

BSA



2026 Annual Conference

University of Manchester
Wednesday 8 April – Friday 10 April 2026
#britsoc26

**BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

BSA Annual Conference 2026

Abstract Book Thursday 9 April 2026

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WELCOME

Welcome to the British Sociological Association Annual Conference 2026 at the University of Manchester. The theme of the 2026 conference is '75 Years of Sociology'. Over the past seven and a half decades, the BSA has played a central role in advancing scholarship, fostering collaboration and supporting the development of our field. Our annual conference is a significant moment to come together for reflection and to consider the future directions of our work.

To mark this anniversary, it is a pleasure to announce that Jason Arday, Les Back, and our panellists, Bandana Purkayastha, Beáta Nagy and Maitrayee Chaudhuri, 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 others who share their interests and explore a variety of subjects.

The programme also includes a variety of special events, stream plenaries, publishing events and other sessions to support sociologists across their career stages. 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 and gratitude are due to all those who have helped with the organisation of the conference, particularly the coordinators of the conference streams who read and thought about a record-breaking number of abstracts.

We are grateful to all the organisers, speakers, chairs, Trustees and attendees who make this conference so vibrant every year. Your engagement continues the tradition of community collaboration and intellectual exchange that has defined the BSA since its founding. We hope this conference will renew inspiration and invigorate our shared commitment to sociological ways of viewing the world for the next 75 years.

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.

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[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 sponsoring some of the free places for the conference.

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Bristol University Press is committed to publishing high-quality social science research that makes a real-world impact.

Join us at the BSA conference to explore our latest books and journals, including the new Creative Research Methods Journal. Book a meeting with our editor to discuss your publishing projects, including open access options.

Special offer for BSA attendees: Get your favourite BUP books at 50% off during April! Use code CNF26 at checkout on our website.

Discover more about our Sociology programme here: <https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/sociology>

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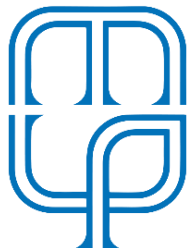
form books and series that set the research agenda, Emerald is an exciting home for scholarship that aims to reach beyond the academy.

Liverpool University Press



[Liverpool University Press](#) is the UK's third oldest university press, with a distinguished history of publishing exceptional research since 1899. LUP has rapidly expanded in recent years to become an award-winning academic publisher that produces approximately 200 books a year, over 50 journals, and more than a dozen digital collections across the social sciences, humanities and earth sciences. In 2025 LUP was selected as the new publishing partner for the British Academy.

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Manchester University Press

Our thriving [Social Sciences list](#) consistently engages with the most pressing issues of our time. We publish books that influence policy and change the international research landscape. The list is multidisciplinary, producing award-winning academic and trade titles on everything from migration and medicine to the climate crisis and culture wars. Boasting key series on globalisation, racism and resistance, urban transformation and creative ethnography, the list represents the depth and breadth of contemporary social research.

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[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.

Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group



Routledge is the world's largest academic publisher in the Humanities and Social Sciences, offering an extensive portfolio of book and journals that serves scholars, instructors and professional communities worldwide. We are proud to publish the Sociological Futures book series with the BSA, a flagship for new approaches to sociological issues, debates and 'the social' in the 21st century. Please visit the Routledge stand to browse the latest titles and to discuss ideas with our editors.

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 75th Social.

Registration will take place in The Drum, University Place:

Wednesday 8 April	08:00-17:30
Thursday 9 April	08:30-17:45
Friday 10 April	08:30-14:00

A cloakroom will be available for luggage, coats, etc throughout the conference in the Drum, University Place.

Wednesday 8 April	08:00-20:00
Thursday 9 April	08:00-19:00
Friday 10 April	08:00-18:30

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/>

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	12:30-14:00 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.

75th Social

The 75th Social will be held at Whitworth Hall on Thursday 9 April at 19:00. Dress code is smart casual. This event **must be pre-booked**, we are unable to take bookings at the conference. If you are registered, your badge will display a ticket symbol. For any questions, please visit the registration desk.

Publicity and Photography

Share your experience using #britsoc26 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 4

09:00-10:30

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BSA Special Activity - Lecture Theatre B

Teaching Scholarship in Sociology: Pathways to Publication and Impact

Garrett Grainger, Eileen Pollard, Peter Kahn

(Wrexham University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester)

This interactive workshop introduces participants to the field of teaching scholarship within higher education and explores practical pathways for publishing pedagogical research. Teaching scholarship has become an increasingly important site of academic inquiry, professional recognition, and sector-wide impact. Yet many sociologists remain uncertain about how to conceptualise, design, and disseminate research on teaching and learning. Hosted by the Early Career Forum, Peter Kahn (Former Editor, *Teaching in Higher Education*), and Eileen Pollard (Manchester Metropolitan University), the session will provide an accessible overview of the intellectual foundations of teaching scholarship, its methodological diversity, and its distinctive contribution to sociological practice. Participants will gain insight into how classroom innovation, curriculum design, assessment practice, and student engagement can be developed into publishable research outputs. The workshop will also offer practical guidance on navigating the publication process. Drawing on editorial experience and sector expertise, the facilitators will discuss what journal editors look for, how to position pedagogical work within broader debates, and how to identify appropriate outlets for submission. Time will be dedicated to discussion, enabling participants to share ideas and ask questions about developing teaching-focused research trajectories. This session is particularly suited to early career sociologists, teaching-focused academics, and colleagues seeking to integrate pedagogical innovation into their research profile. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of teaching scholarship and concrete strategies for publishing and amplifying their work.

Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 3.211 Special Event

Ageing, Inequality and Urban Change: Exploring the Experiences of Minoritised Older Communities

Camilla Lewis, Christopher Phillipson, Niamh Kavanagh, Phillipa Winship, Luciana Lang

(University of Manchester)

The Significance of Neighbourhoods for Older People Living in Low-income Urban Areas

Camilla Lewis, Christopher Phillipson

(University of Manchester)

This paper provides a sociological analysis on the significance of neighbourhoods for older people, analysing a range of recent policies addressing low-income urban areas in the UK. The importance of neighbourhoods, and their role in people's lives, is an enduring theme in political and policy debate. Neighbourhood-based interventions are a key feature of Labour government policy, reflected in initiatives such as the 'Pride in Place' programme. Such policies reflect concerns about pressures facing low-income neighbourhoods, driven in part by economic inequalities, conflicts between social groups, and the impact of reduced community resources. Such developments have also come at a time when more is being expected of neighbourhoods, in providing support in periods of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and as integral to expanding community-based care. This paper argues that while neighbourhoods are important for groups across various points of the life-course, they are particularly important in the context of an ageing population. While the communities in which people age may prove to be hostile and challenging environments, neighbourhoods remain essential sites for producing and maintaining social ties and a sense of belonging and identity, particularly in later life.

Centring the Lived Experiences of Ethnically Minoritised Older People in a Site of Urban Regeneration

Niamh Kavanagh, Camilla Lewis

(University of Manchester)

Across the UK, ethnic minority older people are more than five times more likely than their White British counterparts to face housing deprivation, as they often live in overcrowded, shared, or unheated properties. But despite persistent ethnic inequalities in housing and health, and a demographic shift towards a more diverse ageing population, the experiences and preferences of ethnically minoritised older adults remain underrepresented in both sociological and urban policy agendas. This paper reports on research in North Manchester, an area with significant health inequalities among people aged 50-plus, which is undergoing Northern England's largest urban redevelopment. The regeneration promises 15,000 new homes, green spaces and community hubs over a 15-year period. But while the redevelopment seeks to expand Manchester's age-friendly housing options, policies and services have been criticised for overlooking cultural diversity and older residents' lived experiences. This discussion explores some of the potential opportunities and challenges of using coproduction methodologies to work with ethnically minoritised older people. The paper makes suggestions for how ethnic minority older people's needs and aspirations should be incorporated into future urban regeneration policies.

Navigating Territorial Stigma and Unequal Experiences of Aging during Urban Regeneration

Phillipa Winship

(University of Manchester)

This paper explores how territorial stigmatisation shapes the unequal experiences of older residents ageing in place within areas undergoing urban regeneration. Drawing on an ethnographic case study in North Manchester, the research examines how older adults—particularly those living in deprived neighbourhoods—navigate stigma, marginalisation, and exclusion in the context of an ongoing urban regeneration project. Through interviews, participant observation, and community engagement, the study reveals a spectrum of coping and resistance strategies, highlighting how symbolic power and planning processes often reproduce ageism and spatial injustice. The findings show that older residents' experiences of ageing are deeply shaped by socio-economic inequalities, historical disinvestment, and limited recognition in urban policy. By applying and extending Wacquant's concept of territorial stigmatisation, the paper contributes a critical lens to urban ageing literature and calls for more inclusive, participatory approaches to regeneration that address the diverse realities of ageing in urban environments.

Ageing in Place in Safe Spaces: Co-producing Inclusive Housing and Care Solutions with Older LGBTQ People

Luciana Lang

(University of Manchester)

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there are over 25 million people in the UK aged 50+, of whom 2.5 to 5% identify as something other than heterosexual. The older LGBTQ community have a range of desires and expectations for the future, many of them informed by a shared history of discrimination. Commonalities amongst this broad age and identity group, include the perception that people have to go 'back in the closet', and the likelihood of experiencing economic disadvantage and social isolation as they age. This paper draws on an ethnography that observed the process of co-designing a Housing and Extra Care scheme in Manchester, a collaboration between a group of older LGBTQ people, architects, local residents, a housing provider, the public sector, and the LGBTQ Foundation. The research unravels the intersecting disadvantages in people's life trajectories, and their hopes and dreams for the future, including the possibility of ageing in a safe space. The paper finally argues for the potential of participatory methods of addressing inequalities and positively altering the provision of housing and care for older LGBTQ people.

Culture, Media, Sport & Food - Room 3.210

School Meals for All? Co-designing Approaches to School Food Improvement with Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and other Stakeholders

Rebecca O'Connell, Lauren Denyer, Louca-Mai Brady, Andy Feltham

(University of Hertfordshire)

In the context of UK 'austerity', and rising child poverty, the government has expanded free school meal (FSM) entitlements. But whilst children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are more likely to grow up in low-income families and be entitled to and benefit from FSM than other children (Brannen et al., 2024), according to a survey by charity Contact (2023) a third of families with disabled children eligible for FSM were unable to access their entitlement. Disability has been described as 'the form of inequality that has received the least attention from sociologists' (Frederick and Shiffrer, 2019: 201), despite its intersections with other social and material inequalities (Wilde and Fish, 2025). This is true for the sociology of food, including children's food in schools, that has focussed on mainstream education and generally excluded children with SEND. Grounded in sociologies of food, childhood and children's rights perspectives, our NIHR funded mixed methods scoping study in the East of England set out to address this gap. We involved children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, and other stakeholders in designing a future project to improve access to nutritious food at school. The talk discusses the methodology, study findings and future plans. It reflects on what we learned about involving children and young people with SEND in an applied research project, and in school food improvement, and considers how we might draw on critical/disability studies in making sense of 'inclusive' school food provision in the context of special educational reform.

Carcerality and Food: Exploring the Lived Experiences of Prisons and Asylum Hotels

Maria Adams, Charlotte Sanders

(University of Surrey)

Food in asylum hotels and prisons is central to the lived experience of those confined within these spaces. Food offers a lens through which we can understand broader questions of social control, power, and resistance. Drawing on two existing qualitative studies on 1) food in women's prisons (Adams, et al., 2021) and 2) lived experiences of those in asylum hotels (Sanders, no date)- this presentation argues that asylum hotels resonate with carceral institutions through shared experiences of lost autonomy, dehumanisation, and the regimentation of daily life. By foregrounding food, in this presentation we will explore how it becomes a key site through which such dynamics are lived and challenged across both spaces. Specifically, we focus on three interrelated themes including: 1) emotions and connections related to food; 2) role of food to either disrupt or facilitate family life; and lastly, food as a mechanism to discipline and regulate everyday social life.

Charitable Food Aid and Growing Inequalities in the UK

Olalekan Oyedepo

(University of the West of Scotland)

This paper examines the relationship between charitable food aid provision and material deprivation in the United Kingdom through a quantitative analysis of the geographical distribution of food aid providers. Drawing on administrative data from charity registers and socioeconomic indicators, we map the evolution of charitable food aid provision across UK local authorities from 1991 to 2024 and analyse its relationship with indices of deprivation. Using multilevel modelling, the research aims to identify the relationship between provision and need, as well as deprived areas experiencing inadequate food aid coverage.

The research addresses two key questions: how charitable food aid provision has evolved over time, and how it correlates with material deprivation. The research contributes to scholarly understanding of how charitable responses to food insecurity intersect with patterns of socioeconomic inequality, with important implications for welfare policy and third sector provision in the context of ongoing welfare reform.

Food, People and Place: Measuring the Impact of Social Connectivity in Building Healthier and More Sustainable Local Foodscapes in Whitley

Lorna Zischka, Bramble Gardiner

(University of Plymouth)

Spurred on by austerity, stagnant wages and Covid-19, food poverty and inequality has been rising across the UK. In this context, FoodSEqual co-produced research with community researchers discussing people's diets, pressures shaping those choices, and aspirations for change. This involved questionnaires and workshops with 500+ people in Whitley (Reading). The top policy priority identified was developing trusted community spaces offering social connections. Moreover, the research revealed most people's diets are driven by their circumstances. Change requires an altered food environment in which people are able to select healthier foods. But how to get to this? We agree that change is more likely when 'done by' and 'done with' communities instead of being 'done to' or 'done for' them. A capacity to connect and cooperate is a key component of social capital, change, resilience and wellbeing.

Based on this, our research explores links between connection with community organisations and (1) eating well (2) feeling in control of diet (3) sense of connection and belonging in the community (4) trust on various levels (5) giving (i.e. doing instead of being done to) (6) stigma. We also explore to what extent does the temporal aspects, quality and depth of connectivity matter. We surveyed and interviewed 137 people and analysis is underway. We will situate our results in the historic and currently evolving landscape of austerity and food poverty, and community solidarity responses to them, considering whether food system transformation could be sparked by place-based initiatives.

Emerging Themes & Special Events - Room 4.209

The Genealogy of Carnavalesque: A Perspective of Sociology of Emotions

Zhao Zhao

(Peking University)

At the end of the 19th century, the alienation and flattening subsequently triggered a dual crisis of civilization at the end of the century. On the one hand, the overly rationalized modern civilization caused the loss of meaning; on the other hand, urban youth were trying to change the status quo but fall into a narrow and special feeling. This essay traces the genealogy of carnivalesque and its dialectical imagery in surrealism to explain the emotional image of revelry itself. In the face of social order and the potential transgression of individual subjectivity under the transition times, carnivalesque has become a body technique for adjusting emotions and suppressing radicalism. Whether it is witty radicalism or wired realism, carnivalesque implicitly tacitly agrees to overstepping boundaries, giving social actors moments that are both within and outside of time. From Fin de siècle to the early 20th century, the emotion of carnivalesque characterized by imagination, surrealism and utopianism were the search for certainty in the face of the uncertainties of boundaries. The essay summarizes this as two different paths for modern people to carry out resistance through the emotion of carnivalesque with their bodies: one is to look inward and explore the psychological boundaries of the urban subconscious; the other is outward pursuit, seeking to escape the geographical boundaries of industrial civilization. Both forms and spiritual carnivalesque are response to the crisis of modernity.

Understanding Human Rights in Practice: Exploring a Human Rights-based Approach in Irish Intellectual Disability Day Services

Laura Doyle

(South East Technological University)

This study explores how a human rights-based approach (HRBA) is experienced and understood by both Social Care Workers and adults with intellectual disabilities within disability day service in Ireland. While a HRBA have become increasingly embedded in policy and legislative and discourse surrounding

disability services, less is known about how a HRBA is experienced or understood in everyday practice, particularly from the perspectives of those who provide and use disability sday services.

Grounded in qualitative methodology, the research draws on semi-structured interviews involving both Social Care Workers and service users across multiple day services in the south east of Ireland. The study is informed by critical disability theory, the social model of disability, and an understanding of human rights as socially constructed and negotiated. The findings highlight a spectrum of experiences of a HRBA, ranging from formal compliance with policy and legislative standards, challenges experienced in implementation, to relational practices that were perceived as fundamental for upholding a HRBA in practice.

Service users expressed a spectrum of experiences from feelings of empowerment to frustration while some highlighted structural challenges in rights being supported or consistently applied.

The study raises Important sociological questions about the translation of human rights principles into real life lived experiences, the structural institutional challenges in upholding rights, and the sociopolitical factors shaping these dynamics. It contributes to broader sociological debates on disability, care, and rights by highlighting the complex realities of implementing a HRBA in practice.

Towards a Vegan Standpoint: epistemological and methodological considerations for Vegan Sociology

Kate Stewart, Matthew Melsa, Lynda Korimboccus
(University of East Anglia)

The 'animal turn' in Sociology has given rise to a distinctive sub disciplinary field of Vegan Sociology in the last decade, furthered by the establishment of a network of vegan sociologists, the establishing of the International Association of Vegan Sociologists, a proliferation of publications in this field, and the recent launch of the first academic book series in Vegan Sociology. This emergence of a discrete sub disciplinary field within sociology in research has been accompanied by a corresponding growth in interest and activities at degree level in taught undergraduate sociology modules, dissertation research, and doctoral study.

This paper outlines a vegan sociological research standpoint, which the authors recent and forthcoming publications have developed, bringing new conceptual tools to this emerging field. It draws on key sociological responses to some of the challenges addressed by contemporary Vegan Sociology, and faced by scholars working in this area. The paper offers guiding principles for the conduct of species-inclusive sociological research. Our aim in articulating principles of a Vegan Standpoint methodology is to provide some practical guidance for how intersectionality can be integrated into sociological research, for the mutual benefit of all – human and nonhuman alike. Although much work needs to be done to iterate fully intersectional research methodologies and epistemologies, that work is essential to equipping sociology with the tools adequate to understanding the planetary crises instantiated by the Anthropocene.

