning disabilities.

## Choices and Freedom in the Digital Divide: Educational Inequality between Urban and Migrant Children in the Context of China's Hukou System

*Qiru Wei, Debbie Watson, Jo Staines*

*(University of Bristol)*

This research investigates the differences and similarities in how urban and migrant children in China use digital devices and technology for learning, within the context of China's household registration (hukou) system. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of capital and cultural reproduction(Bourdieu, 1986; Liu, 2008), this study explores how digital learning opportunities are shaped by the socioeconomic and institutional disparities between these two groups. The findings are based on interviews with urban and migrant families, as well as educators in Beijing. The results reveal that while technology offers both urban and migrant children increased opportunities for learning, the extent of their benefits differs. Urban children face a paradox of limited freedom but unlimited choices, whereas migrant children

experience greater freedom but limited choices. This contrast highlights the unequal educational outcomes produced by different access to and use of digital technology across socioeconomic groups.

**Online Learning in the COVID-19 Era: Deepening Inequality or Driving Educational Innovation?**

*Ajeng Patria Meilisa*

*(University of Birmingham)*

The COVID-19 pandemic compelled nations worldwide to rapidly adapt their educational systems, and Indonesia was no exception. The shift from traditional, classroom-based learning to online education presented both significant challenges and unique opportunities. This research investigates the transformation of education in Indonesia during the pandemic, with a particular emphasis on the role of family dynamics. Through a qualitative methodology, interviews were conducted with parents, students, and teachers to explore their experiences with distance learning between 2020 and 2022.

The findings reveal that, despite substantial barriers such as limited technological access and varying educational backgrounds, many families successfully adjusted to online learning, discovering new strategies to support their children's education. Additionally, the study highlights how family dynamics were significantly altered, particularly in social and emotional terms. Economic pressures from the pandemic intensified stress within families, impacting both interpersonal relationships and children's emotional well-being. However, the research also underscores the importance of family interaction and collaboration in creating positive learning environments amidst these challenges.

By examining the intersections of education, family, and socioeconomic factors, this study sheds light on the resilience and adaptability of families during a time of unprecedented change, offering insights into the broader implications for education in developing countries.

**Gender Inequality in Fertility Intentions: Impact of Gender Attitude and Household Labor**

*Siyu Chen*

*(University of Manchester)*

Based on the 2017 China General Social Survey (CGSS) data, this study used ordered-logit regression models to explore the impact of gender attitude and household labor on fertility intentions and conducted gender and urban-rural subgroup comparisons. China is experiencing gradual industrialization, modernization, and urbanization, however the transition period does not necessarily signify entry into the next stage, and particularly China's gender equality revolution is still in an "unfinished" stage. Traditional Confucian cultural family values still has profounding influence, such as restrictions on the rights of both sexes to choose marriage and customs like early marriage and the requirement to start a family before pursuing a career. Moreover, concepts of "continuing the family line," "more children bring more blessings," and "raising children to support parents in old age" continue to shape the behaviors of both sexes. Traditional families tend to have multiple children, with men as the primary family providers and decision-makers, while women typically occupy lower family positions. Therefore, Chinese families exhibit a mixture of traditional and modern characteristics. The study found that Family behaviors are influenced by both social changes and inherited traditional norms, with clear distinctions between urban and rural areas. Gender preferences in fertility are reflected in higher gender ratios in rural areas compared to normal gender ratios in urban areas. Chinese men have a high bargaining power in household labor in the private sphere, and rural women, despite facing the "double oppression" of low family status and high household labor, still have high fertility intention decisions.

# Lifecourse Posters

**Ageing Well with a Lifelong Disability for Black British Adults**

*Emily Oputa*

*(University of Surrey)*

Credited in part to advances in health and social care, there is an increasing number is ageing adults with lifelong disability (LD). Despite the increase in life expectancy among adults with LD very little is known about the experience of ageing in this population, especially among Black older adults with LD. This is of particular importance as research suggests that Black older adults have poorer mental and physical well-being in comparison to White older adults. Similar findings are evident when Black British people with LD are compared to their White counterparts. This, coupled with the projected significant increase of ethnic minority older adults with LD highlights the need for research to explore the ageing experience of Black older adults living with LD in the UK. Thus, using an intersectional approach, this qualitative study seeks to explore the impact of navigating marginalised racial and disabled identities on ageing well. Interviews will be conducted with Black adults aged 40 or older with LD or carers of Black adults with LD. The double perspective of ageing well afforded by interviewing both older adults with LD and carers will help address current literature gaps by providing:

- Insight into the conceptualisation of ageing well among Black adults with LD
- Insight into the experience of ageing with a LD among Black older adults
- Insight into aspects influencing ageing well in older adults with LD
- Insight into the experience of caring for ageing disabled Black British people

**I Don't Want to be a Burden: Resilience of Older Trans Women in Malaysia**

*Maya Chew*

*(University of Surrey)*

The paper delves into an infant research area of LGBTQ+ ageing in Southeast Asia, focusing on older Malaysian trans women. In 2023, Malaysia joined many high-income economies to become an ageing nation, defined by the UN as a country with at least 7% of its citizens reaching 65 years of age and older.

