



Beyond the 'archival turn': Making and using sociological archives

Monday 30th June 2025

A BSA Early Career Regional Funded Symposium

30 June 2025 (09:30-17:00 BST)

Sir Bob Burgess Building, University of Leicester, UK

This event will address the potential for sociological archives to bring the voices of young people, women, as well as working-class and racialised communities, into public discourse. Moving beyond theoretical reflection on sociology's 'archival turn', the event will explore the practicalities, as well as the ethics and politics, of making and using sociological archives.

Speakers will address the rich archival resources that exist within sociology and show how creative methods can be used to make the past anew, as well as helping us to imagine different kinds of futures. The event will engage with different kinds of sociological archives - ranging from 'classic studies' preserved within formal archives, through the DIY archiving of researchers and activists, administrative data sets and memorabilia and personal collections. It will bring together sociologists, including early career researchers, with archivists to explore how we might work with the voices and experiences held within archives in ways that could challenge, shape or disrupt public discourse. Hands-on workshops will be provide opportunities for ECRs and other participants to test out different methods for bringing archival material to life.

The University of Leicester will host and co-sponsor the event as part of its 75th anniversary celebrations. The University of Manchester's Morgan Centre for the Study of Everyday Lives has also provided funding to mark its 20th anniversary. The University of Sussex has also contributed funding towards this event.

Registration

Registration for this event is open until 13th June 2025. Please register at via [the event's BSA webpage](#).

BSA Member: £10

BSA Concessionary Member: £5

Non-member: £15

Organisers

Laura Fenton (University of Sheffield), John Goodwin (University of Leicester) and Rachel Thomson (University of Sussex). If you have any queries, please email Laura Fenton at l.m.fenton@sheffield.ac.uk.

Programme

9:30-10:00	Registration
10-10:10	Welcome
10:10-11:10	Panel: Sociological archives and qualitative longitudinal research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Goodwin and Henrietta O'Connor (University of Leicester), <i>From Found Data to Young Worker Archive: Repurposing Lost Data from the 1960s and the 1980s</i> Kahryn Hughes (University of Leeds and Timescapes Archive), <i>Men, Families and Poverty: Using qualitative secondary analysis (QSA) of archived qualitative longitudinal data to interrogate men's intergenerational and longitudinal trajectories through low-income family life</i>
11:10-25	Comfort break
11:25-12:40	Panel: Recovering voices and experiences in/through the archive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ros Edwards (University of Southampton), <i>Archival traces and bringing hidden lives into existence</i> Penny Tinkler (University of Manchester), <i>Three moments of recomposure: working in, and with, archives</i> Tracey Loughran (University of Essex), <i>From the inside-out: creating an oral history archive</i>
12:40-1:20	Lunch
1:20-2:20	Workshop: Reanimating data: a theory and some practice (Rachel Thomson, Niamh Moore & Kate Watson) <p><i>In this workshop we will present our approach to the 'reanimation' of archived data, inviting participants to engage with materials from the 1988-90 feminist sociological study 'Women, Risk and AIDS Project' – as well as linked material from other relevant archives. We will focus attention on how recontextualization in different forms can play a role of making new meaning from and with old data.</i></p>
2:20-3:20	Panel: Re-weaving life stories: Using sociological archives from an early career researcher's perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurie Parsons (University of Leicester), <i>Reflections on Working with Archival Ghosts and Fragments in an Auto/biographical PhD</i> Zhongwei Li (University of Leeds), <i>Working with the "cut-out archive": Archiving subcultural memories in 1990s China</i>
3:20-3:35	Comfort break
3:35-4:50	Workshop: Working with Mass Observation <p>Jessica Scantlebury (Mass Observation Archivist), Kirsty Patrick (Mass Observation Research Manager), Dawn Lyon (Professor of Sociology, University of Kent) and Khaleda Brophy-Harmer (PGR, University of Southampton)</p> <p><i>This workshop will introduce participants to the Mass Observation Archive and some of the ways researchers have looked to use its unique collections.</i></p>
4:50-5:00	Closing remarks