Environment & Society - Room 4.214

'It can get very discriminating, very fast': Navigating Parks among People Who Use Drugs and Are Homeless

Praveena Fernes
(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

While urban green spaces are often described as offering privacy and refuge (Speer and Goldfischer 2019), this paper explores how parks act as transitional, in-between spaces where people who use drugs and are homeless negotiate inclusion, exclusion, and danger. This paper draws on walking ethnographies (n=21) and visual data collection from my doctoral study of 'access' in the context of third sector services for people who use drugs and are homeless in London. Parks are a key site for outreach. Recognizing that visual data can become a form of symbolic violence if used uncritically (Rhodes and Fitzgerald 2006), I used participant-led photography on go-along interviews as a tool for documenting

how people navigate and reshape places of wellbeing and exclusion. This study revealed themes of everyday exclusion, care, and resistance that departed from dominant narratives framing individuals as 'hard-to-reach'. Drawing on the concept of 'liminality', this paper shows how parks can act as 1) escape zones, situated between freedom and entrapment; 2) judgement zones, between erasure and existence; and 3) danger zones, between privacy and surveillance. The stories moves from diffuse, seemingly benign interactions to acute experiences of risk. I demonstrate how distinctions between zones remain as leaky as the boundaries of 'public' parks and the events that flow through them. By addressing the material and social complexities of parks, this paper problematizes and reimagines how 'access' gets done in the context of contested urban environments and the ongoing pressures that third sector organizations face in delivering care.

From Home to Activism: Parents' Pro-environmental Practices and Attitudes to Climate Activism in England

Maria-Nerina Boursinou, Thomas Roberts, Nivedita Chatterjee, Ranjana Das, Emily Setty
(University of Surrey)

This paper presents findings from a three-wave longitudinal project that explored parents' engagements with news in the South of England during 2024-2025. We draw on one of our thematic areas - environmental and climate change - to discuss parents' pro-environmental actions vis-a-vis their attitudes on environmental climate activism. Drawing from theories on intensive parenting in risk societies and climate activism, this paper contributes to the nascent research on parenting and climate change. We show that parents prioritise actions that are focused on the local, domestic sphere and which take the form of everyday habits as a means to role model environmentally conscious routines to their children and create tangible change. Concurrently, while active at home, our participants express mixed attitudes about larger scale climate mobilisations; while the majority supports pro-environmental activism as a concept and a practice, they too problematise the more disruptive elements that characterise some of the tactics of climate activist groups in the UK, showing preference to organised, peaceful methods of taking action for the environment. We argue that both individualised local actions driven by parents and shaped by their positionalities, as well as (inter)national polymorphous activisms, are valuable on their own terms and not antithetical. As the impacts of anthropogenic climate crisis intensify globally, we propose that pro-environmental action – as a practice diffused across scales and forms- should be considered in flux and that both levels– the local and the global- can equally support each other in building sustainable and just societies of the future.

Peer Cultures and Climate Emotions in Early Childhood: A Scoping Review

Jane Spiteri
(University of Malta)

Early childhood is a formative period for both emotional and social development. Yet research on climate-related emotional experiences has predominantly focussed on adolescents and adults. Emerging evidence indicates that children aged 3–8 can experience climate emotions, such as worry, fear, grief, and hope, which may be socially mediated within peer cultures. Peer cultures, encompassing routines, play practices, narratives, and social norms co-constructed by children, serve as influential arenas for emotional meaning-making.

This scoping review maps the literature at the intersection of early childhood peer cultures and climate emotions. Following the PRISMA-ScR framework, 15 peer-reviewed studies published between 2000 and 2025 were identified across sociology of childhood, developmental psychology, environmental education, and climate psychology. Studies were categorised by age range, study design, cultural context, and focus on peer-mediated emotional processes.

Findings indicate that peer interactions can amplify, buffer, or transform climate-related emotions, often through play, storytelling, cooperative problem-solving, and moral negotiation. However, empirical evidence directly linking peer cultures and climate emotions remains sparse. Key gaps include: (1) a lack of age-appropriate climate emotion measures, (2) limited observation of peer interactions, (3) insufficient cross-cultural studies, and (4) minimal integration into early childhood education for sustainability (ECEfS) practice.

This review underscores the need for child-centred, participatory methodologies such as play ethnography, story completion tasks, puppet interviews, and drawing/photo-elicitation. Mapping these gaps provides a foundation for future research, policy development, and the design of pedagogical interventions that leverage peer cultures to foster resilience, hope, and pro-environmental engagement in young children.

Petropower in the United States Secret Service's Advertising at Super Bowl LIX

Pancho Lewis, Daniel Finch-Race

(Durham University)

In this presentation, we examine the (re)production of petropower through media form. Specifically, we explore how petropower reveals itself in a recruitment advertisement produced by the United States Secret Services, shown at the 2025 US 'Super Bowl'. Drawing on social scientific concepts which have been developed to make sense of energy transitions, we attend to how oil power works through 'petroknowledges'. These ooze through the short film's aesthetic and affective forms. Yet, a close examination of the commercial reveals an ambiguous role of the position of petropower. Whilst the advertisement seeks to entrench the power of oil in contemporary energy landscapes, it simultaneously reveals insecurities about its durability, communicating anxiety about US global dominance amid a transition to electrofutures. We conclude by exploring what implications oil power's fragility holds for the politics of high-carbon attachments amid a transition to post-carbon lives.

Families & Relationships - Room 4.204

(In)Separable Affective Ties: Family and Global Mobility in Chinese Queer Lives

Yingxin Zhang

(University College London)

This research explores the family relations of transnational Chinese queer people. While many queer Chinese migrate abroad to LGBTQ-friendly countries in pursuit of personal freedom, family ties often remain inseparable from their everyday lives. Physical distance does not dissolve the tensions between queer identity and normative expectations. Drawing on surveys, semi-structured interviews, and autoethnographic reflections, this study examines how sexuality, mobility, family, and affect intersect in shaping their life narratives and decisions.

It foregrounds the specific temporal and spatial negotiations through which queer individuals respond to affective demands embedded in family relations, for example, how they perform heteronormativity during family visits or traditional holidays, and how they manage visibility across private/public and local/national/transnational spaces. These practices demonstrate how time and space are tactically structured to meet familial obligations without fully erasing queer selfhood.

By situating transnational queer family life within broader dynamics of global mobility, this research considers how queer individuals' relationships with family are both enabled and constrained in different contexts. It contributes to queer China scholarship and to wider discussions on kinship, affect, agency, and the moral legibility of queer lives. Ultimately, it suggests that transnational mobility is not an escape from family, but a renewed site of negotiation, self-making, and survival.

A Queer Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Emotional Wellbeing in Gay Men Who Pursue UK Surrogacy as a Pathway to Family Building

Alice Ferrari

(University of Nottingham)

Surrogacy is fast becoming a popular form of family building in the UK and worldwide, particularly for gay men. Whilst surrogacy incentivises the reproductive freedom and autonomy of gay men, it also can involve an emotional toll due to its medicalised nature, prohibitive costs, the surrounding legal uncertainty, social hostility, and the lack of LGBTQ+ inclusive care within the healthcare system.

However, their affective experience is under-researched. This paper asks how the challenges posed by surrogacy can shape the emotional experience of gay men in the UK.

Using a queer hermeneutic phenomenology, I conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with gay men who were pursuing surrogacy in the UK or had pursued it in the past. I am currently analysing data using a reflexive thematic analysis.

Preliminary findings indicate that gay men feel surrogacy in the UK is a safer and more ethical route compared to cross-border destinations; yet, they often define their journeys as “emotional rollercoasters” where they feel both out of control, anxious, or lost, as well as lucky, resilient or joyful.

Empirically, the study centres gay men within a timely reproductive debate. Theoretically, it advances a dialogue between queer theory and phenomenology to highlight how non-heteronormative bodies navigate heteronormative structures that simultaneously constrain and enable their affective and reproductive experiences.

The study invites reflections on

- How are existing structures of kinship and reproduction challenged and reproduced by gay men’s surrogacy journeys?
- What does the emotional labour of pursuing surrogacy reveal about the heteronormativity of reproductive healthcare and legal frameworks?

The Politics of Reproductive Signification: Navigating Definitions of Parenthood in the Context of UK Informal Donor Conception

Leah Gilman, Alexis Davis

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

In the UK, informal (non-clinical) donor conception is on the increase, often facilitated by online platforms which enable direct communication between potential sperm donors and recipients, without the need for an intermediary. Despite its growth, IDC has an ambiguous status under UK law. Whilst not illegal, it is discouraged by regulators and only partially recognised in designations of legal parenthood; Whilst clinical donor conception offers up to two recipient parent(s) and donors clear routes to legal parenthood and non-parenthood respectively (HFEA, 2018), this is not always the case in informal arrangements, wherein some non-genetic parents lack legal recognition and sperm donors may be legal parents (Smith, 2013).

In this paper, we use IDC as a lens to explore the politics of reproductive signification. Building on the ‘new’ kinship studies, theories of stratified reproduction and socio-legal studies of queer kinship, we use this term to refer to the power dynamics at play in deciding what reproductive processes mean. Through an analysis on interviews with 19 donors and 30 (intended) parents via IDC, we explore how users manage the legal-social meaning of their reproduction in this complex and somewhat de-legitimised context. We consider both how reproductive signification is constrained and stratified and also discuss the agency, creativity and resistance which parents and donors display in managing the meaning of their reproduction. Our analysis draws attention to the ways in which formal/legal and relational/social processes of reproductive signification are co-constituted and enmeshed in broader inequalities of power and resources.

Lifecourse - Room 4.213

Being Afraid and Being Brave: Children’s Perspectives on Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events in Fiji

Jill Thompson, Grace Spencer, Gade Waqa, Jacklynn Iroi, Helen Tawakilai

(University of Sheffield, Anglia Ruskin University)

Climate change represents one of the greatest challenges to children’s health and wellbeing and UNICEF have labelled the climate crisis as a ‘child’s rights crisis’. Yet children’s own perspectives on

the impacts of climate change on their lives have been relatively underexplored. The notion of climate justice highlights the unjust and unequal impacts of climate change – drawing attention to the ways in which those least responsible for the climate crisis are often the most impacted. Children and young people are especially vulnerable to such negative impacts as intergenerational injustice shapes adult-led (lack of) responses to climate change, which often fail to engage directly with children's own perspectives on the changing climate and its impacts on their lives, communities and homelands.

By drawing together perspectives on climate justice and intergenerational injustice, this paper examines findings from a qualitative study with children and young people and their parents in six communities in Fiji. The study aimed to explore children's own perspectives on climate change, and extreme weather-related events, the impacts of these events on their wellbeing and their communities. Participatory methods including drawings, images, videos, storytelling and focus groups were undertaken. We share three key themes drawn from our analysis: 'Being afraid and brave' 'Being prepared' and 'Being together'. These themes provide new insights into the importance of harnessing children's indigenous knowledges, which potentially challenge Western centric concepts of children's agency. Crucially, such perspectives offer alternative ways to think about, and action, climate justice and intergenerational justice to support children's rights.

Young People Navigating the Maze: The Relevance of Reflexivity

Jenni Tikkanen

(University of Turku)

This study explores the relevance of reflexivity – understood as the means through which individuals try to understand, negotiate and cope with society's structural inequalities and uncertainties in their life course and, thereby, as a prerequisite for agency – for the formation of educational and occupational trajectories of young people in vulnerable and marginalised positions. Reflexive practices are socially embedded and oriented towards the realisation of meaningful biographical trajectories, and reflexivity does not equate with emancipation from structural constraints. Reflexive practices are not, but can include or lead to, agency. Thus, reflexivity and agency are distinct: reflexivity may exist even when structural barriers prevent agency from being exercised.

Our data consist of biographical narrative interviews with young people (age 18–30) in varying vulnerable life situations (N=67) in different transition regimes and spatial contexts of Austria, Finland and Portugal. The data collection was carried out in two socio-demographically contrasting regions per country in 2024, and the data was analysed with qualitative thematic analysis.

We aim to answer two research questions: 1) How do young people in vulnerable and marginalised situations display reflexivity in educational transitions and disruptions? and 2) How are their reflexive skills supported, ignored or hindered by their lived experiences of educational and labour market policies and practices in differing spatial contexts? On a more general level, we are also interested in exploring the analytical and theoretical relevance of the concept of reflexivity for the study of the life courses of young people facing vulnerabilities and marginalisation.

Living the Polycrisis: Young People's Experiences of Intersecting Crises

Johanna Nurmi

(University of Turku)

The ongoing climate, ecological, political, and economic crises can be understood as a polycrisis—a constellation of interconnected crises affecting multiple systems simultaneously. This presentation draws on a study that integrates sociology with literary and reading studies to explore how young people in both the global South and North experience overlapping crises in their everyday lives.

Focusing on the themes of security and belonging, I examine how young people in Finland and Morocco perceive and experience issues such as armed conflict, radicalization, polarization, and racism as part of the global polycrisis. These crises are deeply intertwined with the climate emergency, shaping both the present realities and imagined futures of young people. Their effects are intersectional and context-dependent, influenced by individual life circumstances and broader social inequalities.

The study is based on reading groups with young people aged 16–19 in Morocco and Finland, where participants engaged with contemporary literature addressing intersecting crises. These sessions included creative writing exercises and thematic interviews.

I propose that combining reading groups with semi-structured interviews provides a creative and effective method for exploring polycrisis experiences—especially those that may be difficult to articulate in interviews alone. In this presentation, I share preliminary findings and reflect on the methodological value of integrating literature, creative writing, and interviews to understand young people's lived experiences of the global polycrisis.

“I don't know if I'd call it support?": Understanding the Dimensions of Social Support Networks and Opportunity for NEET and Precariously Employed Young People in the UK and Australia

Liam Wrigley, Charlotte Mcpherson

(University of Birmingham)

This paper explores the multifaceted nature of social support in the context of young people who are either precariously employed or classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) in the United Kingdom and Australia. Drawing on qualitative data from two distinct longitudinal studies conducted in England, Scotland, and Australia, we critically examines the role of social support in shaping future educational and employment trajectories. While existing literature highlights the influence of familial, peer, and professional networks in facilitating such opportunities, we offer a comparative exploration of how these support networks are constructed, disrupted, and reconfigured across national contexts. The findings reveal that social support for NEET and precariously employed youth is highly complex and often obscures the dynamic processes through which support networks are formed, sustained, or dissolved. Moreover, the data highlights the importance of recognising young people's intersectional identities, including age, gender, cultural background, and sexual orientation, in understanding the effectiveness and limitations of social support. Finally, we challenge conventional understandings of social support by interrogating its role in enabling or constraining opportunity structures for young people who are marginalised in education, employment, and training.

Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 3.209

Medicalization of Transgender Identities and Citizenship in India

Neelima

(Jamia Millia Islamia)

This paper examines how transgender identities in India are shaped by medicalization and what this means for their citizenship. It explores the ways medicalized frameworks influence legal recognition, healthcare access, and social inclusion, drawing on Foucault's notion of biopower, Fraser's critique of recognition and redistribution, and Rose's ideas on biosocial governance. These perspectives help trace how medical and legal power structures both regulate and contest transgender lives.

The study shows that medicalization—through diagnostic categories, gatekeeping in gender-affirming care, and bureaucratic requirements—plays a decisive role in mediating transgender rights and access to basic services. These mechanisms often reinforce marginalization by privileging normative gender expressions, restricting self-determination, and shaping state policies that complicate full citizenship. Transgender citizenship, the paper argues, emerges at the intersection of healthcare systems, legal regimes, and sociocultural norms, demanding constant negotiation from individuals to secure rights and recognition.

Using a critical review of literature, policy analysis, and case studies—including the 2014 NALSA judgment and the 2019 Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act—the paper highlights how medical institutions and regulatory frameworks define the contours of transgender belonging in India. It calls for inclusive, rights-based healthcare policies that recognize diverse gender identities and guarantee equitable access. By grounding the analysis in India's context, the study also offers insights into the broader global dynamics of medicalized citizenship and its effects on marginalized communities.

Queer Stoma Pride: Challenging Gut Stigma through Crip Gut Community Building

Órla Meadhbh Murray

(Northumbria University)

This paper examines the complexity of making community with others around gut conditions, specifically dynamics of stigma and pride at the intersections of queerness and disability. Beginning with autoethnographic reflections on my experience of being diagnosed with ulcerative colitis and having semi-elective ileostomy (stoma) surgery, I consider how stigmatising discourses around 'normality' are used in stoma-related discourses in queerphobic and ableist ways. Using Kafer's (2013) political/relational model of disability alongside broader feminist work on the gut (Wilson, 2015; Dryden, 2022a, 2022b, 2023), I interrogate the experience of having crip guts – "non-normative digestive processing, nutritional disabilities or other disabilities related to the gut" (Kolářová, Stöckelová and Senft, 2023, p. 1255). In particular, I consider dynamics around 'coming out' as having a stoma and being queer, the role of stigma and pride in navigating becoming an ostomate, and similarities between ostomates and many queer and trans people around (un)expected bodies. I argue for queer stoma pride and crip guts community making across difference as a critical response to discourses of normality around crip guts and as a potential site of coalitional politics between differently positioned queer and/or disabled people. From this, I will discuss my ongoing work to create a crip gut community and community-led research through gut-focused peer support groups and workshops at a mental health recovery college in Newcastle upon Tyne, England. This work attempts to create crip kinship across multiple gut experiences and turn individualised private experiences of gut distress into collective coalition building across difference.

Methodological Innovations - Room 4.206

'Trusted as we are, without being expected to change': Navigating the Personal Investment and Emotional Resonance of Lived Experience Advisors

Siobhan Beckwith

(University of Huddersfield)

Keeping Mothers in Mind, a National Institute for Health and Care Research funded study, aims to improve maternal mental health following the removal of children through the Family Courts in England. The project has lived experience at its heart with members of the Mothers Apart – Common Threads Collective, based at WomenCentre in Kirklees, UK, forming a lived experience advisory panel. All have personal experience of poor mental health and child removal/care proceedings/local authority intervention and are keen to contribute to systemic change, increased understanding and improved support for others. Advisors guided the research through multiple points of consultation. They ensured relevance, accessibility and sensitivity checked language and ideas from funding application, research question formulation, consultation on early findings, development of conclusions and recommendations and dissemination of key.