In a country with unfavourable political opinion and legislatively punitive toward LGBTQ+ people, many Malaysians within this community remain invisible. However, trans women typically face the most public discrimination due to their high visibility. Most studies on Malaysian trans women have predominantly focused on the medicalisation of their identity, i.e. focus on HIV/STD prevention, hence the need for a more holistic understanding of their life experiences as they age.

This study utilises a unique approach in understanding the experiences of older trans women in Malaysia via the Life Course Interview. This creative qualitative method entails participants mapping their life through the River of Life drawing, allowing unrestricted narrative and visual expression, while adding complexity and depth in depicting their experiences. The creative exercise is complemented by a subsequent semi-structured interview of the participants' life course.

This research aims to enhance the understanding of the nuanced challenges faced by older trans women in Malaysia and the recognition of cultural and regional subjectivity as important aspects in the study of LGBTQ+ ageing on a global scale.

**COVID-19 and Elderly Muslims in Denmark:  Exploring the Challenges of Long-Term Care, Funeral Rites, and Bereavement through Spatial Lenses**

*Saira Latif Mian*

*(University of Hull)*

Muslim immigrants in Denmark have long faced the challenge of adapting their religious practices to align with Danish regulations, a process further complicated during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Western

nations, long-term care (LTC) facilities were among the hardest hit, with a significant proportion of fatalities occurring in LTC settings. Elderly Muslims in Denmark, most of whom are immigrants from non-Western countries, encountered unique difficulties in LTC facilities, where cultural and religious needs were often neglected. This research explores the impact of the pandemic on long-term, end-of-life care, funeral rites, and bereavement processes among elderly Muslims through an analytical lens of physical, embodied-psychological, and digital spaces. Employing qualitative interviews with healthcare workers, religious leaders, and families, this study examines how these spaces were navigated and transformed during the pandemic.

Preliminary findings suggest that the pandemic may have led to funeral practices that were more traditional and Islamic, while also exposing gaps in long-term care facilities for the elderly and in culturally competent mental health care and support for Muslims in Denmark. This research thereby provides vital insights into the resilience of religious practices during crises, offering important implications for future healthcare policies and community support systems.

# Medicine, Health & Illness Posters

**Digital Supports for Unpaid Carers: A Developmental Evaluation**

*Anna Terje, Nicola Carey*

*(University of the Highlands and Islands)*

A Living Lab is a research and design methodology that involves developing and testing approaches to co-creation in real-life settings. The University of the Highlands and Islands is undertaking an evaluation of Living Labs in the Moray Rural Centre for Excellence for Digital Health and Care Innovation. The methodology is developmental evaluation, entailing undertaking rapid cycles of evaluation using real-world data that allows for timely, in-project feedback that aligns to the pace of asset development. This poster presents findings from the evaluation of the Care in Place Living Lab with a focus on the development of a Personal Data Store and a website to access community resources to support frail older people and unpaid carers in Moray Scotland. Unpaid carers are critical to the UK's social care system, but they often face significant challenges. Some of the particular challenges identified by unpaid carers include the emotional labour of retelling their story to various professionals, and difficulty navigating and identifying available supports. It is thought that the provision of digital solutions will reduce burden on both unpaid carers and social work staff. This poster presents the process of conducting a developmental evaluation in this complex context, as well as the outcomes, making use of validated questionnaire data, financial evaluation and qualitative and ethnographic methodology. It also details the complexities of implementing a new digital service model, the friction of change required to do so, and the challenges in evidencing projected outcomes for unpaid carers and service providers to enact change.

**Experiences of Gender Discrimination in Lithuanian Medical Residency: Discussion of the Results of a Qualitative Study 2021-2024**

*Agota Vaitkiene*

*(Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences)*

In 2020, the court process was discussed in the Lithuanian media, when a neurosurgeon who completed her residency at LSMU complained to her former managers about the gender discrimination and sexual harassment she experienced. Gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the medical sector is also written about in Western scientific literature (Tameling, et al, 2023; Najjar, et al, 2022; Ono, et al., 2020; Nora, et al., 2002.)