Reflecting the personal resonance of the research subject for advisors, the study is underpinned by tandem commitments to shared learning and wellbeing. This is evident in the flexibility, pace and creative approaches to engagement such as zine-making, diagramming and creative writing. Examples of creative approaches to co-creation of research will be presented during the talk including short film clips created with advisors. Drawing upon women-centred approaches, recognising people as assets, this work is deeply relational, rewarding and challenging. This paper will explore both ethical and logistical tensions and share innovative approaches taken to bridge the gaps between lived experience and the academic pursuit of knowledge creation.

Changing Cycles: Accepting, Recognising, and Disseminating Menstruation through Methodological Innovation

Samanmali Alujjage Don

(University of Essex)

This paper positions menstruation as a central object of sociological inquiry and methodological innovation. Based on feminist ethnographic research with Malayaha Tamil women in Sri Lanka's plantation sector, it argues that accepting, recognising, and openly disseminating knowledge about menstruation constitutes a radical intervention in a field where silence, stigma, and taboo have historically prevailed.

Methodologically, the project combines narrative interviews with the researcher's own art practice. Artworks were created from photographs, interview transcripts, portraits, and natural materials such as tea leaves—elements that resonate with women's labour and identity in the plantation sector. These pieces are not illustrations of findings but methodological extensions of them: they translate lived experiences of menarche, ritual restriction, and bodily negotiation into sensory, material forms that open the research to wider publics. In embedding menstrual research within creative practice, the project highlights menstruation itself as a site of methodological innovation.

Treating menstruation as a subject worthy of creative, public-facing representation challenges conventional academic boundaries and develops alternative modes of disseminating findings that amplify voices often silenced in both community and scholarly contexts. Dissemination becomes an innovation in itself: menstruation is not only studied but also made visible, discussable, and shareable through media that travel beyond the written text.

Recognising menstruation as both method and message, the paper argues for its centrality to sociology's future—expanding the discipline's capacity to engage with embodied knowledge, destabilise taboos, and create transformative dialogue across academic and public domains.

EuroBorderWalks: Walking Borders, Risk and Belonging: Advances in Ethno-mimetic Biographical Research in the Making and Re-Making of Three European Borders

Maggie O'Neill, Agnieszka Golczyńska-Grondas, Krešimir Zazar, Aleksandra Sobanska, Vladimir Ivanovic, Tomasz Ferenc, Marek Domanski, Michael Mcloughlin, John Perivolaris, Conach Gibson-Feinblum

(University College Cork)

EUROBORDERWALKS is an interdisciplinary, inter institutional and European research project. This paper will share the innovative methodologies used including the challenges and vital importance of studying Europe's Borders 'bottom up,' by advancing sociological, ethnographic, biographical and arts based knowledge and understanding of EU Borders, in the context of state-of-the-art research in critical border and mobilities studies. Given the themes of the conference (in BSA's seventy-fifth year) and in the context of geo-political shifts, economic instability, environmental challenges, and political unrest, this paper presents both the methodological advances and work in progress focusing upon the experiences of people living, working or crossing three borders at the edges of the European Union (Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland, Poland & Ukraine, Croatia & Bosnia-Herzegovina). In the process we tell the story/biography of the three borders and borderlands, including transversal/comparative analysis and we share the intricate connections between biography, memory and temporality, societal processes, and crises, as well as hopes for the future gained through ethno-mimetic methods, walking interviews as biographical method and arts workshops.

Embodied Identities: Using Yoga as a Sociological Tool to Explore the Lives of Adolescent Amazigh Girls

Jordan Katz

(Goldsmiths, University of London)

This paper explores how yoga, both as a personal and pedagogical practice, can act as a sociological tool for understanding the lives of adolescent Amazigh girls in the remote High Atlas Mountains of

Morocco. In a region characterised by limited government support for girls' education (Laghssais & Comins-Mingol, 2021), these young women are chosen to pursue secondary education in an all-female dormitory supported by Education for All Morocco (EFA, 2023). Yoga becomes a means through which they connect internal and external experiences, offering insights into their embodied realities.

While girlhood studies in the Global South often focus on traditional rites of passage, this research shifts attention to how 'becoming' is experienced through embodiment, mindfulness, and self-awareness practices—including meditation, breathing, journaling, and self-care. Through shared yoga sessions (conducted both in person and virtually), dialogue develops between the researcher and participants, creating a space to explore their lived experiences.

Drawing on Rebecca Coleman's work on movement and transformation in research, the study frames yoga as a dynamic process, wherein both the researcher and participants undergo a metamorphic exchange. This transformation demonstrates how the girls use yoga to reflect on their identities as Amazigh girls and imagine future selves beyond traditional expectations. Yoga becomes a 'place-world', a space for self-exploration and empowerment, where participants learn to lead and design their own classes. This project ultimately presents yoga as a sociological tool that provides a meaningful lens into the girls' aspirations, identities, and the collective process of becoming within a shared, transitional space.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Room 2.217

Walking while 'Black' in the English Countryside

Maxwell Ayamba Bem

(Sheffield Environmental Movement)

This paper draws heavily on my PhD research which uses walking ethnography and works from Spivak's (1985b) positionality on subaltern voices as lens to understand how hierarchy of power and landscape impact on the ontology of Blackness in the English landscape. Though Spivak is a feminist theorist, I argue that her thinking intersects with historic systemic and endemic practices embedded within the English landscape discourse where histories and voices of those categorised as 'Black' is silenced and erased.

Spivak's ideas about subaltern voices is pertinent to spatial racial politics, justifying why national parks remain racialised resulting in Black people perceiving not to belong in these spaces. I draw on the national play *Black Men Walking* by Eclipse and Royal Theatre in 2018/19 inspired by the walking group '100 Black Men Walking' I co-founded in 2004 to drive home my point. The play traced over 500 years of Black British history erased from the English landscape as a precursor to why Black bodies appearance in national parks remain contested. In this paper, I contend this is because 'invisible' anti-black structures based on the historicisation and constructions of the English landscape as part of English national identity of 'whiteness' remain interwoven within parks management systems, hence notions of 'race' and space fail to make it to the political agenda. I conclude that to decolonise and democratise the English landscape it is important to reimagine how the Enlightenment project and colonial thought process continues to maintain the status quo in English national parks.

Curriculum and Policy Development in Post-Independence Barbados: An Exploratory Study of Key Stakeholders

Jacqueline Newsome

(University of Cambridge)

The intensification of white nativism within England's policies, institutions, and grassroots organisations has entrenched hostility toward addressing racial inequities in education. This climate has constrained meaningful efforts to tackle the persistent disparities faced by Black Caribbean children in English schools, including attempts to decolonize the curriculum. In this context, solutions may emerge not from the UK itself but from the Black-majority spaces of the anglophone Caribbean.

Barbados, as a former imperial possession, offers a compelling case study. In recent years, the nation has actively re-examined its colonial legacy, engaging critically with how history and identity are taught in classrooms and represented in public spaces. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews with key stakeholders across the Barbadian education system, this paper presents preliminary findings on the ongoing process of reclaiming education policy and practice.

The study employs Critical Race Theory (CRT) as its theoretical framework. While CRT does not explicitly address colonial histories in the way postcolonial and decolonial studies do, it foregrounds the operation of race and racial power at the systemic level. Applying CRT to the Barbadian context represents a novel intervention, appropriate to a society seeking to disentangle its educational structures from a white settler past. This paper argues that Barbados's evolving approach to education provides valuable insights for reimagining anti-racist and decolonial practices beyond the metropole.

(Never) the Twain Shall Meet: Bourdieu and Black Alumni Experiences of British Private Schools

Justice Aina

(Cambridge University)

This article adopts an intersectional reading of Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus, and field to explore the experiences of Black alumni of British private schools. These institutions, historically world-renowned for (re)producing elites globally, operate through ritualised practices that secure and legitimise privilege. This study argues that these processes are embedded in and inseparable from racialised forms of power, and in doing so makes a novel contribution in the British context, by bringing elite school research into dialogue with Black education scholarship.

Drawing on 17 in-depth interviews, the analysis highlights two key dynamics. First, the acquisition of social and cultural capital is constantly negotiated for Black students, whose access to elite schooling resources is mediated by race. It finds that many of the experiences of racialised marginalisation documented within the state sector manifest across both sectors, presenting the presupposed 'ease' of private schooling privilege as a complex construct for Black alumni. Second, such racialised negotiations shape alumni's habitus, influencing how identity, belonging, and social positioning are understood and navigated over time.

The article demonstrates that race is central to processes of capital acquisition and extends current discussion about private schooling beyond outcomes of attainment and earnings. It develops a theoretical account of the racialised structuring of privilege, showing how in tandem they operate through everyday practices, recognition and misrecognition within elite educational spaces. It advances scholarship on the formation of the Black middle class and elites, repositioning British private schools as simultaneously racialised and classed institutions of reproduction.

Vigilant Whiteness: Racism, Transphobia and the Mainstreaming of Far-right Politics in Britain

Aleksandra Lewicki, Maddy Clark

(University of Sussex)

Far-right agendas have moved to the centre stage of politics. Here, we examine how registers of difference are crafted within reactionary movements in the UK. We analyse social media activities and interviews with individuals who gained a public profile by advancing far-right agendas. Racist and transphobic discourses thereby fulfil parallel functions: both operate via projected scenarios of biological contamination and criminal transgression. They draw on amalgamations of colonial registers of biology and culture and normalize roles such as 'threat' versus 'protector'. Racialized and gendered 'Others' are imagined as contagious, invasive, transgressive and dangerous species. Cisgendered Whiteness, in contrast, materializes via projections of vigilance, watchfulness, protection, and guardianship. These projections have political-economic implications for the distribution of rights and resources. Thus, the mainstreaming of far-right agendas nurtures combative and belligerent political subjectivities that centre cisgendered Whiteness. We also discuss how this notion of Whiteness becomes conditional, e.g. *visa vis* Europe's borderlands.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 2.218

The Diseducation of Scottish Youth: How Secondary Schools Promote Misconceptions of 'Race', Racism, and Anti-racism

Rohit Rao

(University of Glasgow)

Like many institutions in Scotland, secondary education projects an image of itself as a site of only limited racism, owing to its attempts to promote values of pluralism, universalism, and meritocracy. This paper draws on fifteen months of ethnographic and interview data in two high schools to show that the reality can be very different for Black pupils and pupils of colour (BPOC). The findings show that racism proliferates not in spite of, but precisely because of the schools' purported liberal doctrines, akin to Bonilla-Silva's thesis of 'racism without racists'. Such colour evasive discourses within teacher-pupil interactions misidentify and mistake the concepts of 'race', racism, and anti-racism, under the guise of neutrality and objectivity. BPOC pupils are taught to co-opt outdated biological conceptions of 'race', to minimise or deny racist encounters they suffer, and to express cynicism for engaging in anti-racism efforts. I term this process 'diseducation' to convey the structural and active knowledge loss experienced by participants over time in the Scottish school system. An example of symbolic violence, diseducation reinforces hegemonic whiteness by widening the racial employment gap and moulding BPOC pupils into adopting genuflective, compliant, or silent ways of being in school. This paper hopes to contribute to scholarly discussion of how racism is able to propagate covertly in 21st century Scotland, and to how anti-racism efforts must be wary of institutional insincerity.

Anti-racism and Racial Literacy Training in Schools

Sharon Porter

(Leeds Beckett University)

This paper presents findings from research with secondary school teachers and leaders on their perceptions of anti-racism and racial literacy training, drawing on semi-structured interviews and analysis of training resources.

Anti-racism and racial literacy programmes are increasingly recognised as essential for raising awareness and driving systemic change. In sectors such as healthcare and policing, structured training has been developed to challenge bias and promote equity. Within education, initiatives including the Anti-Racist School Award (Centre for Race, Education & Decoloniality) and the Race And Conscious Equality (RACE) Charter Mark signal national commitments to structural transformation.

Language and terminology are central to these programmes. Some reproduce racial hierarchies through deficit-based narratives, while others challenge inequities by centring systemic change (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Walker et al., 2022).

Using Critical Anti-Racist Discourse Analysis (Laughter & Hurst, 2022), this paper examines how professional development sessions and resources reinforce or disrupt racial power dynamics. Critical Race Theory provides the analytical lens to explore how race and racism are embedded within institutional practices. The paper examines the implications for teachers and school leaders in developing more effective and transformative approaches to racial equity in education.

For training to produce systemic change rather than perpetuate inequities, educators, policymakers, and providers must critically interrogate the language and frameworks underpinning these programmes. Schools must move beyond performative gestures and actively embed anti-racist principles throughout curricula, policies, and practices.

References available on request.

Women of Colour's World-making Practices: Caring Labour and Ephemeral Delights

Leah Bassel, Akwugo Emejulu

(University of Sheffield, Coventry University)

Our research project 'Women of Colour Resist' explores the struggles of women of colour activists to build and sustain intersectional solidarity in six European cities: Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, London, Madrid and Paris. In this presentation we examine the hopes, dreams and desires of women of colour activists. In different but interconnected ways across the six contexts, we find that left solidarity in white dominated activists spaces fails women of colour activists. Given the consistency of this failure, and the emotional, physical and discursive violence that abets it, women of colour activists dream about new ways to remake the world through different approaches to their activism, solidarity-making and community-building. We foreground activists' desire for solidarity grounded in accountability and responsibility, which they see as the foundation for any kind of effective caring practices in their groups. They wish for more accountability about the problems that oftentimes wrack their collectives such as power hierarchies, distrust and internalised racism and homophobia. Closely linked to this accountability work is the need for dismantling white supremacy and other hierarchical relations that breed dissention, disrespect and disillusionment in their groups. We find a re-emphasis, on the informal, the pleasurable and the joyous as a (temporary) escape from the multiple crises activists face. This focus on ephemeral delights coupled with caring labour indicates the world the activists wish to bring into being. Through a politics of refusal, they insist on a revolutionary love for self and others as the threshold to liberation.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 3 - Room 2.219

Continuous Becoming, Continuous Shifts: Local, National, and Transnational Dynamics of Mixed-race Performativity

Heather Proctor

(Newcastle University)

'Mixed-race' has been shown to occupy a fluid subject-position (Rockquemore et al, 2009), defying the social order predicated on constructions of racial categories (Root, 1992). In this way, mixed-race positionality shifts not only according to contemporary understandings of mixedness, but in relation to the specific localized space an individual occupies, and what dialogue that situatedness has with wider understandings of race. We can examine these shifts through the lens of racial performativity, the fluidity of which gives us the tools to unsettle the certainties of race (Tate, 2015). I therefore use racial performativity in a way that highlights the multiplicity of subjecthood in mixed-race experiences through looking at the fluid and shifting ways they constitute themselves within a particular context. I draw on interview data with mixed Black/white and Asian/white individuals in the UK to discuss the concept of mixed-race performativity. Mixed-race studies in the UK has often held a London-centric or city-based focus (e.g. Aspinall and Song 2013, Campion 2021, McKenzie 2013). Both building on and departing from this city-oriented approach, I explore the ways that mixed-race experiences in towns, rural areas, cities, and places beyond the UK lead to shifts in how the mixed-race self is envisioned by individuals, and subsequently (re)negotiated within these different spaces, which hold contradictions with one another. I map how mixed-race performativity shifts through an emotive dialogue with changing conceptions of race in local, national, and transnational contexts.

A Decolonial Approach to Understand Anti-Black Racism in China

Zihuan Zhang

(University of Sheffield)

This presentation argues that the studies of racism in China demands a decolonial intervention due to coloniality present in contemporary Chinese society. By exemplifying anti-Black racism amongst many other racial ideologies in China, I argue that Chinese racial ideologies are highly likely to be manifestations of coloniality similar to other postcolonial societies.

Informed by the outcome of my PhD project, this presentation is two-folded. First, Blackness is subordinated by China-centrism while White supremacy is upheld. Colonial modernity is the underpinning narrative for Chinese national development and rejuvenation project. Chinese modernisation is constructed on a pervasive temporal hierarchy. That is a notion of a linear timeline where people and cultures are classified based on their proximity to Western modernity as the end goal. This temporal classification essentially renders a racial hierarchy. Consequently, Chineseness aspires to capture and become White Western modernity on both temporal and racial hierarchies. This racial hierarchy reflects how China's racial ideology is not exactly endogenously born but profoundly influenced by global forces of colonialism. Second, I argue the need to devise decolonial theory derives from the possible origin of racism which is colonially implanted in China. My research amongst many others suggest that racism in China is not a result of Chinese traditional culture, but a consequence of colonisation of Chinese people. By this presentation, I challenge existing research by centring decoloniality in studying racism in China.

Understanding the European Racial Formation: Towards a Continental Scale in Racial Formation Theory

Simina Dragos

(University of Cambridge)

Building on earlier insights by theorists such as DuBois ('global colour line') or Said ('orientalism'), recent developments in race critical studies understand 'race' and racism as a planetary structure (e.g. Christian, 2019; Lentin, 2020; Singh et al., 2025), offering insight into the historically grounded global span of racial domination. Conversely, many race critical theories – for example critical race theory or racial formation theory – have been (rightfully) critiqued for their provincialism, ahistoricity or methodological nationalism (e.g. Meghji, 2023). Taking account of these critiques and developments, I propose a theory of race and racism which takes the continental (or regional) as an important scale for the theorisation and analysis of racialisation and racial domination processes. Positioned between the global and the national or local, the continental (describing a large region) has been a neglected scale of sociological analysis, especially when it comes to racialised social formations and processes. However, studying racial formation processes in their continental or regional variations allows us to 1) broaden our historical reference points, 2) capture the circulation of ideas and power which underpin racial formations, 3) understand how forms of racialisation and racisms build upon one another. In this paper, I argue that historically grounded racial formation(s) in Europe are continental/regional in nature. I do so to substantiate and theorise recent debates about the nature of whiteness in Europe (e.g. Borocz, 2021; Baker et al., 2025), as well as to demonstrate the intertwined nature of Islamophobia, anti-Roma racism, antisemitism and anti-blackness, historically and presently.