During 2021-2025 qualitative research on the factors defining medical residency in Lithuania, one of the relevant topics was the experience of gender discrimination in residency and medical institutions. During the semi-structured interview (14 with medical residents, 2 with medical specialists), sources of motivation to study medicine, experiences of medical studies, residency and work in hospitals, general position on health policy in Lithuania were discussed. According to the respondents, the gender discrimination appears already during medical studies, even before choosing a future residency. Later,

this divide is experienced by respondents, both men and women, in medical institutions and it is used in evaluating the behavior of colleagues.

Analyzing thematically semi-structured interviews aims to determine how gender discrimination is experienced and why it exists. The research implies that sexual harassment is one of the consequences of existing gender discrimination. It was examined what preconceived notions about gender dominate the respondents' experience and possibly influenced their own decision in choosing a therapeutic or surgical residency field.

# Methodological Innovations Posters

### Gender and Power in the Far-Right: A Feminist-Informed Social Network Analysis

*Victoria Scheyer*

*(Monash University)*

Social movements and networks are gendered. This paper applies a feminist-informed social network analysis (SNA) to examine the gendered power dynamics of the far-right network on the social media platform Telegram in Germany. By developing a mixed-method approach that merges SNA with feminist-informed analysis, the paper addresses the critical question of how gender influences network formation and dynamics while also exploring how networks, in turn, shape and reinforce gender stereotypes and a gendered social order. The analysis focuses on the far-right network Telegram, which has emerged as a central platform for the movement since 2019, where far-right actors create and actively share each other's content. By understanding nodes and edges as gendered and analysing the gendered content of the network, the paper reveals the gendered segmentation within the six identified communities of the far-right network, demonstrating that women's representation in the network differs between activism and political parties. Moreover, this feminist-informed SNA demonstrates the highly gendered nature of the networks' core and its gendered distribution of power. Although women are present within the network, the findings show that influential male-led channels largely refrain from amplifying women's voices, and women's content and influence remain limited. These findings underscore the importance of applying a feminist-informed methodology to the social network analysis to understand the gendered structures of far-right networks and contribute to the broader discourse on gender and power within social networks.

# Race, Ethnicity & Migration Posters

### Creative Consumption Construction and the Windrush Generations

*Natalie Clue*

*(Bayes Business School)*

This PhD research explores the consumption culture of the Windrush Generation and their descendants in the UK, using Diaspora Theory, Black Feminist Thought, and Critical Race Semiotics. It addresses the intersections of race, identity, and consumption, challenging Eurocentric frameworks that have historically excluded non-White communities.

By focusing on the lived experiences of the Windrush Generation Diaspora, the study seeks to reveal how these communities maintain ties to their homelands while shaping consumer culture in the UK. It extends Black Feminist Thought by examining how Black women and marginalised groups navigate and resist dominant cultural narratives in consumer spaces.

Methodologically, the research employs Social Archaeology and refines Critical Race Semiotics to analyse how racial meanings are constructed and contested within consumer practices. The study has practical implications for developing inclusive marketing strategies and contributing to social justice initiatives. Additionally, it critiques the lack of focus on structural racism in marketing, as highlighted by Davis (2017), who identified only 75 academic works on race and marketing over a 48-year period. By examining the Windrush Generation's consumption practices, this study challenges traditional

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), which often overlooks the evolving consumer behaviours of diasporic communities beyond the second generation. It questions whether subsequent generations should be viewed as 'transnational migrants' or if their consumption requires a new conceptual framework.

Davis, Judy Foster. 2017. "Selling Whiteness? – A Critical Review of the Literature on Marketing and Racism." Journal of Marketing Management 34 (1–2): 134–77. doi:10.1080/0267257x.2017.1395902.

### Migration and Its Discontents: A Retrospective on Migration from the Central and Eastern Europe to the U.K. in the Last 10 Years

*Ciprian Badescu, Alina Badescu*

*(Romanian Academy, University of Leeds)*

Our research will provide the rationale for a new research direction by debunking the mainstream belief that "migration will contribute significantly to human development, shared prosperity, and poverty alleviation". (World Bank, 2024)

The world is a field of conflicts, pressures, distortions, and fractures that manifest in the great turbulences of the last century, with destructive effects on communities established within local, national, regional, and continental (civilizational) areas. Migration acts in the developing world like a relief valve for the social and economic pressure caused by underdevelopment. At the same time, it can lead to new social risks in the developed area. The pressure induced by the significant disparities between regions, countries, and continents is released in migratory flows, resulting in the departure of those capable while the elderly, children, women, and those disadvantaged stay home. These categories go to swell the ranks of the discontented at home and in their new destination countries because some of those choosing to migrate will not secure a better life in their new home countries. We have called this phenomenon migration-induced social risks.