What's in a Category? Poetry, Re-membering and Identity Construction amongst British Women with South Asian Family Histories

Manjot Dhaliwal

(University of Sussex)

Poetry develops conceptual diversity (Madhok 2025), through its expansion of the sociological imagination (Mill 1959), use of creative languages and access to aesthetic knowledge. A point of tension within migration research is the transition from colonialism to nationalism, and the reworking of identities. This transition was also deeply gendered, as this paper will highlight. Drawing on data from poetry based participatory action research with British women with South Asian heritage, this paper will argue for the consideration of dismembered knowledges through re-membering (Pandit 2023) to rework how are identities are conceived. This paper will outline how poetry based participatory action research facilitates an expansion into identity constructions, making way for self-defined identities and identities constructed through resistance to the imposition of both gendered racialisation and gendered patriarchal cultural constructions. I argue that the uncritical use of social categories creates intersectional erasures (Cleton and Meier 2023), producing ahistorical narratives, which reproduce rather than investigate otherization (Cleton and Meier 2023; Gillespie et al 2012; Dahinden et al 2020; Sharma 2020; Dahinden 2025; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). While I focus on British women with South Asian heritage, this paper builds on movement to reconsider conceptualisations of identity to include women's voices (Takhar 2011,2013) and to recognise legacies of colonialism (Demir

2022,2023,2024). For British women with South Asian heritage this involves the recognition of the intersectional ways in which their identities have been ideologically constructed and categorised and reworking conceptualisations of identity that are iterative of their marginalisation.

Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 4.211

Creating Generative Spaces in Participatory Research: Reflections from a Women's Lived Experience Advisory Group

Hannah King

(Durham University)

Creating the conditions for a generative space within patient and public involvement (PPI) groups requires more than tokenistic inclusion; it demands attention to trust, safety, and the relational dynamics that underpin meaningful collaboration. This paper explores how feminist values—care, reciprocity, and equity—can inform the design of such spaces. Generativity emerges where participants feel safe to voice uncertainty, difference, and critique without fear of dismissal or harm. Building trust is an iterative process, developed through transparent communication, acknowledgement of lived experience, and recognition of structural power imbalances. Crucially, researchers themselves must enter the space as embedded members rather than detached facilitators, explicitly refuting hierarchy and resisting traditional power asymmetries. By adopting an ethos of shared vulnerability and mutual learning, researchers contribute to dismantling barriers that can otherwise undermine authentic participation. Embedding feminist practices such as mutual respect, attentiveness, and collective responsibility enhances the transformative potential of PPI, enabling participants to move beyond consultation towards genuine co-production. Methodologically, the presentation draws on participatory and feminist research traditions that value reflexivity, positionality, and co-construction of knowledge. In so doing, the PPI group becomes not only a site of knowledge exchange but also a supportive community that nurtures confidence, resilience, and creativity. This reorientation towards safety, feminist ethics, and shared positionality opens possibilities for more just and inclusive research practices, where diverse voices shape agendas, challenge hierarchies, and generate insights that might otherwise remain silenced.

Beyond Structure and Agency: Disability Activism as Assemblage in Democratisation

Po-Han Lee

(National Taiwan University)

Sociological scholarship on social movements has tended to bifurcate between structuralist accounts of mobilisation and psychosocial approaches to agency, affect, and identity. Disability activism unsettles this division. In Taiwan, persons with disabilities and their allies have mobilised across shifting terrains of welfare, law, and rights, yet sociology has given little theoretical attention to disability as a constitutive dimension of socio-political life. Drawing on the DeLanda reading of Deleuzian assemblage theory, I argue that movements are better understood not as unitary actors or structurally determined outcomes but as contingent formations of heterogeneous elements – policy frameworks, medical discourses, built environments, activist networks, and embodied practices – that continually territorialise and deterritorialise.

Building on earlier theorisation of queer activism in Taiwan, which foregrounds ambivalence and coalition as assemblage effects, this paper examines how disability rights activism emerged at the intersections of welfare paternalism, medicalised charity, and human rights discourse. Caregivers, disabled persons, civil society organisations, and state institutions do and undo disabling environments in uneven and sometimes contradictory ways, creating fragile yet productive advocacy spaces. In so doing, they enact both solidarity and tension, expanding and limiting political subjectivity.

Foregrounding these dynamics, the paper contends that sociology's neglect of disability over-rationalises movement processes and ignores the ambivalence constitutive of intersectional, coalitional politics. Revisiting sociology in its seventy-fifth year requires renewed attention to contested bodies and the assemblages they form. Disability activism in Taiwan demonstrates how assemblage thinking can

open new possibilities for theorising collective action, subjectivity, and social change beyond inherited binaries.

When Sociologists Become the Target: Backlash, Hate and the Politics of Research

Rachel Keighley

(University of Leicester)

Sociology has long endured through its interrogation of complex socio-political topics. This includes for example, race, migration and belonging, sites where the fragility of nation and identity is most visible and contested. In the current climate, far-right movements and culture wars seek to delegitimise critical scholarship, increasingly drawing sociologists into the very conflicts they study. Under such conditions, both participants and researchers become the targets of hostility.

This paper reflects on these pressures through examples given from the author's research, including research on rural racism in England and a project exploring LGBTQ+ migration to England and Italy. The paper thus explores the researcher's own experiences of harassment as a social justice scholar and as a member of a marginalised group. In doing so, it considers how backlash accompanies attempts to unsettle national myths on identity and racialised and heteronormative boundaries of belonging, and how this reshapes the terrain of sociological inquiry.

The paper asks whether sociology is unavoidably political, and what responsibilities arise in protecting not only participants but also researchers in these spaces. It argues that sociology's endurance requires extending ethical concern to the conditions of inquiry itself: ensuring researcher safety whilst resisting silencing on important sociological matters. Sociology as a discipline must protect the labour of those exposed to backlash and defend the discipline's capacity to question power, identity and exclusion.

Ritual Enactment of Freedom of Speech: Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park

Suzanne Newcombe, Shanon Shah, Lucy Clarke

(Inform and Open University)

Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park is an iconic symbol of Freedom of Speech and Expression, and an icon in British democratic tradition. Drawing on Goffman's theories of Interaction Ritual this paper will explore how and to what extent ritualised roles contribute to the creation of a relatively stable ritualised enactment of Freedom of Speech every Sunday at Hyde Park Corner. We will explore how the social consensus of this space is regulated by conventions which have developed over the years (the 'situation at large'), rather than by individual dominant people. Drawing on historical and ethnographic research largely conducted between April-June 2025, the paper explores how this sacred space for Freedom of Speech is created through competitive debates, heckling, as well as a variety of other recognisable styles of expression and typified social roles. Although Hyde Park Corner is still vibrant and largely self-policing, the space is vulnerable to outbursts of violence. Police presence to enforce the limits of provocative behaviour is essential to the smooth functioning of this social ritual. We will explore some of the transformations social media and livestreaming have made to the environment and champion the continued iconic importance of the location in exemplifying British democratic values.

Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 3.205

Embedding Participation in AI Research: Collaborating with Researchers and Communities on the Peas in Pods Project

Sarah Linn, Caitlin Nunn, Keeley Crockett

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Developing responsible, human-centred AI is vital to building public trust and mitigating environmental, social and economic risks. The 'participatory turn' in AI has the potential to be instrumental in this, seeking to engage diverse stakeholders in the design, delivery, analysis and dissemination of AI. However, studies have shown that the engagement of communities with participatory AI research is

often merely consultatory. Given the strength of participatory research in Sociology and allied disciplines - what might be gained through interdisciplinary projects which share learning and practice with the rapidly developing AI sector?

In this paper, we reflect on the experiences of early career data science researchers who participated in the UKRI funded project PEAS in PODS: Co-production of community-based public engagement for data and AI research. As part of this three-year project, participants from Manchester Higher Education Institutions were upskilled, trained and mentored in participatory research methods before applying their learning in collaborative group projects with seldom heard communities in Manchester.

In tracing the journeys of early career data scientists through the project as they encountered, explored and applied participatory principles and practices, we offer insights into the epistemological, ethical, and affective complexities and possibilities of adapting social scientific participatory paradigms for AI research.

Queer Bodies as Borders

Christoffer Koch Andersen, Leah M. Schmidt
(University of Cambridge)

What does it mean to feel queer warfare in the age of algorithmic borders? This paper argues that contemporary technosecuritisation constitutes a dispersed form of warfare waged on queer bodies, where algorithmic surveillance, biometric detection, and digital infrastructures target the aberrantly gendered body as a threat to sovereign order. By situating digital borders as infrastructures of war, we examine how these practices foster fear and anxiety around cross-border queer embodiment, while simultaneously creating possibilities for collective resistance.

Our focus is on recent border developments in the United States and Denmark. Both states introduced increasingly automated controls (biometric passports, AI-driven surveillance, and automated detection of gender markers) framed as neutral tools of national security. Yet, when read through queer theory (Snorton, Haritaworn, Puar) and affect theory (Ahmed, Berlant, Ngai), these technologies enact violence by disciplining bodies that deviate from binary gender logics. We argue that such practices operate as affective regimes of war: they regulate movement while circulating dread, insecurity, and fear that “stick” to queer bodies. Methodologically, we combine discourse analysis of border policy and communications with close readings of memes and digital satire that document, critique, and resist these infrastructures. We propose the concept of the queer-body-as-border: not only acted upon by borders, but also reshaping, multiplying, and queering them. In doing so, we foreground the relational and affective dimensions of war as lived (queer) experience. Ultimately, this chapter shows how queer bordering practices expose the violence of algorithmic regimes while mobilising humour, optimism, and solidarity as counter-affective resources.

Feminist Spaces of Care: Building Online Communities as Affective Infrastructure

Priyanka Pandey, Yingqin Zheng
(University of Essex)

This study examines IWU, an online community (OC) for women of the Indian diaspora in the UK, as a socio-technical space for knowledge exchange, reciprocal support, and empowerment. Stemming from participant observation, we present a qualitative case study consisting of 31 in-depth, semi-structured virtual interviews with women from diverse age groups and professions and analyse how engagement with IWU shapes women’s sense of self and relational agency.

Findings show that IWU cultivates recognition, trust, and resilience grounded in the shared conditions of being Indian, women, and immigrants in the UK. Sharing from lived experiences, participants were able to gain practical knowledge in meeting challenges as a diaspora, receive emotional support in moments of vulnerability, and develop critical awareness of patriarchal structures and possibilities of resistance.

Theoretically, we propose the concept of “feminist space of care” as an affective infrastructure (Berlant, 2016), drawing upon studies of feminist ethics of care (Gilligan, 1982; Tronto, 1998). Built upon socio-

technical affordances such as anonymity, voluntary participation, and situated knowledge sharing, feminist spaces of care are characterised with attentiveness and responsiveness, enacted and sustained through the cultivation of care, solidarity, and relational autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000) in individual and collective experiences, where women's autonomy and agential capacity could develop even in constrained circumstances. The study also reveals the tensions across heterogeneous values and positions in IWU, generating broader insights into the enabling conditions and challenges in constructing and sustaining inclusive and affective online communities in digital environments.

Beyond the Algorithm: Limitations of NLP in Analysing Trans Media Narratives

Yen Nee Wong

(University of Leeds)

Natural Language Processing (NLP) has become an increasingly popular tool in digital sociology for analysing large-scale media discourse. Techniques such as sentiment analysis and topic modelling offer scalable insights into how social issues are framed across time and platforms. However, when applied to trans subject matter, these models, often trained on general-purpose corpora, can misrepresent or flatten the complexity of trans narratives. This study uses RoBERTa-based sentiment analysis and BERTopic to examine 14,084 UK and US legacy media articles on trans athletes (2015–2025). It highlights key limitations in NLP's ability to capture ideological stance. For instance, RoBERTa frequently classifies exclusionary views as positive due to affirming language, such as endorsements of bans on trans athletes framed as "fair" or "progressive." This misalignment between emotional tone and political stance reveals the need for fine-tuning sentiment models on trans-specific datasets. The side-lining of minority discourses due to topic modelling outliers can also reinforce erasures of trans voices. The paper argues for retraining NLP models with inclusive, community-centred data derived from activist and independent media, and integrating qualitative and multimodal methods to better reflect the complexity of trans representation in digital media.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 1 - Lecture Theatre A

Between Objective and Discursive Understandings of 'Class': Who Counts as Working Class under Neoliberalism, and How Is It Changing?

Salome Letter

(University of Glasgow)

This paper will present early reflections from an ongoing project in which I both critically examine claims made on behalf of the working class in contemporary France and Britain, and reconceptualise class. I ground this reconceptualization on an objective understanding of class as defined through capitalist relations of production, but juxtapose it with a discursive approach which sheds light over who is considered as 'counting as' the working class today. The working class is often defined in narrow terms, whether it is through a reductive account of industrial capitalism – often mobilised to counter cultural accounts of class associated with post-Marxist currents in the 1970s and 1980s, or through exclusionary accounts of class, such as far-right discourses elevating a 'white' working class, often also heteronormative and Christian. I defend an extensive objective understanding of the contemporary working class, while also advocating to recognise, research, and participate in, the discursive hegemonic struggles around who to call working class, as the twofold path towards socialist class consciousness in crumbling neoliberal times. Presenting early findings of an archival research surveying 40 years of discourses on class, I posit that the various 'dividers' of the working class, such as arguments around changing economic relations (including sociological moves to stratify the working class), cultural articulations of race and gender, and political histories rewriting colonialism and human migrations, are used both together and independently at various times, and that they might be key indicators of the specific challenges put to neoliberalism and capitalism in that period.

'A just transition for who? Just for who?' Examining Worker Subjectivity in Trade Union Responses to Climate Change

Rebekah Diski

(University of Warwick)

I consider changing class composition in relation to climate breakdown, finding that the main industrial unions privilege a particular type of work/worker crystallised in a nationalist yearning for Britain's industrial heyday. We see this in both the defensive posture of unions representing energy workers in "good, skilled jobs" and in the hopes invested in the restorative project of a "green industrial revolution". Through their own rhetorical attachments to a productivist definition of the worker – especially as the subject of the just transition – unions ignore the more heterogeneous reality of the working class and of union members themselves, who are disproportionately gendered and racialised and more likely to be employed in public services, often in social reproduction and inherently low-carbon work.

Analysing union discourse and interviews with officials and reps across sectors, this paper examines how the large industrial unions reinscribe a hierarchy of jobs and skills that idealises an anachronistic (white, male) subject. Exploring the nuances within materialist ecofeminism and Social Reproduction Theory, I ask whether the former's investment in a "meta-industrial" class (Salleh, 2009) – encompassing unpaid domestic and subsistence labour – employs its own anachronism, substituting a fetishised male, industrial worker with a similarly fetishised (gendered, racialised) reproductive one, rather than a clear-eyed analysis of a complexly divided working class. As Stuart Hall (1979: 180) said, "you don't overcome the capitalist division of labour by denying that it exists [or by elevating one group over another] - only by going beyond it, in reality, in practice".

Race and Gender in the 1960s Affluent Worker study

Stephen Ashe, Vikki Boliver

(Durham University)

The Affluent Worker study, conducted in the early 1960s by key figures in postwar British Sociology, set out to test the thesis of working class embourgeoisement. Publications arising from this study (Goldthorpe et al., 1967, 1968a, 1968b & 1969) focused on the class identities and political outlooks of white working class men, overlooking the voices of ethnic and racial minority workers and the women who also took part in the study. In this paper we build on our analysis of a sample of interview transcripts from the original study. We highlight that white male workers frequently discussed Britain's place in the world following the demise of the British Empire, with some aspiring to migrate to white settler colonies and some expressing racist views. The paper also spotlights the migration stories of several ethnic and racial minority workers from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent, who noted that they would not apply for promotion due to workplace racism. Some of the women interviewed aspired to own a small business or pursue further education, noting how the domestic division of labour had impacted on these aspirations. Taken together, these findings indicate that social class identities and social mobility aspirations in 1960s Britain were being shaped by colonialism, migration and racism, as well as being experienced in profoundly gendered ways. In offering this restudy, we seek to address critical silences in the original study which remains foundational to the sociology of class in Britain and has been revisited numerous scholars since the 1960s.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 1.218

Classed Selves in the Making: A Relational and Intersectional Perspective on Youth Inequality

Maria Keil

(Justus Liebig University Giessen)

Today's youth face not only multiple societal crises but also rising social inequality. Trajectories into adulthood are no longer linear, and meritocratic promises are often shattered when entering the labour market. But how do young people perceive inequality, and how do they develop a sense of their place in society? This paper presents findings from a grounded theory study based on longitudinal

ethnographic fieldwork and guided interviews with 19 young people in a German city as they transition from school to work.

Drawing on Bourdieu's relational sociology, I conceptualise class transitions as temporally and spatially embedded, structured by a practical sense of the world and a sense of belonging. Classed selves, therefore, do not simply emerge upon labour market entry; my study shows that this process is already constituted during youth.

The analysis reveals how social class intersects with gender, ethnicity, religion, and health in shaping everyday lives. This is evident in how young people sustain or adapt their educational ambitions, cope with crises, appropriate the city and respond to discrimination, such as spatial stigmatisation and racism, and violence. Further, a relational and intersectional perspective illuminates the affective, spatial, and temporal dimensions of inequality in young people's lives, such as the intersections of migration histories and class trajectories in urban segregation. This approach allows us to examine, on the one hand, how inequalities structure the transition from school to work, and on the other, how young people actively constitute their class positions.