The focus is on the realities within the migratory flows between the CEE countries and the U.K. in the last 10 years. Governments in the CEE appear to have favored the migration alternative and, on the other hand, it is still unclear if the U.K. Government can significantly mitigate the risks of such migration alternatives.

### Offshoring and Externalisation Reimagined: Exploring Colonial Durabilities in the UK-Rwanda Scheme

*Beth Porter*

*(University of Sheffield)*

The ill-fated UK-Rwanda partnership is frequently portrayed as both symptomatic of a contemporary 'all-Western externalisation trend' towards offshoring as a 'solution' to the global migration 'crisis', and as a 'seismic juncture' in longer histories of migration management - a drastic turn away from Britain's long-standing commitment to human rights (Bar-Tuvia, 2018; Drakeley, 2023). In other words, it is seen as part of an unprecedented shift towards offshoring and externalisation practices that are contrary to the usual rights-respecting operations of Global North states.

Combining Stoler's (2008) concept of 'colonial durabilities' with historical sociology and critical realism, I provide an alternative perspective. In analysing (dis)continuities between the Rwanda policy (2022-24) and the Sierra Leone Resettlement Scheme (1786-91), I demonstrate how practices of offshoring pursued by British colonial powers are reactivated in the present, (re)producing similar lived experiences over two centuries later. Crucially however, I illuminate the continued magnetism of colonial-racial thought in enabling and shaping schemes like the Rwanda policy. Racialised hierarchies of people and places, constructed for and through colonial rule, continue to determine who belongs where, who is valuable and for what purpose, justifying offshoring initiatives that reinscribe long-standing patterns of inequality, domination, exploitation, abandonment and resistance in their attempts to keep subjugated populations out of the 'modern' geographies of the Global North. Far from an aberration then, I argue the Rwanda policy has deep historical antecedents, constituting a revitalised, racialised (post)colonial practice that seeks to reinforce the modern/colonial juncture that divides humans and 'nonbeings', places and 'nonplaces' (Escobar, 2007).

**Navigating Borders in Higher Education: The Experience of Forced Migrant Students in British Universities**

*Alessia Dalceggio*

*(London Metropolitan University)*

Much has been written about the hostile environment and its restrictive immigration policies and legislations (Goodfellow 2019; Griffiths and Yeo 2021). Recent changes to immigration and asylum laws (e.g. Nationality and Borders Act 2022; Illegal Immigration Act 2023) have continued an exclusionary trend of closure, exacerbating bordering practices (Yuval-Davis et al 2019) which further limit, prevent and criminalise the movement and rights of racialised migrants and those seeking sanctuary.

Meanwhile, the higher education (HE) sector has been an opposite trajectory, with many universities trying to 'opening up' (Cantat et al 2022) access and participation for traditionally under-represented students, including forced migrants. As of 2024, over 80 universities in the UK offer Sanctuary Scholarships and other type of support to displaced students to improve access for this cohort (STAR, n.d.).

The resulting interplay between the immigration regime and the HE system has increasingly become a subject of academic enquiry (Murray and Gray 2021), with studies focusing particularly on barriers to access (see Ferede 2018). Yet little is known about forced migrant students' experience after entering university.

This study aims to better understand the complexities of forced migration and its impact on students' journey to and through higher education. Drawing on semi-structured and walking interviews with 21 students and 5 stakeholders, this study explores the experiences of forced migrant students as they navigate university, and the changes universities are making to facilitate access and engagement for displaced students.

**Migration and Family Dynamics: Analyzing the Experiences of Asian Migrants in Finland: A Mixed Method Approach**

*Fahmeeda Idrees*

*(Tampere University)*

Migration often affects family dynamics, especially when moving to a new cultural environment. This study explores how migration impacts the family relationships of Asian migrants living in the Tampere region of Finland. The aim is to understand the changes in family roles, support systems, and overall family cohesion after migration. A mixed-method approach was used, combining quantitative surveys with 100 participants and qualitative interviews with 20 Asian migrants. The survey gathered data on family structures, length of stay, and well-being, while the interviews provided deeper insights into individual experiences.

Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics, correlations, and a one-way ANOVA to explore differences in family cohesion based on the length of stay in Finland. Results indicated that migrants who had been in Finland for more than five years reported significantly higher family cohesion (mean = 4.1, SD = 0.6) compared to recent arrivals (mean = 3.2, SD = 0.8, $p < 0.01$). Correlation analysis revealed a positive relationship between the length of stay and family cohesion ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$). The qualitative interviews reinforced these findings, revealing themes such as the challenges of balancing traditional family roles with Finnish societal expectations and the importance of external support from extended families and local immigrant communities.