Between the Said and the Unsaid: Rethinking Dalit Women's Resistance in Rural North India

Komal Chauhan

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in two villages in rural North India, this paper examines practices of everyday resistance among Dalit women agricultural labourers. While existing scholarship has recognised the presence of everyday resistance among marginalised groups, this study argues that understanding its political significance in the context of Dalit women requires centring caste as a structuring force. I explore how Dalit women navigate intersecting regimes of caste, gender, and labour through refusals, spatial strategies, and moral claims. These acts, though quiet and often unnamed, challenge the extractive logics of caste-based relations and assert alternative registers of dignity and entitlement. The paper brings anti-caste thought into conversation with theories of everyday resistance to foreground a Dalit feminist perspective that treats everyday practices of survival as a political practice.

By situating women's practices within agrarian economies of debt, migration, and precarious labour, the study highlights how domination is reproduced through everyday humiliations, silences, and erasures. Dalit women's tactical withdrawals, coded refusals, and embodied assertions emerge as interventions that subtly unsettle caste hierarchies and reclaim moral and material space. Reading these gestures through an anti-caste feminist lens enables us to see them as situated critiques of caste power that reconfigure the relationship between labour, dignity, and survival. This paper calls for an expanded understanding of the political, showing how agency emerges from within constraints and how seemingly minor or mundane practices embody profound political rationalities that expand our conception of both agency and the terrain of the political.

Unsettling Caste Exceptionalism: Policy, Politics, and the Left Front in West Bengal

Angira Dhar

(Presidency University)

This paper examines the role of caste in shaping political agendas and policy processes in West Bengal during the period of Left Front rule (1977–2011). Scholarship on caste in Bengal has often focused on community mobilisations, land reforms, or the thesis of caste "exceptionalism," which claims caste plays a marginal role in the state's politics. I argue instead that caste was embedded in governance, shaping debates, agendas, and outcomes.

The Left Front provides a crucial entry point: while presenting itself as a casteless, class-oriented regime, it was repeatedly compelled to engage caste-based demands at key moments — the response to the Mandal Commission in the 1980s, the establishment of the Backward Classes Commission in the 1990s, and controversies around OBC reservations. Drawing on Legislative Assembly proceedings, archival sources, and secondary scholarship, I trace how caste was acknowledged, reframed, or silenced in these debates by ministers, opposition leaders, and Scheduled Caste legislators.

Methodologically, the study employs process-tracing to link political debates with policy outcomes, situating them within wider historical and social currents. By unsettling claims of Bengal's caste exceptionalism, the paper demonstrates that caste remained central to the state's political life while appearing publicly disavowed. It further offers a lens to understand the continuing salience of caste in Bengal today, where identities and demands shape party strategies and policy agendas. By tracing these historical continuities, the paper highlights how longstanding social hierarchies inform contemporary politics and how sociological analysis can reveal the subtle ways in which inequality is reproduced and contested.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 3 - Room 1.219

'Seeing things more queerly': An Autoethnographical Layered Account of the Emotions and Realities of a Precariously Employed Working-Class Queer Early Career Researcher through the Lenses of Cruel Optimism and the Art of (Working-class) Queer Failure

Brian Finlay

(Glasgow Caledonian University)

Routed in their analysis of film, television, literature and the arts, Lauren Berlant's concept of cruel optimism critically reflects on the manipulable material of the good life fantasy (Berlant, 2011), and, Jack Halberstam's conceptualisation of *The Queer Art of Failure*, in that the experience of 'failure' for queer people might feel more 'inevitable' given "success in a heteronormative, capitalist society equates too easily to specific forms of reproductive maturity combined with wealth accumulation" (Halberstam, 2011: p2). Halberstam goes on to suggest 'we', as queer people, should allow ourselves to 'get lost' on our journey and carve out what success might look like for queer people under capitalism.

Heeding the call from WCQ scholars (including Taylor (2023)) of the importance to document, share and discuss intersectional queer experiences and realities under an increasingly unpredictable political environment in the UK, this paper considers what these concepts, as lenses to see the realities of work 'more queerly' in the 'real world', might offer a precariously employed working-class queer (WCQ) early-career researcher (ECR) like me to make sense of my own precariousness in the ordinariness.

Adopting the layered account approach to autoethnography (Ronai, 1992), this oral paper considers: More than a decade since the conceptualisation of cruel optimism and multiple economic crises later, does the concept and experience '(still) exist' in the 'real world'? And what might a WCQ Art of Failure look like for an ECR, given the material realities of work in the increasingly neoliberal higher education sector and precariousness in the everyday?

Class, Race and Lifestyles in the US: A Play of Spaces

Will Atkinson

(University of Bristol)

Pierre Bourdieu's famous thesis on the homology of class and lifestyles has been criticised for overlooking or downplaying race and ethnicity. Despite recent advances in theorising ethno-racial domination and its intersection with class inspired by Bourdieu's field theory, the most sophisticated tests and updates of this thesis in statistical research have so far done little to counteract that oversight. This paper attempts to marry the divergent threads of scholarship by conceiving and exploring the relationship between class, race and lifestyles multi-relationally. Using survey data from the US and multiple correspondence analysis, I build models of the US 'social space' and lifestyle space and examine the position and dispersion of ethno-racial categories in both. I then use principles of geometric data analysis to document the relative autonomy of race in differentiating lifestyles and where in the class structure it makes the most difference. Contrary to some prior research, the results suggest that race is most salient in differentiating lifestyles within the dominant class.

Lived Dissent and the Limits of Secularisation: Quakers, Mormons and Lefebvrists in Modern Britain

Brandon Taylorian

(University of Lancashire)

Histories of religious dissent in Britain have often emphasised theology, institutional conflict or political activism. Less attention has been given to the everyday lives of dissenters and the ways they negotiated modernity through personal and familial strife, affective practice and embodied belief. This paper introduces the concept of lived dissent as a comparative framework for analysing how religious dissent functions as a relational and adaptive response to modernisation, extending David Hall's concept of 'lived religion.' Drawing on archival and narrative sources, it examines three moments of dissent among British converts: Quakerism during the English Civil War, Mormonism in the Industrial era, and Lefebvrism in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. By foregrounding conversion testimonies, diaries and personal correspondence, the paper situates dissent as a lived negotiation with wider historical transformations—revolutionary upheaval, industrial capitalism and liturgical reform. In doing so, it challenges linear secularisation narratives that depict modernity as corrosive of religion. Instead, it argues that dissent emerges as a distinctly modern practice, providing coherence, identity and resistance in contexts of disillusionment and change. The framework of lived dissent contributes to sociology of religion by extending “lived religion” approaches into the terrain of rupture and resistance, showing how dissent both destabilises and reconstitutes social order. It also offers a means of connecting disparate movements across time, highlighting surprising affinities between early modern, late modern and postmodern dissenters. The paper therefore reframes dissent not as marginal or residual, but as a vital and recurrent feature of religious modernity.

The Politics of Cultural Taste: How Ideology Is Connected to Taste, Irrespective of Your Class Position

Aaron Reeves, Sam Friedman

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

In this paper we examine how political divisions map onto cultural taste using data from an original survey conducted in Britain (n=3,743). Cultural taste is socially stratified and these class divisions create a connection between class politics and culture. But politics is not determined by class position. Indeed, political ideologies and class politics are not perfectly aligned. Given the possibility of this mismatch, we explore the connection between cultural taste and two distinct dimensions of people's political ideologies: the libertarianism-authoritarianism dimension and the left-right dimension. These measures of ideology have been central to political sociology but have rarely been used to examine cultural taste. We find that, first, the politics of cultural taste is far more divided along the libertarian-authoritarian dimension of people's political ideology than the left-right dimension. Authoritarians enjoy Celine Dion and the TV show *Mrs Brown's Boys* while libertarians enjoy Radiohead and Louis Theroux documentaries. Second, we find that these divisions are not explained by social class and, third, that even the size of the cultural gaps between libertarians and authoritarians are stable across social classes. In other words, authoritarian professionals are as different from libertarian professionals in their tastes as authoritarian manual workers are from libertarian manual workers. The politics of cultural taste is not only mediated by party but is organised around other elements of people's political ideologies. Political ideology is entwined with cultural taste in ways which could be the ground for political divisions which cut across classes.

Sociology of Education 1 - Room 2.220

What Works? Troubling the Homogenisation of 'Care Experience' in Policy

Claire E Crawford

(University of Cambridge)

Since 2008, England has witnessed a substantial rise in the number of children looked after by local authorities (CORAM, 2025). Existing research demonstrates that care experienced children continue to

face poor educational outcomes, including markedly low rates of participation in higher education (Harrison, 2020). In response, central government has promoted a 'what works' approach to improving outcomes, directing local authorities to commission interventions deemed 'well evidenced' and 'effective' in raising attainment and progress (MacAlister, 2022).

This paper examines publicly available data on the GCSE attainment of care experienced young people to interrogate the adequacy of the broad policy categories through which demands for improved outcomes are articulated. Our analysis identifies significant variation within the category of care experience according to demographic factors, geographical location, and type of care provision. These findings indicate that care experience alone is not a sufficient explanatory variable for differences in educational outcomes.

Building on the principles of critical quantitative methodologies ('QuantCrit'), we argue for a more intersectional and context-sensitive account of care experienced young people's educational trajectories. Furthermore, the restricted availability of robust, disaggregated data significantly constrains the capacity of researchers and service commissioners to respond meaningfully to policy requirements for evidence-based interventions.

We conclude that the policy homogenisation of the category 'care experience,' when combined with the absence of detailed and usable data, risks re-marginalising some of the most vulnerable young people in England. A more nuanced, data-informed approach is required if educational equity for this group is to be advanced.

Finding Hope in the Margins: Alternative Approaches to Alternative Provision in Education

Lucy Wenham, Tom Ralph, Dee Higgins, Mehmet Kiranel

(University of Bristol)

Our education system is marginalizing young people, whether we consider rampant mental-health concerns, the rise of absenteeism, de-registration and elective-home-education, or the use of exclusions. The margins, while a position of exclusion, are also a position of resistance and critique. Research at the margins elucidates entrenched norms at the centre, making visible possibilities for things to be otherwise. In this empirical research, a collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and a local education authority, we listen to the voices of young people excluded from mainstream schooling. We gathered data through semi-structured individual or paired interviews (as chosen by the young people) embracing photo-elicitation to soften the experience, dilute tensions and enable more authentic voices. Our ethical approach is underpinned by working closely with practitioners with pre-existing positive relationships with the students. Through qualitative analysis drawing on grounded theory techniques, we pull out what helps and hinders in overcoming systemic and individual obstacles. In so doing, we argue for situating ourselves as irrefutably against the neoliberal school. We offer provocations and reflections for how things may be otherwise, through exploring this rich, atypical, hopeful practice. Here holistic, therapeutic approaches and expertise are embraced, with mentors and specialist support staff on-site and readily accessible, establishing safe spaces yet blended with everyday practices and slow pedagogy. Through the blurring of roles and boundaries, the fluidity of space and time, relationships, connectivity and links form and are strengthened, segregation and stigma dissolve, trust and a sense of belonging, blossom. This offers insights for radical educational change.

Conformity, Constraints and the Crushing of the Student's Soul: Insights from De-registered Students

Lucy Wenham

(University of Bristol)

The neoliberal school is struggling to keep hold of young people, with absenteeism, formal and grey exclusions, and de-registration pervasive undercurrents of concern. What can be done to pause this exodus and induce those lost-to-the-system to return? This paper draws from empirical research listening to the voices of marginalised, home-schooled adolescents, explicitly those de-registered from school. Implications for policy and practice abound from exploring their lived-experiences of school and not-school. The margins are a site of exclusion, struggle, resistance and thus also critique. This research at the margins reveals deep-rooted, constraining and stifling norms, at the heart of neoliberal

schooling, offering urgently needed provocations for reflection, change and critical hope. The research is in collaboration with a community-interest-company (CIC), which provides wide-ranging sessions to secondary-school aged students being home-schooled. Students disengaged from school often have concomitant SEND, may struggle in classroom settings, or might have been labelled and stigmatized. Hence, time to slow-down, to grow trust and mutual respect, underpins ethically coming to know the field, through spending extended time together, participant-observation, gently building-dialogue and embracing slow-pedagogy. Subsequently, rich, authentic data was gathered through both semi-structured interviews and use of on-line tools, offering the possibility for anonymous contributions. Analysis drew on constructivist grounded theory techniques, including free-writing, close-coding, memoing and diagramming. Affect permeates the findings, which indicate that relationships and the social matter, being known matters, affect and emotions matter. Implications for policy and practice encompass areas of behaviour management; inclusive, engaged, slow-pedagogy; and system-structures including joined-up pastoral support.

A Sociology of Risk Perspective on the Out-of-School Children Crisis in Pakistan

Minha Khan

(University of Cambridge and Global Schools Forum)

The out-of-school children (OOSC) crisis in Pakistan, where nearly 40% of children remain unenrolled in formal education, presents a critical site for understanding how risk and inequality are intertwined. This research applies the sociology of risk to reconceptualize non-enrolment not merely as an educational challenge but as a manifestation of broader social, economic, and political risks that are unequally distributed across populations. Rather than treating exclusion from education as an outcome of isolated barriers, this study frames it as a dynamic process shaped by the differential exposure to and management of risk.

Drawing on national datasets spanning two decades, the analysis employs logistic regression to identify predictors of non-enrolment and multivariate models to examine how these risks influence labor market outcomes. The findings reveal that risks to enrolment are stratified along lines of gender, geography, and socioeconomic status. For instance, girls disproportionately face cultural risks, such as restrictive norms limiting their educational participation, while boys contend with risks driven by economic imperatives to work. Rural children encounter compounded vulnerabilities due to infrastructural deficits.

These differentiated risks have enduring consequences, with non-enrolled children more likely to enter precarious, low-wage employment—thus reproducing cycles of economic disadvantage. By situating the OOSC crisis within the sociology of risk, this research highlights how educational exclusion is both a product and a mechanism of inequality reproduction. The study calls for policy responses that address the systemic production of risk, moving beyond enrolment-centric interventions to tackle the underlying social structures that perpetuate exclusion.

Sociology of Education 2 - Room 3.204

Habitus Clivé and Cultural Aspiration: Disadvantaged Chinese Immigrant Mothers' Support for Children's Western Classical Instrumental Learning

Peng Zhang, Tianran Luo

(University College London)

This study interrogates a prevailing assumption in the sociology of education and migration: that Western classical instrumental learning (WCIL) among East Asian immigrant families functions primarily as cultural capital strategically deployed for upward mobility. Dominant scholarship, drawing on Bourdieu's framework, has consistently framed music lessons as rational investments to secure elite trajectories. Yet this narrative is built almost entirely on the experiences of middle-class households, thereby silencing disadvantaged immigrant families and reproducing class-blind understandings of cultural practice.

Focusing on Chinese immigrant mothers in Scotland who face persistent poverty, this study challenges such instrumentalist readings. For these families, WCIL does not represent continuity with inherited

cultural dispositions, but a rupture, since in China access to classical music has tended to be concentrated among middle- and upper-class families. To theorise this fracture, the analysis draws on Bourdieu's notion of *habitus clivé*, capturing the tensions and contradictions produced when deprivation, migration, and aspiration collide.

Based on semi-structured interviews with seven disadvantaged immigrant mothers in Glasgow, findings reveal that music is reimagined not as a ladder to mobility but as emotional and symbolic work. It becomes intergenerational compensation for denied childhood opportunities and a means for children to gain visibility and belonging in British schools, protecting them from the invisibility.

By foregrounding these neglected voices, the study destabilises prevailing accounts of cultural capital, showing that disadvantaged immigrant families invest in WCIL cultural practices not to reproduce class advantage but to contest exclusion, reclaim dignity, and imagine alternative futures at the margins of society.

Changing Dynamics of Family Educational Decision-making: From Intergenerational Negotiation to Technological and Geopolitical Transformation

Youjiangyu Xu

(Nankai University)

Educational decision-making has long been conceptualised as a parent–child process, most notably in Rational Action Theory (RAT) as developed by Breen and Goldthorpe (1997), which privileges parental authority and treats the family as a unitary actor. At the postgraduate level, however, students may encounter disagreement not only with their parents, but also with partners and even their own children. Building on Simon's (1957) notion of bounded rationality, this study extends RAT by proposing a bounded rationality–rational negotiation framework, which highlights how students exercise agency within intra-family interactions.

The analysis draws on national quantitative data from the Panel Study of Chinese University Students (PSCUS) and 45 in-depth interviews with Chinese postgraduates. The findings indicate that intra-family negotiation seeks to construct a common rationality among family members and typically takes the form of persuasion, compromise, or resistance. Each strategy is stratified by family resources and by the nature of intra-family relationships: students from wealthier backgrounds, or those occupying a position of greater authority within the family, are better placed to persuade others, whereas those in less advantaged positions more often resort to adaptive compromises or emotionally charged resistance.

By integrating RAT with interactional family processes, the framework demonstrates that postgraduate choices are both relational and classed: family resources shape the boundaries of bounded rationality, while intra-family relationships determine the processes of negotiation. Thus, contemporary educational decision-making is grounded in the construction of a common rationality among family members and is increasingly conditioned by their interpretations of technological change and global uncertainty.

Teaching in a Policy Void: Rethinking Education through the Insights of Four Headteachers of Refugee Schools in Malaysia

Eleni Stamou, Francesca Peruzzo

(University of Birmingham)

This paper examines the work of headteachers leading refugee schools (Learning Centres) in Malaysia, where refugees have no legally recognised status and education provision occurs in the absence of state. Drawing on qualitative research conducted within the programme Teachers for Education Equity–Malaysia, we focus on the narratives of four headteachers.

We situate these headteachers at the intersection of governance gaps and overlapping demands from international bodies, NGOs, funders, and refugee families. Positioned in what Hajer (2003) terms a 'policy void', we examine how they "pave the way as they go along," crafting responsive and often improvised solutions: from negotiating community tensions and building bridges across student groups, to addressing material deprivation, safeguarding, and advocacy. Their accounts reveal how

professional boundaries blur, as headteachers simultaneously assume roles of teacher, counsellor, social worker, and community organiser.