It is concluded, the evolving family dynamics of Asian migrants highlight the need for strong support during early settlement. Effective support systems can strengthen family bonds and ease their adjustment to life in Finnish society.

**Mobility and Immobility of Female Pakistani Student Migration to China in the COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Yingjing Du*

*(Waseda University)*

The geography of international student mobility (ISM) is shifting towards multipolarity- destinations. China became the third-largest receiving country of international students, with 492,185 international students in 2018. Pakistan is China's third-largest sending country of international students. Most Pakistani students are male, while female students receive less attention. This paper adopts the education-migration nexus as the theoretical framework and studies the complexity and intersectionality of gender inequality faced by Pakistani female students. Using semi-structured qualitative interviews to investigate 20 female Pakistani students studying for Master's and Doctoral degrees in China, this paper explores why they chose China as a study-abroad destination, their study experience, and post-graduation plans. Findings suggest that intersectionality exists both at home and abroad for them, as gender inequality intersects with other forms of inequality such as such as race, class, and religion. However, studying abroad helps them break gendered stereotypes: their employment in Pakistan was subject to social barriers as they returned and worked in Pakistan when postponing studies in China during the COVID-19 lockdown, while in China they have relatively broader career choices. Moreover, social media increases their individual agency in choosing desirable career paths despite the traditional gender roles in Muslim society. Nevertheless, the impact of studying abroad on them is multi-faceted, because while it promotes their individual agency, it also intensifies the contradictions between becoming professional women and their wish for marriage. Thus, Pakistani female students are facing the dilemma between the pursuit of individual agency and traditional values from Muslim society.

# Rights, Violence & Crime Posters

**"Selective Amnesia": The Transformation of Trauma into Chinese Cultural**

*Xi Lu*

*(University of Florida)*

"I am a monster and a demon, and a force of evil. I'm guilty and I deserve to die. The people should smash me to pieces! I'm guilty...It's a dead end if I don't tell the truth."This refrain, echoing throughout China's Cultural Revolution, reveals the profound suffering endured by intellectuals, who were stripped of their humanity and reduced to mere howls under the Red Guards' oppressive regime. Selective amnesia emerges as an unspoken choice to ignore the deep wounds of this period, but as time progresses, this choice often transforms into genuine oblivion. Researching the theme music of China's Cultural Revolution is a path less traveled by scholars yet is essential for understanding trauma and the healing process.

This paper examines Gu Shengying, a modern Chinese female pianist, and Ma Sicong, a composer, as representatives of how to navigate this forbidden topic in music performance and composition amid an environment steeped in selective amnesia. Employing historical research, case studies, and conceptual analysis, I aim to explore this no-go area, peeling back layers of silence to confront the wounds of the Cultural Revolution. While trauma has deeply influenced these musicians, it has also driven them to transform their experiences into profound musical expressions. As Carl Jung asserted, "One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious." Engaging with the dark side of consciousness represents a courageous step toward processing these experiences, allowing artists to confront their history and ultimately seek redemption through their art.

# Science, Technology & Digital Studies Posters

**Echoes of Bias: Ethical Challenges of Memory, Prejudice, and Harm in AI and Large Language Models**

*Dota Szymborska*

*(University WSB Merito, Warsaw)*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and LLMs are reshaping human interactions with technology and information, driving significant social transformations. While offering substantial benefits, they risk perpetuating and amplifying societal biases embedded in their training data. This presentation critically examines how bias is embedded and propagated within AI and LLMs, focusing on ethical challenges related to memory mechanisms, internalized prejudices, and harmful content generation.

Beginning by defining bias and its manifestations in human cognition and machine learning, the study elucidates how AI systems learn from datasets reflecting historical and cultural prejudices, reinforcing stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors. The concept of "algorithmic memory" is analyzed to understand how models retain and reproduce biased information over time.

We thoroughly discuss ethical challenges arising from biased AI, including the perpetuation of social inequalities, erosion of public trust, legal ramifications, and the dissemination of prejudiced or violent content. Real-world examples illustrate tangible impacts on vulnerable communities.

The poster highlights the need for sociological insights in AI development. It advocates for collaborative, multidisciplinary strategies involving technologists, sociologists, ethicists, and policymakers to address and mitigate bias. Proposed solutions include diversifying training data, implementing fairness-aware algorithms, enhancing model transparency, and establishing ethical guidelines.

The goal is to enrich discourse on the societal implications of digital technologies, engaging participants in dialogue about fostering AI systems that advance equity and justice. By confronting the ethical challenges of AI bias, the study aims to influence AI development to serve as a catalyst for social good.

# Social Divisions / Social Identities Posters

**Exploring the Experiences of Disabled Women Becoming & Being Mothers: A Qualitative Study**

*Kelsey Tredgett*

*(University of Leeds)*

Previous research with disabled mothers highlights a higher likelihood of being labelled a "risky parent" by social services, disjointed adult/child social care provision and stigmatising responses from others. However, much of this literature has been sampled from clinical settings (like Cystic Fibrosis teams) or from crisis services like those who assist disabled parents in child protection proceedings. Most research has therefore focused on troubled situations and has been impairment specific, leading to discussions of areas where individuals "lacked parenting skills", especially women with mental health problems and learning disabilities. This research aims to provide a more balanced, comprehensive account of mothering as a disabled woman including the support that works well and what could be improved. Six to ten disabled mothers with varied impairments will be recruited via disability and mother-and-baby organisations. Participants will complete a novel creative task creating a Motherhood Journey Box by considering a list of topics covering their motherhood journeys and collecting related items that are valuable, important or otherwise memorable. These may be literal items, like a fidget spinner, or symbolic, for example, a heart drawn on a piece of paper to represent a partner's support. Participants will then attend two interviews to explain their choices and provide more detailed accounts of their experiences. The strengths, challenges and lessons learnt utilising a novel creative method with a hard-to-reach population will be discussed as well as preliminary findings. Results will focus on common themes amongst participants' experiences of mothering, the utilisation of support and shared challenges.

**Is the Universal Basic Income (UBI) Really for 'Everyone'? Analysing Universality Discourses on UBI among UK Policymakers**

*Emily Clark*

*(University College London)*

This paper examines universality discourses in UK Universal Basic Income (UBI) policymaking in order to identify what a future UK-based UBI may "actually entail" (Hogg, 2023). Commonly defined as "an unconditional income paid to all members of society on an individual basis without any means test or work requirement" (Birnbaum, 2016), UBI has gained increasing popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic as a potential policy 'solution' to combat growing inequality in welfare states. The Green Party openly supports its implementation and the UK's first basic income trial is now underway in Wales, providing 635 care leavers £1600 a month.

Understandably, universality – an income given to everyone in society - is widely recognised as the core feature of UBI proposals (Standing, 2017). Despite its apparent simplicity, however, this idea emerges as a key site of argumentation in UBI discourses. Whilst members of the SNP, for example, have repeatedly called for a UBI for citizens, members of the Green Party have criticised such proposals for failing to account for the needs of non-citizen residents, prisoners, and asylum seekers among others. Across policy circles, contentions emerge in terms of who 'universality' includes, why 'universality' is important, and what the intended effects of 'universality' are. This paper thus examines these questions - how different definitions and designs are invoked in UBI 'universality' discourses - using a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of 134 policy texts from UK Hansard since 2016, and interviews with 30 UK-based policymakers, including MPs and Peers from a range of political parties.

**Tigers in Film: Past, Present and Future Perspectives**

*Farah Benbouabdellah*

*(University of Reading)*

This interdisciplinary research examines the changes and evolution of tiger representations in visual media, reflecting their symbolic and cultural significance across various historical, social, and geographical contexts. By combining anthropology, material culture, art history, and film studies, this study seeks to analyse how depictions of tigers in static images (16th-19th century) and moving images (19th-20th century) provide a nuanced understanding of the tiger's symbolism and impact across historical contexts. Anthropology contextualises tiger imagery by exploring themes of symbolism and the socio-political implications of tiger representations during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Material culture helps reveal how representations of tigers reflect shifting cultural values and evolving relationships between humans and nature. On the other hand, film studies examine the portrayal of tigers in cinematic narratives by analysing visual techniques, narrative structures, and audience reception in Asian (with particular emphasis on Indian cinema) and Western films from the early 20th century to the present. Art history investigates the aesthetic and historical contexts that have shaped static representations of tigers in various art forms specifically during the pre-colonial and colonial periods. By synthesising these disciplinary perspectives, this research offers a comprehensive comparative analysis of static representations of tigers across multiple art forms and their dynamic roles in moving images. The study also highlights how broader political and socio-cultural dynamics have influenced the representation of the animal across various mediums. Ultimately, it seeks to elucidate the tiger's enduring role as an influential cultural symbol, tracing its significance within human society through historical periods.