Adopting a decolonial lens, we move beyond narratives of victimisation or romanticisation to foreground agency, creativity, and radical care as central to their practice. Headteachers' experiences disrupt Western-centric grammars of schooling (Allen & Peruzzo, 2024) by revealing pluriversal pedagogies grounded in solidarity, survival, and situated knowledges. We argue that these insights not only illuminate how refugee education is enacted under conditions of policy absence, but also open up possibilities for reimagining inclusion, education and the very purposes of schooling.

The Paucity of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Persons in Educational Leadership

Alexandros Oladiti

(University of Reading)

This paper examines the underrepresentation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) persons in educational leadership. Specifically, this paper explores the lived experience of a black woman in senior educational leadership. Taking such in-depth narrative approach, which uses semi-structured questions, allows for an insight into the journey, influences, challenges, and motivations that form the totality of the experience of this Black African woman in educational leadership.

Ultimately, this paper/presentation seeks to argue that it is high time for us to move away from Eurocentric models of educational leadership, which characterise Black Africans as the 'Others' (Said, 1978), towards more Afrocentric models. The use of Afrocentric models of leadership will allow for Black Africans to be constituent and co-creative members of the educational leadership process.

Theory - Room 4.205

Sociology of Memory: A Theoretical Analysis

Licheng Qian

(Birmingham City University)

What does sociology contribute to the study of memory and forgetting? What makes the sociology of memory possible and useful? How do cultural contexts shape theoretical approaches to the sociology of memory? By reviewing sociological works on memory in Western academia, this paper identifies and summarises five major theoretical approaches to the study of memory: Durkheimian/social-functional approach, discursive-interpretative approach, action-interaction approach, formal-structural approach, and individual-collected approach. Based on a critical dialogue with these approaches in Western sociology, and by reviewing the works on Chinese memories, including my own study on the Nanjing Massacre, this paper further coins a field-relational approach in studying memory, which highlights the dual nature of the state in shaping collective memories. This paper contributes to the development of a sociology of memory as well as to the theorisation of epistemological approaches in studying memory.

Archives and the Afterlives of (State) Violence: Reflections on the INQUEST archive

Vikki Bell

(Goldsmiths, University of London)

This paper will reflect upon the first six months of a research project at the archives of the UK charity INQUEST, the sole organisation that supports and advocates on behalf of those bereaved by state-related deaths in the UK. I begin from the premise that the organisation plays a vital role in maintaining the stories of those who have died - at the hands of the police, in prisons or mental health institutions, wherever the state has a duty of care - in the public eye, as evidence and as demand. Might we understand the charity's work and its archival legacy as the creation of an 'archive of dissensus,' in Laura Ann Stoler's sense? Archives of dissensus collect their papers, documents, photographs and other materials not in order to explain the *arkhē*, to command that the past be retold in a certain way, but rather, in their rejection of archives as technologies of rule, seek to invite 'dissension ... [allowing]

defiant political visions, aesthetic possibilities, and affective reflections' (Stoler, 2018). If so, what are the political visions, aesthetic possibilities and affects that arise in the INQUEST archive? How can/should we attend to the dissenting accounts that arise from these 'paper cadavers' (Weld, 2014)? A sociological approach must be capacious enough to consider the (bio)political accounting, the 'accounts of the self,' and the aesthetic - even fugitive - impulses of the archive. Of course, this discussion also quickly prompts questions of what distinguishes sociology and the in/attentions of an academic forum?

Extractive Memory: Metapolitical Anti-communism and the Institutionalisation of the Neoliberal Radical Right

Ana Taranu

(University of Warwick)

This paper interrogates the role of anti-communism in constructing the legitimacy of radical right metapolitics within post-socialist contexts. I conceive of anti-communism both as a historicised intellectual habitus and as a vocabulary of uncritical neoliberal fervor, assembled during the 1990s and still shaping the limits of political imagination across the region.

To this end, I analyse the annulled Romanian presidential elections of November 2024, in which radical right and previously obscure independent Călin Georgescu acquired 23% of the votes. The involuntary reaction of civil society was the anti-communist repudiation of Georgescu, whose isolationist utopianism and links to the former party apparatus appeared more threatening than his overt nostalgia for interwar fascism. Paradoxically, a common repertoire of anti-communist rhetoric was deployed by Georgescu, as a source of anti-systemic legitimacy, and against him, by his liberal detractors.

Building on this case study, I trace how anti-communism offers a credible alibi to the radical right's metapolitical amalgamation of interwar Judeo-Bolshevik mythology, Cold War-era tropes, and neoliberal politics of resentment. I look at how the nationalist developmentalist imaginaries of state socialism are selectively deployed by the contemporary radical right and explore how the latter's 'extractive' tendencies shape its revival of the communist spectre. Ultimately, I aim to showcase the contradictions on which antitotalitarian mnemonic regimes are built and how they nourish the very radical right they seek to condemn.

Restoring the Third: Introducing Triple Consciousness as a Sociological Concept

Fatma Muge Gocek, Fadilat Oiasupo

(University of Michigan)

In *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), W.E.B. Du Bois introduced "double consciousness" to capture the fractured self of African Americans as they viewed themselves and as they were viewed through the dominant gaze of White settlers. This formulation joined the bottom-up perception of Black people as agents with the top-down, hegemonic perception that rendered them outsiders. We argue that a crucial third vantage point remains obscured: the self-perception of Black people before their forcible removal from their homelands, severed by slavery, colonialism, and migration. Restoring this dimension, we theorize triple consciousness as a framework for understanding racial subjectivity across time and space. Triple consciousness highlights three interlocking vantage points: (1) identity shaped within racial hierarchies; (2) the dominant gaze that casts Black and other marginalized people as foreigners, outcasts, or "problems"; and (3) the ancestral and historical legacies of memory—erased by slavery and settler colonialism yet carried forward through cultural inheritance. We illustrate the concept through two cases. Historically, Indigenous peoples in the United States embody this third consciousness, as their precolonial vantage point was violently disrupted by settler colonialism. Contemporary Nigerian immigrants in the United States likewise navigate anti-Black racism and immigrant exclusion while drawing on cultural inheritances and aspirations for belonging. By introducing triple consciousness, we extend Du Bois's insight into the twenty-first century, foregrounding temporality and historical memory as constitutive of racial subjectivity and offering a decolonial analytic for understanding how marginalized groups negotiate identity, belonging, and survival in racialized modernity.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.212

Embroidery as Embodied Knowledge: Gender, Heritage, and Agency in Contemporary China

Yaqian Li

(University of Bath)

This paper examines women's embroidery practices in contemporary China to explore the intersections of gendered labour, heritage policy, and everyday aesthetics. Drawing on ethnographic interviews and field observations, I trace how embroidery has shifted across socio-economic contexts. These trajectories reveal embroidery not only as technical skill but as embodied knowledge, intergenerational memory, and affective labour.

Building on Lave and Wenger's notion of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation, I argue that embroidery offers a lens to understand how women enter, participate in, and reshape communities of practice under conditions of social and institutional transformation. In this context, participation is not only structured through apprenticeships and everyday making but also refracted through aesthetic agency and an implicit literacy of networks—a tacit sense of who to learn from, collaborate with, or appeal to (peers, patrons, gatekeepers, heritage officials). Legitimacy is secured through aesthetic evaluation and relational positioning as much as through mastery of technique. State heritage programmes and rural–urban transitions further reconfigure these communities, producing hybrid spaces where artisans continually negotiate the boundaries between utility and artistry, tradition and reinvention, autonomy and institutional authority.

By foregrounding artisans' voices, this paper contributes to debates on gendered labour, decolonial feminism, and the sociology of art and heritage. It suggests that women's craft stories open new perspectives on how tradition is lived and reimagined, and how situated learning, aesthetic agency, and networked participation are constituted within contested fields of heritage and community.

Working and Living in Rural and Peri-urban Irish Communities: Occupational Conditions and the Middle-Class Status of Filipino Migrant Nurses

Arnie Trinidad

(University of the Philippines Diliman)

This case study examines how geographic space, social class, and national and global social structures intersect to produce the class conditions of migrant nurses. Drawing from the experiences of 34 Filipino migrant nurses who were interviewed for a larger mixed-methods project on migrant nurses in the Republic of Ireland, this work looks at the occupational class and the class as life conditions of nurses who live and work in fringe communities. The occupational class conditions of nurses are simultaneously shaped by global, national, and local processes, which contribute to disparities of work and socioeconomic conditions across internal borders. While the nurses' work conditions in fringe communities share similarities with those in highly urbanized cities, there are unique features only found in fringe localities, such as the downsizing of services and budgets and the closure of smaller healthcare facilities in rural communities that impact the labor situation of nurses. Meanwhile, living in fringe communities allows nurses to maximize the attainment of their middle-class aspirations, but also ironically impels nurses to grant active consent to their "exploitation." The article contributes to discussions on the role of local spaces, in shaping the class conditions of nurses and how global and national processes impact healthcare facilities in fringe communities. Lastly, it establishes the connections between occupational and class as life conditions of migrant workers.

Friends, Pals, and Countrymen: Middlemen and Precarious Migrant Construction Work

Anastasia Diatlova

(University of Helsinki)

The Finnish labour market has been known for its strong collective agreements, workers' rights and robust unions. Yet, it has also been known for its insularity, making it difficult for migrants to access it. Construction is one of the few sectors that does employ migrants, yet even here access is highly stratified, with certain groups of people having access to particular jobs, particular forms of work, and particular employers. This creates a space for those who facilitate access to the sector for migrant workers: the middlemen. The amalgamation of institutions, employers, and social and political forces constitute the labour regimes, which shape the precarity of the workers in a particular context. And the middlemen are an important element in the labour regimes. In this paper, based on 23 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with migrant construction workers in Finland, I explore the role of the middlemen in the labour regimes and their relation to workers' precarity. Wide networks of friends, acquaintances, pals, and countrymen form the middlemen, that help supply the construction sector with reliable and flexible labourers. The webs of relationships that bind these people together form the moral economy of the sector. The paper examines how this moral economy of the middlemen fits into the labour regimes and relates to the precarity of the workers.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.213

Threads of Time and Empire: Reclaiming India's Unravelling Trade Legacies for a Postcolonial Sociology of Temporality

Anurag Shukla

(Brhat)

This paper revisits India's pre-colonial trade ecologies as a problem for sociological temporality. Drawing on the "Empire of Threads and Silver" narrative, which documents how colonial regimes dismantled dense networks of craft production, silver circulation, and oceanic commerce, I argue that the colonial encounter in South Asia was not simply an economic rupture but a re-engineering of time itself. Dipesh Chakrabarty's call to "provincialise Europe," Sudipta Kaviraj's analyses of postcolonial state formation, and Anna Tsing's notion of "friction" provide a theoretical scaffolding to ask how histories of circulation, measurement, and cosmology were disarticulated and then recoded as backwardness.

Ethnographic work with artisan, agroforestry, and temple-based education initiatives in India shows how communities today negotiate what I call "temporal restitution": the recovery and reworking of occluded trade legacies through hybrid forms of digital market access, ritual economies, and new forms of cooperative capital. These practices unsettle the disciplinary binaries between tradition and modernity, welfare and commerce, ritual and production.

By placing material exchange and temporal imagination at the heart of sociological analysis, the paper contributes to current debates on the afterlives of empire (Chatterjee 2020), the "archival turn" in economic anthropology (Bear 2015), and the sociology of time (Adam 2004). It argues that India's unspooled threads of trade and silver are not simply vestiges of a lost past but living resources for rethinking how sociologists periodise change, conceptualise inequality, and build comparative theories beyond Eurocentric chronologies.

Environment, Meaning and Productivity: What the Natural World Affords a Working Life

Evan Curley, Karen Foster

(Dalhousie University)

"It's a sad state of affairs... I don't know if it can come back". These are the words of a Canadian herring fisherman, contemplating the consequences of a year with no catch. The species was totally depleted

in the fishing grounds from which he'd derived his livelihood, just like his father and grandfather. Although old enough to retire, he expressed deep sadness about seeing the fish that supported his family for generations slowly decrease in size and then nearly disappear. Herring afforded a livelihood, structured the meaning of work, and gave shape to the seasonal rhythms of his life. This weirman was one of 100 participants in Work-Life Canada, a longitudinal nation-spanning project exploring the diverse and changing social meanings of work through image, word, and sound. His story is one of many showing that workers' relationships to the environment are not just subconscious ties between self and physical landscape, but a product also of intentions to make places meaningful and productive - what Howard (2017) calls "affordances" of the environment. While work in our post-industrial age is rightly analyzed for its destructive impacts on the non-human world, our analysis of a subsample of Work-Life participants draws attention to the deep interdependence between work and nature - the timing of tides, the cruelties of seasons, the anticipation of arriving fish – that shapes the rhythms of the workday and working lives.

Frontstage Dreams, Backstage Realities: The Dual Lives of Hong Kong's Insurance Agents

Xinyi Qu, Xueshi Li

(University of Hongkong)

This study explores the cultural and emotional labor of mainland Chinese insurance agents in Hong Kong, focusing on how they commodify time and risk to navigate precarious work and migrant life. Through ethnographic fieldwork at a major multinational insurer, including participant observation in training sessions, sales pitches, and team-building activities, this research reveals how agents perform a dual narrative labor. First, they construct validating life narratives that recast their own entry into insurance—often driven by visa requirements, social mobility, or family needs—as a story of self-realization and strategic choice. Second, they master affective future-making, translating abstract financial risks into culturally resonant stories of security and opportunity for their mainland Chinese clients.

The core paradox of the industry lies in its structural flexibility: it offers agents a toolkit for crafting an entrepreneurial identity and a pathway to belong in Hong Kong, while simultaneously subjecting them to high turnover and instrumental workplace relationships. Agents' daily practices thus involve a constant negotiation between frontstage performances of meaningful, value-driven careers and backstage practices governed by the tool-based rationality of commissions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This research argues that the sustainability of Hong Kong's insurance market is fueled not merely by economic demand, but by this very heterogeneity of agents' motives and their skillful narrative labor. Ultimately, the study illuminates how individuals capitalize on their own life trajectories and migrant biographies within neoliberal financial structures, achieving a form of dual governance over their own identities and the anxieties of their clients.

BREAKTIME SESSION

10:35-10:55

Mezzanine, University Place

Japanese Tea Ritual

Ikuko Tomomatsu

(University of Osaka)

Experience the Zen of Japanese Tea Ritual Take a moment of tranquility amidst the conference buzz. We invite you to a demonstration of the Japanese tea ritual, presented by Sōiku (Dr Ikuko Tomomatsu). Rooted in the Zen philosophy of "Ichigo Ichie" (treasuring every unique encounter), this session offers a mindful escape through the art of Matcha.

Interactive Experience: We will hold two sessions (approx. 20 minutes each), with a possibility of a third session upon request. For each session, three participants are invited to sit and enjoy Matcha and Japanese sweets. As spaces are very limited, **pre-booking is required**. Please email kirsten.boucher@britsoc.org.uk if you would like to attend this experience. Email requests must be **received no later than Tuesday 31 March 2026**.

The Tea Ritual will take place on Day 1 and Day 2 during the refreshment break in the mezzanine area from 10:35am - 10:55am.

PAPER SESSION 5

11:00-12:30

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BSA Publications Special Activity - Lecture Theatre A

Celebrating 60 Years of Sociology: Editors from across the Decades Discuss the Journal's Significance

Jill Timms, Alan Warde, Graham Crow, Andrew King, Sarah Neal, Sue Scott

(University of Surrey, University of Manchester, University of Edinburgh, University of Sheffield, Newcastle University)

What does the journal *Sociology* mean to you? This BSA flagship publication was launched in 1966 and is consistently regarded as a global leader in the field. Whether you have engaged with *Sociology* as a student, author, reviewer, editor or reader, join us to celebrate these 60 years. Editors from at least four decades will be sharing their journal stories and together we will reflect on the past influence and future role *Sociology* has in shaping the discipline.

We are also excited to launch our special celebration edition of *Sociology* for 2026. Past editors from the 1970s onwards have selected articles from their tenure, chosen for being particularly influential, innovative or novel. These will also be made freely available for the year. Join us as we reveal the final collection and hear first hand some of the editor's explanations. We are also interested in which articles you would have selected. There will be time for questions and discussion. Please send any queries to the chair and current Editor in Chief - j.timms@surrey.ac.uk

Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 3.211

Remembering London on Social Media: Urban Experiences and Placemaking via Digital Place Memory

Chenfei Li

(King's College London)

The globalisation of higher education has made UK universities dependent on Chinese students, a distinctive group of knowledge migrants who contribute economically and academically yet often struggle to adapt to host cities. While existing research treats social media mainly as a communication tool to ease everyday challenges, this study instead examines how social media mediates the creation, circulation, and imagination of place experiences and memories, shaping durable person–place relations in transnational contexts. Focusing on London, I investigate how overseas Chinese students dynamically construct place identity and place attachment and engage in digital placemaking through posting photos of the city as digital place memories on social media. Guided by a constructivist phenomenology, the study proposes an experience–memory–imagination cyclical framework to trace how hybrid urban experiences crystallise into visual digital memories and are reworked into idealised imaginaries of London and the self. A mixed-method design will combine exploratory questionnaires, individual photo-elicitation interviews, and visual content analysis of elicited social media posts. The research reveals how embodied urban experiences, socio-culturally constructed meaning-making, and platform mediation intersect in students' memory-building and imaginaries of London. By introducing the concept of digital place memory and deploying a visual-driven mixed method, this study connects urban communications, memory studies, and digital media to offer a novel account of social media's role in mediating transnational person–place relationships.

The Construction of Collective Memory in Qatar: Ahli (Community-based Civic) Spheres Reconsidered

Kaltham Alsuwaidi

(University of Manchester)

This paper explores how ahli (community-based civic) spheres shape the production, mediation and forms of negotiation of collective memory in Qatar. Civic spheres and their relationship to collective memory remain understudied in Arab Gulf contexts, despite the rise of digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok serving as alternatives to physical ahli spheres that have come under increasing state monitoring and regulation.

The paper addresses the following questions: what constitute ahli or civic spheres/ spaces in the context of Qatar? How have these evolved overtime? What role does the state play in these spaces? And how does the spatial governance mirror the state-citizen relations?

Drawing on memory studies and public sphere literature, the paper employs qualitative methods using content analysis of civic memory initiatives across physical and digital spheres, examining forms of remembering from 2005 to the present.

The initial findings indicate that digital spaces have provided access to parallel collective memories, opening dialogue to different narratives of Qatar's historiography. However, dual forms of forgetting have occurred, younger generations have lost knowledge of existed ahli spheres and their former roles, in addition to the loss of the collective memories circulated within them.

This paper contributes original context-specific perspective to the growing body of literature that reinterprets civic spheres and memory politics in the wider Arab region amid the rapid political, economic and social transformations.

Berlin: Making of and Living in a Neoliberal Queer Utopia

Aleksandr Lange

(University of Manchester)

There is a narrative about Berlin which appears ubiquitous. It essentializes Berlin as the city of pleasure and experimentation, a queer promised land, where self-discovery is not only possible but indeed expected. In my research, I focus on everyday experiences of Berlin dating app users who identify as queer. I aim to demonstrate how the structure of these experiences is related to the political economic conditions of the digital capitalist economy, architecture and design of the dating apps and the continuous production of Berlin as a queer utopian space. This contribution covers the latter part of my analysis. I begin by outlining the origin myth of queer Berlin in the 1920s and then proceed to discussing its uses in post-1989 construction and marketing of Berlin as a global queer city. Ultimately, I argue that one of the most significant effects of this multimodal process is the discursive production of queer Berlin as a site of personal authenticity—a place where the truth about oneself is discoverable. Analytically, I situate this process in the work of David Harvey on neoliberalism and the city. In conclusion, I outline a series of contradictions between the implicit promise of Berlin as a queer utopia and the experiences of my respondents—how the utopian promise is lived.

Emerging Themes & Special Events - Room 4.209

Special Event

Big Conversations in Queer in a Wee Place: Small Nations, Sexuality and Scotland

Yvette Taylor, Harvey Humphrey, Kirstie Ken English, Francesca Stella, Finn Mackay, Jack McKinlay, Jessica Gagnon

(University of Strathclyde, University of Glasgow, University of the West of England, Bristol, University of Manchester)

This Special Event will include a panel discussion based on the new open access collection *Queer in a Wee Place: Small Nations, Sexuality and Scotland* (Bloomsbury), including sociologists, Yvette Taylor (editor & authors), Finn Mackay (author), Francesca Stella (author), Marco Reggiani (co-author), Jack McKinlay (author), Kirstie Ken English (author), Harvey Humphreys (co-author). This will allow for a broad ranging discussion across themes of e.g. citizenship, migration, nationality, Scottish exceptionalism, intersectional inequalities, queer data etc., LGBTQ+ belonging. The collection is interdisciplinary, including contributions beyond academia and has been positively endorsed by social science academics:

- This is a dazzling collection, a major achievement, an erudite and also a highly readable volume, a must read indeed. - Angela McRobbie, Goldsmiths University of London, UK
- This generative and confronting collection invites us to re-think, re-position, and re-imagine the imbrication of queerness and Scottishness. Taylor has curated an impressive array of creatives, scholars, and activists who explore the tensions, possibilities, pleasures, risks, and glitches that emerge for queer and trans people navigating their senses of belonging to the 'wee nation' of Scotland. - Senthurun Raj, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

This event will explore wide ranging views on what it means to be queer in Scotland, variously pitched as progressive, vibrating, poetic, curious, conversational and creative. Through a series of critical reflections, creative interventions, and collaborative exchanges, we ask how sexuality and gender are shaped, counted and contested in the 'wee places' of a small nation with large aspirations. What emerges is not a single story of a queer Scotland, but a one that resists simplification, insists on complexity, and attends to the ways in which nation, space, identity, and belonging are always in flux. Smallness – geographic, demographic, or symbolic – can be both a site of erasure and one of imaginative possibility. The potential queering of life in Scotland is tempered or 'glitched' by authors' reluctance regarding reductive measures – whether as census data, hate crime counts, or tokenistic classroom content – and an awareness of the myth-making around home and nationhood which often reinscribes inequalities of class, gender, and race (Strachan 2014, Mahn 2019, Sobande and Hill 2022). So, what does it mean to have 'big conversations' about queerness in ostensibly peripheral places? In between cynicism about and desires for national belonging, the book, *Queer in a Wee Place: Small Nations, Sexuality and Scotland*, was shaped incrementally during many big talks, efforts and organising, formalised in events, seminars workshops and a conference: like all these events that precede it, this book continues to commit to being accessible as an open access publication, and in wanting more in from education, outputs and publics – with an extended invite to audience members and readers to decide what this work does and who it is for. This Special Event will showcase some sociological contributions in the collection, and end with a quiz to provoke thinking on the place of Scotland in – and beyond – our located conference venue.

From Census Counts to Creative Presence: The Production of Queer Life

Harvey Humphrey, Kirstie Ken English

(University of Glasgow)

Drawing on two chapters, this discussion explores how queer and trans lives are counted, represented, and staged in Scotland at a time of shifting political, cultural, and legal landscapes. The first paper interrogates the 2024 Scottish Census, examining new questions on sex, gender identity and trans status. While hailed as 'world leading' in its inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, the census also carries risks:

its categories may obscure intersectional inequalities, misrepresent or invisibilise communities, and be applied in reductive ways. Counting, the paper argues, is only meaningful if data is mobilised to meet the diverse needs of LGBTQ+ people. The second paper reflects on *As Is*, an ethnodrama staged in 2022 based on qualitative research with trans and intersex activists in the UK, Malta, and Australia. Performed just as the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill (GRR) became a flashpoint for anti-trans media rhetoric, the play brought international perspectives to a local stage, highlighting tensions around recognition, representation, and activist storytelling. Taken together, these papers situate census data and performance as parallel sites of visibility and contestation, showing how conversations about queerness in Scotland unfold across statistical tables, political debates, and creative forms of expression.

Beyond Haven and Home: Queer Lives across Scotland's Borders and Backroads

Francesca Stella, Finn MacKay

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

This section brings together two chapter reflections on queerness in and beyond Scotland, foregrounding questions of belonging, exclusion, and the uneven terrain of 'wee places'. The first paper interrogates the narrative of Scotland as an exceptional haven for LGBTQ+ rights by exploring the experiences of queer 'New Scots.' Drawing on research with LGBT+ migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and engagements with queer asylum seekers, it asks how migration status, race, and class shape the extent to which protections are felt in practice. This perspective challenges the simplistic story of migration as movement from repression to liberation, highlighting continuities between past and present struggles. The second paper offers a personal account of growing up queer in rural Scotland, where natural beauty coexisted with poverty, isolation, and the absence of visible difference. Here, 'home' emerges not as a place of return but as a site of survival, waiting, and longing to leave. Held together, these chapters reveal how Scottishness is differently lived and imagined – whether in narratives of migration, or in the ambivalent ties to rural landscapes – underscoring the need for more complex and situated understandings of queer belonging.

Inclusion or Illusion? Queer Lives in Scotland's Universities

Jack McKinlay, Jessica Gagnon

(University of Strathclyde, University of Manchester)

This session explores the promises and contradictions of Scotland's universities as spaces that claim to be distinctively progressive, while often failing to account for the diverse lived realities of LGBTQ+ students and staff. The first contribution centres the experiences of disabled-queer students, revealing how intersecting inequalities shape their navigation of Scottish higher education. While universities showcase equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) commitments through polished statements, awards, and branding, the day-to-day experiences of students whose lives do not align with normative LGBTQ+ narratives remain messy, layered, and marginalised especially beyond elite, well-resourced institutions. The second contribution draws on the STEM Equals projects to examine LGBTQ+ experiences in STEM fields, applying queer and intersectional theories to show how professional and institutional cultures reproduce normativity. Here, intersectionality highlights how overlapping systems of oppression generate unique challenges, while queer theory interrogates the persistence of hetero- and cisnormativity in ostensibly inclusive environments. Together, these chapters complicate narratives of Scottish exceptionalism in higher education, demonstrating that diversity commitments risk remaining symbolic unless they grapple with structural exclusions and the uneven realities of belonging across disciplines, institutions, and identities.

Queer Connections: A Wee Quiz for Big Ideas

Yvette Taylor

(University of Strathclyde)

To round off the Queer in a Wee Place Special Event, we invite the audience to take part in a fun, light-hearted quiz that celebrates the themes of the book while sparking conversation – and perhaps laughter. The quiz is not about testing anyone's academic knowledge but about engaging together as

a community, playing with ideas, and enjoying the quirks and complexities of queerness in Scotland. Across a series of quick-fire rounds, we'll explore 'wee facts' and 'big ideas', moving between history, culture, and the playful possibilities of queer belonging. Some questions are multiple choice, others are open for audience shout-outs, and all are designed to be thought-provoking without being too serious. You don't need to be an expert to take part just bring your curiosity, sense of humour, and willingness to join in. Most importantly, this quiz will likely highlight that there is never a single, final or complete story of a queer Scotland. Instead, there are many overlapping and imaginative ways of understanding small nations, identity, and belonging. And yes, there's a prize! The winner will receive a copy of *Queer in a Wee Place: Small Nations, Sexuality and Scotland* – a 'dazzling' open access collection also in print.

Families & Relationships - Room 4.204

Transnational Care and Divorce among Migrant Construction Workers in Finland

Matias Muuronen

(University of Helsinki)

Research on transnational families has long emphasized the circulation of care as a key analytic for understanding how family responsibilities are redistributed across borders. This paper argues, however, that attention to disruptions of care is equally crucial for analyzing the gendered consequences of labor migration. Drawing on interviews and ethnographic fieldwork with Baltic construction workers in Finland, the analysis identifies two principal trajectories of disruption: migration regimes and divorce. Migration regimes reconfigure masculinity by reducing men to their labor capacity, thereby marginalizing their caregiving roles within transnational family arrangements. Divorce, in turn, emerges as an outcome of the highly mobile and uncertain work trajectories that hinder the maintenance of affective and conjugal ties. In both contexts, the breadwinner function is sustained, yet the provision of emotional and embodied care is curtailed. These dynamics illuminate a temporal contradiction between the acceleration of global capitalism, which demands rapid labor mobility, and the slow temporality of care, particularly childrearing. This tension becomes apparent in the differentiated experiences of workers: men employed in urban housing construction appear better able to sustain transnational family cohesion than those engaged in more circular forms of mobility, performing specialized tasks in newly emerging megaprojects such as data centers. By foregrounding moments of care disruption, this paper contributes to theorizations of care circulation, masculinity and the temporalities of the data infrastructure economy.

Reframing Belonging: Romanian Transnational Families across Continents and the Dinamica of Settlement

Alina Ionela Badescu, Ciprian Ilie Badescu

(University of Leeds)

This paper examines the lived experiences of Romanian transnational families and how they negotiate processes of settlement and belonging across distance. Drawing on 60 in-depth qualitative interviews—30 conducted in Sydney, Australia (Feb–Mar 2024), and 30 in Manchester, UK (Spring 2025)—this study compares families who have settled long-term in two contrasting geopolitical and cultural contexts: within the European Union and outside it.

The research explores how Romanian families sustain transnational ties while undergoing different trajectories of integration, adaptation, and identity formation. By introducing the conceptual distinction between “settled” and “unsettled” transnational families, the paper argues that settlement is not a fixed state but a fluid and negotiated process shaped by legal status, emotional labour, caregiving practices, and perceptions of belonging.

The findings highlight how geographical location influences not only institutional support and pathways to citizenship but also family strategies for maintaining kinship, transmitting culture, and reimagining “home.” Families in both contexts reconfigure traditional roles and relational practices.

Reconstructing Resilience: Adaptive Strategies and Social Networks of Chinese Migrant Families in Small and Medium-sized Cities

Hui Zhou

(University of Sheffield)

Departing from previous research on individual labour migration to megacities, this study focuses on an overlooked group: entire migrant families settling in China's small and medium-sized cities. Their migration is a holistic family project seeking a better quality of life, yet they face unique integration challenges due to institutional gaps and local protectionism. This study investigates how these families construct resilience in the absence of formal state support.

Our core argument is that family resilience is not a static attribute but a process dynamically constructed through social networks. To substantiate this, we employ an innovative mixed-method qualitative approach, combining 53 semi-structured interviews with Social Network Analysis (SNA) of 35 families. This method connects subjective experiences of adversity with the objective structure of their support networks, enabling a multi-dimensional analysis of resilience formation.

Findings reveal that resilience is built through a hierarchical, inside-out process based on the family's network structure. It begins with internal adjustments, where members reorganise roles to create an 'internal buffer'. Building on this internal foundation, the family as a unit then selectively activates and expands informal social relationships externally to compensate for institutional deficiencies. This research reveals the synergy between internal family dynamics and external social capital, highlighting the critical role of informal networks for integration. Ultimately, this study challenges the passive-victim narrative, offering a new theoretical perspective on agency, risk, and social support in transitional China.

Lifecourse - Room 4.213

Survival and Resistance: 'I want to help people like me'

Kim Heyes, Shoba Arun, Benedicte Brahic, Nicola Ingram

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Despite often experiencing severe childhood trauma, many women from single-parent families in South Africa reconfigure their lives through higher education. This paper foregrounds the socio-economic and gendered challenges that structure individual experiences, exploring how trauma—ubiquitous in post-apartheid and post-colonial societies—becomes an unwanted and unaccounted-for component of the habitus. It examines how both individual and collective trauma shape the experiences of mainly black women and girls in higher education (HE) in South Africa.

By situating these narratives within Bourdieu's theoretical framework—one that has had limited engagement with trauma—this paper offers a nuanced understanding of how habitus is influenced by the intersecting forces of family dynamics, trauma, and educational systems. While full financial support provides some relief, university admission often marks the beginning of new, largely invisible struggles. These include the contradictory demands of HE institutions, caregiving responsibilities, financial obligations, household duties, and the enduring presence of past and ongoing trauma. Yet, the women in this study demonstrate remarkable resilience. Their accounts reveal how they transform adversity into agency, lifting not only themselves from the 'ghetto' but also supporting their families and inspiring broader social change. Their aspirations reflect a commitment to advocating for the human rights, dignity, and safety of other girls facing similar hardships. Ultimately, this presentation invites us to recognise how, even in the shadow of profound trauma, there can be pathways of resistance, hope, and transformation.

“Play by the rules”: Young People Figuring Youth Identities in a Neoliberal Risk Society

Elinor Whittle

(Nottingham Trent University)

Young people are feeling the pressure. Pressure to do well at school, pressure to fit in, pressure to stand out. There is an expectation to self-define, which has increased since the advent of social media (Threadgold, 2020). Threadgold (2020) draws attention to the fluid, flimsy way that ‘youth’ is presented throughout scholarship and across media. Various figures of youth are conjured to exert affective power and narrativise the experience of youth in ways which support an agenda of adult hegemony, rather than illuminate the complexities of young people’s lives. There’s a risk that these figures of youth obscure the realities of contemporary young people, both in scholarship (Threadgold, 2020), more widely in education provision (Howard, 2024), and popular media (Hickey-Moody, 2013). For young people facing deficit identities, especially, there is a threat that harmful stereotypes are reproduced and perpetuated (Howard, 2024).

This presentation will explore how young people aged 12-19 figure their own identities, in the face of unstable, precarious futures. The paper draws upon data from a current mixed creative methods PhD project, including semi-structured interviews, creative focus groups, drawing activities and participatory observation. The young people were engaged in London and Bristol at 3 creative youth settings. Findings suggest that young people feel the need to present multiple identities to navigate the affective landscape of expectation regarding transitions and selfhood. The paper will explore these various selves in contrast to Threadgold’s figures of youth (2020), in a context of risk narratives (Hickey-Moody, 2013) and chronic precarity (Devany et al., 2020) in a risk society (Beck, 1992).

What are ‘Good Jobs’ for Young People?

Hannah King

(Durham University)

The jobs we do can govern our quality of life, shaping our health, wellbeing, and economic inclusion, yet high employment does not guarantee good work. Poor-quality jobs harm wellbeing, entrench inequality, and increase social costs. The growth of precarious and insecure work in the UK has widened the gulf between good and bad jobs. Within this context, young people fare worst, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are disproportionately in low-paid, insecure roles, face higher labour market abuse, pay stagnation, zero-hours contracts and are the first generation facing downward mobility. With nearly one million 16–24-year-olds in the UK currently not in education, employment or training, many endure long-term scarring from economic crises.

So what does good work look like for young people? Defining and measuring ‘good work’ are complex tasks. Job quality is a multidimensional phenomenon, shaped by social, cultural and economic factors, and varies between individuals. In the UK, the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development’s seven dimensions of job quality are broadly recognised as the most comprehensive definition of good work. Despite the proliferation of research in this area, little attention has been paid to the needs and preferences of young people. This presentation draws on a large mixed-methods study with the Youth Futures Foundation (What Works Centre for Youth Employment) to define and measure good work with and for young people.