# Sociology of Education Posters

**Global Learning, Local Privilege: Inheritable Higher Education Inequality in China's New Middle Class**

*Xiaowen Zhang*

*(London School of Economics and Political Science)*

Under the transformation towards a more capitalised society, China has seen a remarkably increasing number of students choosing international higher education. Although Western scholars have extensively researched class inequality in education, the influences of the rapidly evolving societal changes in the Chinese context have not been considered. Most studies in China focused on the quantitative trends of class mobility, overlooking individual experiences and perceptions of inheritable class inequality. This research investigates the intergenerational transfer of class privileges within China's newly emerging middle class, particularly through international higher education experiences. Drawing upon Bourdieu's capital theory and situated within the neoliberalisation of the higher education market, this study explores how the second generation of the Chinese new middle class experienced and perceived their inherited privileges. By interviewing 15 students born in the 1990s and 2000s who have been raised in China and experienced UK higher education and 5 counterparts with domestic higher education experiences, this research utilises thematic analysis to provide nuanced insights into the capital transfer processes and the evolution of risk-management strategies across generations. Intergenerational transfer of economic, cultural, and social capital has occurred in Chinese new middle-class families, respectively, by financial sponsoring of international higher education, immersion of family negotiation and workplace culture, and support from parents' domestic connections. This research engages with existing literature, provides policy directions for higher education under the societal transformation from rigidly planned to more marketised, and reveals the possibilities of rising educational inequalities in contemporary Chinese society.

**A Morphogenetic Framework for Educational Transformation**

*Justin Vafadari*

*(University of the West of England Bristol)*

This abstract explores the concept of morphogenetic social justice within a framework of education leadership, foregrounding the transformative activism of education leaders in promoting equitable systems. I argue that sociologists of education can redefine a process of intellectual reform and moral realism to accept their fallibility and co-construct a framework for educational transformation. Drawing on the dynamic interaction of social structures and human agency, this study examines the intersection of leaderful and counter-hegemonic principles at structural, cultural and agential levels of reality (Archer, 1995; Gramsci, 2023; Raelin, 2003)

It involves the redesign and mobilisation of education for social justice to undermine the existing top-down system of policy-making and coercion. The structural reconfiguration is a democratic, adaptable, innovative and decentralised union of education leaders. These mechanisms are enablers of long-term policy generation. They include tactical positioning to ingratiate members inside the ranks of power and influence, alongside rhetoric, propaganda and misdirection to provoke overreaction and expose the contradictions between populist nativism and neoliberal assumptions.

School leaders build capacity to construct viable alternatives to cultural norms through a bottom-up approach to curriculum and assessment re-design. These include pedagogical methods that critique re-configurations of patriarchy and exploitation, empower students to articulate their material interests and concerns, revive social histories and nurture cultures of conviviality.

As agents of transformation, education leaders develop their meta-reflexivity humility, integrity and shared accountability for transformation.

Through a morphogenetic lens, my study takes the long view that transformation is a cumulative series of social changes that transcend political ideologies.

**Diffusion of Gender Equality Certifications in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of Athena Swan Adaptations in the USA and Canada**

*Tsamiyah Levi*

*(Geneva Graduate Institute)*

The Athena Swan Charter is a British certification scheme that encourages and recognises gender equality in universities. After almost 15 years of development in the UK, it has been adopted and adapted by English-speaking countries, including Ireland and Australia (2015), the USA (2017), Canada (2018) and India (2022). This research, funded by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) (process number #2024/13745-9), analysed the versions implemented in the USA and Canada. Through a comparative analysis, the study explored how contextual dynamics influence the development of these certifications and the formats they adopt. The research focused on: (i) the historical, social and political contexts in which these certifications were created and implemented; (ii) the differences in the institutions that administer them, including a British member-led charity, the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and the main Canadian public research agencies; (iii) the circulation of knowledge, individuals and policies between these regions; and (iv) the interpretation of gender equality within each certification, analysed through the vocabulary, practices and protocols that distinguish them. In summary, this situated comparison provides insights into why, even as gender equality is increasingly accepted as a legitimate right globally, its meaning remains contested, varies significantly, and undergoes notable changes as it circulates internationally.

**Chinese Female University Students' Experiences of and Performativity of Gender in Employment Recruitment**

*Wenrui Xue*

*(University of York)*

The number of university graduates in China has increased year by year, making the job market unprecedentedly competitive. Meanwhile, the two-child policy and the three-child policy have made employers reluctant to recruit female graduates as a way to avoid increased labor costs due to females' maternity leave (Team of Research on the Employment among Female University Graduates, 2018). Since addressing female graduates' job-seeking dilemma has become an urgent need, it is surprising that much is unknown about Chinese female graduates' experience during the recruitment process.

To fill this gap, this ongoing qualitative study draws on Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performativity in understanding Chinese female university students' strategies to resist or comply with stereotypes of women's gender roles when seeking a job. Gender performativity theory can help conceptualize how the formation of the subject and gendered behaviors is manifested in a patriarchal social context. This theory can also reveal the strategies that individual female graduates may adopt in order to resist and subvert patriarchal domination in order to achieve women's liberation.

Participants will be Chinese female undergraduates in their fourth year of college or less than two years after graduation. Data will be collected from one-on-one interviews and observations at job fairs for thematic analysis later on. The results on gender performativity in employment recruitment will highlight how social norms and power dynamics influence the recruitment process and can be a potentially important site of resistance to patriarchal and capitalist power structures.

**The Impact of Childcare Provision on Women Garment Workers' Engagement with Capitalism: An Ethnographic Study of Textile Reuse and International Development's Childcare Initiative in Bangladesh**

*Gulfam Tasnim*

*(Open University)*

Global and state policies support multinational corporations and owners of capital in their search for profit in Bangladesh. These policies have facilitated the establishment of the garment industry by utilizing the surplus labour force of Bangladesh in an ever-growing capitalist circuit (Hasan, 2022). The industry's capitalist production process requires long hours from workers, and this conflicts with the socially reproductive work of women workers (Kabeer & Mahmud, 2004a; Siddiqi & Ashraf, 2017). Prior

research finds that Bangladeshi women garment workers' ability to engage in factory work depends on their socially reproductive work such as caring for children (Anwary, 2017). My research will draw on Marxist 'Social Reproduction Theory' or SRT (Bhattacharya, 2017a, 2017b; Ferguson, 2016, 2020) and feminist ethnography (Cermeno et al., 2023; Skeggs, 1994, 2001; Smolović Jones, 2024) to surface Bangladeshi women garment workers' engagement with capitalism when women have access to childcare provision for their children which is enabled by civil society organizations (CSOs). The research will specifically explore this engagement when women garment workers in Dhaka have access to a childcare initiative which is implemented by Textile Reuse and International Development (TRAID), a UK charity, in partnership with Nagorik Udyog (NU), an NGO in Bangladesh.

## Perception of Discrimination within the Police Force by the Women in it

*Young Uwazuruike*

*(University of Central Lancashire)*

The issues of gender inequality persist, with the gender wage gap between men and women in the UK still in favour of men, with women under-represented in senior positions and over-represented in lower-level positions. In England and Wales, the proportion of women in the police force is 33.5%, but the rank of Constable (i.e., entry level) is the only rank where women constitute up to that percentage, with their representation at 35.5%. To better understand the nature of this inequality, researchers are studying the lived experiences of women in the workplace to determine the ways in which women experience these inequalities, thus providing an insight on how the problem may be solved.

In the course of completing my research, I have interviewed women in leadership positions in the England and Wales police force. I have discovered multiple barriers that they face as well as reaffirm some barriers already present in the literature. However, interestingly I have found that most of these women present the discrimination against women in the force as significantly less than what the data shows. I would like to present my finding on why this is the case and the impact it has on young women looking to become police leaders in the future.

## Supporting Women in Higher Education: Overcoming Structural, Institutional and Life-Stage Barriers

*Aimee Quickfall*

*(Leeds Trinity University)*

Around the world, women academics face challenges in their roles. They are likely to find promotion and advancement more challenging than their male colleagues (Galán-Muros, Bouckaert and Roser, 2023). They are likely to find research funding harder to attract, and find themselves steered towards pastoral care and teaching, which whilst important, are not rewarded in the same way as research (Sang, Remnant, Calvard and Myhill, 2021).

This poster describes a study which explored the experiences of ten women who are academics working in UK higher education (HE), using an intersectional feminist approach, unstructured interviews and narrative methods and analysis. The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of women, with a view to highlighting potential shared experiences, informing the policies of universities, and to add to the body of knowledge on women in HE. Findings include narrative themes around gender roles, male-dominated academia and life-stage impact on career. Concluding recommendations include meaningful recognition of pastoral roles, and promotion tracks which value these skills; and support for women's life-stages, including maternity, motherhood, menopause and sandwich caring.

Galán-Muros, V., Bouckaert, M., Roser, J. (2023). The Representation of Women in Academia and Higher Education Management Positions. UNESCO-IESALC Policy Brief Series, March 2023

Sang, K., Remnant, J., Calvard, T., & Myhill, K. (2021). Blood Work: Managing Menstruation, Menopause and Gynaecological Health Conditions in the Workplace. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(4), 1951. MDPI AG. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041951

**Economic Inequality and Political Polarization: The Rise of Populist Movements in Pakistan**

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This research explores the most significant populist movement in Pakistan's recent history. Utilizing qualitative discourse analysis alongside quantitative logistic regression on Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) data, the study investigates the relationship between economic disparities and the political divide that has facilitated the rise of populist leaders and parties. The paper will also consider the broader implications for democratic governance and social stability in Pakistan, providing policy recommendations to reduce economic inequalities and address political polarization.