Desynchronized Futures and Temporal Sovereignty: The Making of Adaptive Aspirations among China’s County Youth

Wenxin Jiang, Kexin Liu, Yuniu Li

(Education University of Hong Kong)

This study examines how undergraduates from a poverty-alleviation county in China navigate a unique temporal contradiction: the simultaneous experience of an accelerated adulthood and a delayed youth. Drawing on life-history interviews with 15 students, we argue that structural pressures such as being left-behind children force early maturity, while educational disruptions like school transfers, repeating grades, and academic leaves delay conventional youth experiences. Rather than treating these temporal dislocations as disadvantages, we find that these young people actively challenge

chrononormativity and its associated meritocratic ideals by reclaiming temporal sovereignty over their life trajectories. Our analysis reveals that such temporal reorientation enables students to convert structural constraints into adaptive advantages, fostering greater optimism and a capacity for present-focused living. This realignment narrows the gap between values, motivation, and action—reducing the aspiration-expectation discontinuities often observed among their urban middle-class peers. Whereas urban youth frequently confront pessimism generated by the friction between high ambitions and limited agency, county youth demonstrate how they and their surrounding significant others, by breaking from normative timelines, can generate more cohesive and fulfilling life projects. Their experiences compel a rethinking of time and agency in sociological theory, illustrating how marginalised youth imagine futures liberated from meritocratic anxiety and oriented toward meaningful well-being. Ultimately, this study shows how alternative temporal practices can disrupt the reproduction of inequality and create new possibilities for flourishing within structural constraints.

Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 3.209

Heading Policies in Association Football: A Figural Analysis

Bright Nduka

(York St John University)

Professional football is recognised as a hazardous occupation, with injury rates surpassing those of other industries (Roderick et al., 2000). Among these injuries, concussions have notably risen among athletes in recent years, prompting increased research attention (Liston et al., 2016) and the development of head policies prioritising athlete safety and well-being due to lay narratives and research speculations suggesting a causal link between heading the ball and brain injuries in football (Malcolm, 2021).

By utilising documentary analysis, this paper examines the content of heading policies in football, the social context surrounding the formulation of these policies, and offers a robust understanding of what these policies and guidelines entail, through a comprehensive theoretical examination of heading policies in football.

Adopting a figural perspective provides deeper insight into the social context of these policies, allowing us to comprehend the activities that influenced their formulation beyond just their content while examining the power interplay between interdependent relationships involved in formulating and implementing these policies.

This documentary analysis reveals that (1) Policies focus on banning heading, (2) these policies primarily focus on children/teenager are informed by research conducted on adults. (3) Focus/emphasis is on heading in training, with little attention given to activities on match days, amongst others.

Further aspects of this study aim to assess the suitability and effectiveness of these policies in safeguarding the health and safety of boys in professional football academies, with other data collection methods further exploring the overall objective of this research project.

Radiographers' Embodied Expertise in the Age of AI

Min Yuan Hung

(National Taiwan University)

Radiology has become one of the most prominent specialties to adopt AI, as systems increasingly demonstrate strong performance in automating aspects of radiologists' expertise. Paradoxically, radiographers—a professional group working closely with radiologists—face far less threat from automation. Their image-producing expertise involves embodied interaction with patients, yet is often perceived as repetitive and subordinate. This study therefore takes radiographers' embodied expertise as an empirical lens to engage with sociological debates on the challenges of AI automation. It asks: what qualities of radiographers' embodied expertise make it difficult for AI to automate? Drawing on two years of participant observation and twelve in-depth interviews conducted at a major hospital in Singapore, the study examines radiographers' daily interactions with patients and highlights the

centrality of embodied empathy in their expertise. Embodied empathy entails a collective understanding that enables radiographers to cognitively interpret patients' experiences, while simultaneously drawing on somatic affordances that allow resonance with patients' feelings. These embodied and contextual qualities remain difficult for AI to replicate, limiting its capacity to accurately assess patient conditions and to foster patient trust. The findings suggest that body work—an expertise that often relies on embodied empathy yet has long been marginalized within healthcare—may, in the context of AI-driven healthcare, present an occasion for shifts in professional hierarchies. At the same time, the study interrogates the challenges of empathy in radiographic practice, highlighting the conditions under which AI might contribute to more patient-centered and equitable forms of healthcare.

Oracles of Truth in Medical Work: AI and Bureaucratic Cybernetics, from Noise to Message

Max Perry

(University of Edinburgh)

This paper will outline the ways in which 'artificial intelligence' technologies in healthcare can be understood as logics of bureaucratic rationalisation. An account will be developed that places 'artificial intelligences' as distinct tools of cognitive automation with a longer history in healthcare, one that includes 'decision-support', audit, numericalisation and standardisation. Each of these techniques look to reduce zones of uncertainty. Making use of Linsey McGoey's notion of 'oracular power', the paper argues that the primary locus of power in the UK's bureaucratic system of medicine has been shifted away from clinicians, creating new techniques of pathologisation.

To automate cognitive practices in medicine, decision making processes needs to be rendered legible to binary/Boolean logics. This has a long history in bureaucratic medicine but is subject to renewed vigour through the deployment of automated technologies reliant upon 'deep learning' & 'machine learning'. Through these technologies, automations are performed within a realm of 'negative-metaphysics' in which questions regarding the nature-of-things are reduced to engineering problems to be 'resolved' at the database level. In medicine, as in other domains of contemporary life, computer science concepts such as 'knowledge representation and reasoning' and 'database ontologies' are vital to such activities and increasingly abstract and centralise knowledge production.

Ultimately, this paper makes a historical & sociological argument regarding the contours of oracular power in medicine. We trace the rise of certain bureaucratic technologies and their problematisation within 'artificial intelligence', and describe the ways they divest power from 'the clinic' through cybernetic techniques and cognitive 'automations'.

Paradoxes of Negotiating Explainability in the Development of Sociotechnical Intelligence: An Ethnographic Study of the Creation of AI for Healthcare

Duncan J Reynolds, Megan Clinch, Deborah Swinglehurst

(Queen Mary, University of London)

An often-stated reason for the low take up of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare is its lack of explainability. This is further complicated by tensions and paradoxes such as machine learning algorithms that exhibit the best predictive accuracy are often the most opaque. Adopting a sociotechnical view, we examine how explainability is enacted in practice. By undertaking an ethnography of a UK NIHR-funded consortium developing a hospital readmission model for people with multiple long-term conditions, we use organisational paradox theory to analyse how tensions are negotiated in practice when attempting to make AI explainable. Data comprised over 230 hours of observation, 20 interviews, and five interdisciplinary workshops.

We identify three recurring paradoxes. First, explanation imperative versus imagined beneficiary: clinicians, data scientists and patients endorsed explainability, yet tended to prioritise it for others rather than themselves. Second, plurality of explanations versus single technical tools: the team acknowledged audience-specific needs but defaulted to tools such as SHAP, which did not satisfy all groups. Third, an epistemic paradox: algorithmic outputs were welcomed when aligning with clinical expectations and problematised when they did not, revealing tensions between new and established knowledge.

We reframe explainable AI as explanation work. Rather than a fixed property of a model, explanation work denotes situated practices that align expectations, justifications and accountabilities across actors, tools and settings. Empirically, we show how explanation work organises collaboration by supplying focal artefacts. Conceptually, we argue for moving from glass box imaginaries to cultivating a culture of critical open inquiry within reflexive interdisciplinary environments.

Methodological Innovations - Room 4.206

Diffractional Debriefing: A Different Approach to Participant Debriefing

Kate Bowen-Viner

(University of Bristol)

In this presentation, I reimagine participant debriefing. In doing so, I consider how the feminist relational materialist philosopher Karen Barad's concept of diffraction can be utilised as an innovative approach to debriefing participants who take part in sociological research. I explain how feminist relational materialist philosophers have troubled the philosophical assumptions underpinning traditional approaches to participant debriefing. I then consider how feminist relational materialism has contributed to post-qualitative approaches to research which involve utilising philosophical concepts as methods. Adopting a post-qualitative approach, I go on to present Karen Barad's concept of diffraction as a participant debriefing method that involves participants, researchers and non-humans contributing to research projects becoming different. As part of this, I consider diffractional debriefing in the context of a research project with 21 school pupils in the Southwest of England that involved young people telling stories about menstruation in their everyday lives. In doing so, I describe the diffractional debriefing workshops that were part of the project. I then draw on such workshops to describe three general principles that I followed when developing a diffractional approach to participant debriefing: (1) Researchers should avoid instructing participants about what happened in a research project (2) Diffractional debriefing should not finalise what a research project can become and (3) Diffractional debriefing involves an approach to ethics that foregrounds response-ability. I will invite audience members to consider how diffractional debriefing could be part of research projects beyond my research project which focused on young people and their menstruation stories.

Building a National Infrastructure for Social Interaction Data

David Bomark, Debbie Collins, Nigel Gilbert, John Edmunds, Corinna Elsenbroich

(University of Surrey)

Social interactions shape individual wellbeing, economic participation, and societal cohesion, yet social science lacks representative data on who interacts with whom in the UK and the implications of these interactions. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored this gap: while co-location data helped model viral spread, the broader social consequences of disrupted contact patterns remain poorly understood. In the post-pandemic context, with increased remote working and digital communication, the long-term effects on individuals, communities, and society are unclear.

The STRIKE project is designed to scope the data infrastructure needed to build a national picture of social interactions in the UK. It aims to collect data on both online and face-to-face contacts, including where and how they occur. Such data is vital for addressing pressing societal challenges, from wellbeing and loneliness to health inequalities, sustainable consumption, and migration. By understanding how people experience and value different forms of social connection, STRIKE will inform future policy interventions, ensuring they are grounded in robust evidence about the social fabric of everyday life.

We will present a potential data infrastructure for social interactions. This has been informed by speaking to academics and other data users about what data is needed, and focus groups with the general public about their willingness to share their social interaction data and what their concerns are.

Visual Propaganda in China: A Computational Approach to Understanding Visual Strategies and Digital Engagement in the 2019 Hong Kong Social Movement

Qiang Tan, Linfeng Shen

(Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Large-scale protests often challenge the stability of state regimes, prompting them to employ various strategies to suppress dissent and maintain control. In the digital age, states increasingly leverage social media platforms for propaganda dissemination and opposition containment. Existing research on protest framing in such contexts has largely focused on text-based analyses, with limited attention given to approaches that leverage visual data, which also conveys rich information and can be manipulated to achieve specific propaganda objectives. This study investigates the visual representation of the 2019 Hong Kong social movement on Chinese social media, focusing on how images are used to shape public perceptions and influence digital engagement. Drawing on a dataset of over 100,000 protest-related posts with images on Chinese social media, this research utilizes the multimodal capabilities of Large Models to analyze how the state manipulates aesthetic features, emotionality, and visual narrative to drive digital engagement. Findings reveal that Chinese social media platforms systematically depict the Hong Kong protests as chaotic, gloomy, and lacking public support, while presenting police presence and pro-government demonstrations with righteous figures and brighter backgrounds to reinforce legitimacy. Regarding digital engagement, we find that posts with visual elements expressing intense sentiment and displaying strong nationalism features receive more digital engagement. This study demonstrates how visual expressions are employed to influence public perception and stimulate digital engagement. Furthermore, our analytical framework highlights the potential of extending visual analysis to examine broader social phenomena.

Beyond Ties: Paradox Network Analysis and the Complexity of Relational Structure

Rosie Boparai, Isidora Kourti, Alexandra Bristow, Sarah Bloomfield

(Open University)

While social network analysis (SNA) has traditionally treated social ties as the primary form of relational structure, scholars have highlighted how other sociological traditions, such as field theory, contest this reduction. This paper introduces Paradox Network Analysis (PNA) as a methodological innovation in the study of relational structures, contributing to debates within the Social Network Analysis Group. PNA expands the notion of relationality by mapping organisational oppositions including: tensions, contradictions, dialectics, and paradoxes. Rather than privileging interpersonal connections, it traces these oppositions as constitutive relational structures, thereby generating new forms of network diagrams for examining processes of social construction. The paper makes two contributions. First, it situates PNA within current debates in SNA on the nature and limits of relational structure, arguing that oppositional logics provide an important and neglected dimension for analysis. Second, it demonstrates the analytic potential of PNA through two applications: (1) the mapping of oppositional relations in literature review, illustrating how scholarly debates can be usefully crystallised through network maps and a novel 'symbolic clustering' algorithm; and (2) the analysis of ethnographic data from the lead authors present PhD study, where organisational actors within a women's network articulate tensions that structure practice and identity. Together these illustrations suggest that PNA opens fresh methodological opportunities for sociologists seeking to capture the highly contextual and communicative nature of relational logics. The paper offers a new formalism for this type of network analysis, together with reflections on the tension between reflexivity and automation.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Room 2.217

Re-membering Home: Analysing the Spatial, Temporal and Relational of Place Attachment for British South Asian Muslim Women in 'Left-behind' Towns

Rashida Bibi

(University of Sheffield)

Drawing on research with second and third generation British South Asian (BSA) Muslim women living in Oldham, a town in the North of England, this paper explores the ways in which attachment to local places is spatial, temporal and relational. Through the concept of homeplace (hooks, 1990) and reflective nostalgia (Boym, 2001) the paper illustrates the ways in which attachment to 'home' is symbolic, fluid and contested. Narratives of home and 'being in place' for BSA Muslim women in this research are articulated through personal memories of childhood, identifying with place and affective interactions with everyday objects and routines. Whilst nostalgia has been critiqued as an insular, conservative force reinforcing imagined boundaries, this paper considers nostalgia as a critical, reflective and relational practice (Boym, 2001) through which Muslim women lay claim to belonging and identity through acts of re-membering (Fortier, 1999).

In focusing on the intimate, subjective narratives of BSA Muslim women and everyday lives in place, the paper argues that an understanding of belonging of the 'Other' which is situated predominantly in the present and primarily through the language of exclusion is in itself reductive. Further, highlighting the spatial, temporal and relational dimensions of place attachment, offers alternative narratives to dominant policy and popular representations of Muslim women in 'left behind' towns.

Shifting Pathways of Gendered Migration: Indian Women's Middle-income Occupations in the UAE

Shruti Gupta

(National University of Singapore)

This paper examines the growing presence of Indian women in middle-income occupations in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and explores their lived experiences in the context of shifting socioeconomic structures. While Indian migration to the UAE has historically been dominated by men, the diversification of the economy has created new pathways for women, particularly in low- and middle-income occupations. Drawing on ethnographic research with Indian women in the UAE between 2020 and 2021 and interviews with recruitment agents, this paper focuses on two middle-income occupations, nursing and teaching, within which Indian women are concentrated. The analysis highlights three interrelated dimensions: first, despite policy reforms during the COVID-19 pandemic that extended residency pathways for nurses and teachers, these opportunities remained inaccessible to many interlocutors. Instead, easier family reunification policies played a significant role in shaping migration flows. Second, growing demand has resulted in increased scrutiny on certification and licensing requirements, pushing certain categories of women outside the labour market. Finally, the paper argues that Indian women migrants cannot be understood solely as economic actors; they also migrate as part of family units (often leading migration pathways), navigating the fluid and often competing demands of individual aspirations and familial obligations. Overall, the paper foregrounds emerging dimensions of gendered migration in Asia and the distinctive route of family reunification to highlight the interplay of economic and family migration.

Conviviality at 20: Trends in the Empirical Application of Conviviality in Sociology

Rachel Ayrton

(University of Birmingham)

In a moment where 'raising the colours' and a political race to more restrictive and punitive migration policies dominate the public sphere, questions of how people live together in the context of difference are as urgent as they have ever been. Since the publication of Paul Gilroy's *After Empire* over twenty years ago, there has been an explosion of interest in the concept of conviviality as a tool for examining

the 'unkempt, unruly and unplanned multicultural' taking shape on the streets of postcolonial cities (Gilroy 2004, x). The resulting field is empirically rich, with many sociologists turning their attention to manifestations of conviviality in the everyday lives of human populations. After two decades of development, how does this body of work define and operationalise conviviality, and with what implications for the modes of sociality capable of countering postcolonial melancholia?

This paper presents the findings of a scoping review conducted of sociological and adjacent literatures published between 2004-2024 using the concept of conviviality with reference to Gilroy's work. It gives an overview of the temporal, geographic and disciplinary scope of the field based on review of nearly 300 papers, contextualising the detailed excavation of 139 empirical studies. Various positioning conviviality as social practice, capability, space and/or culture, this body of work speaks to key debates around what depth/intensity of relationality the term encompasses; what conditions and conditionalities give rise to conviviality, with implications for its relative (in)stability; and, critically, how conviviality accommodates, coexists with or resists conflict and hierarchical power relations.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 2.218

Masking Whiteness with a More Colourful Face: The Impact of the Race Equality Charter on Black Heritage Students in a Post-92 University

Cynthia Lawson

(Durham University)

Equality, diversity, and inclusion have become an increasingly prominent policy agenda across higher education worldwide. At the same time, student mental health and wellbeing have attracted growing concern, with Black heritage students experiencing disproportionately negative outcomes. In the UK, the Race Equality Charter (REC) was introduced by Advance HE as a framework to support universities in addressing racial inequities among staff and students. Yet, systemic inequities persist, with Advance HE's (2021) review on the REC identifying anti-Black racism as an ongoing concern, while scholars have also criticised the REC for functioning more as a form of performative compliance rather than a mechanism for structural change (e.g., Bhopal and Pitkin, 2020; Campion and Clark, 2022).

This study employs Critical Race Theory and draws on qualitative semi-structured interviews with Black heritage students at a post-92 University in England to examine how REC-related policies shape their experiences. Findings reveal a persistent gap between institutional rhetoric and student realities, exposing the non-performativity of race equity commitments and the endurance of whiteness within the institution. The analysis further shows that universities' frame increases in Black heritage and other racially minoritised student enrolments as evidence of transformative progress; however, this framing serves to conceal and reproduce whiteness rather than dismantling it. The study calls for a shift beyond compliance, urging universities to embed REC commitments into practice with accountability for, and responsiveness to Black heritage students' experiences, if the framework is to achieve its potential as a meaningful driver of change.

It's Not a Jungle or Battlefield but a Hospital: The Lived Experiences of Racial Minority Clinicians within NHS Scotland

Frank Asamoah Antwi

(University of Strathclyde)

Drawing on critical race theory (CRT), intersectionality, and organisational change theory, this research explores how racism is embedded within the structures of NHS Scotland. It explores the lived experiences of racial minority clinicians, focusing on recognition, supportive environment, racism, inequity, and exclusion within their workplace environments. By investigating potential patterns of racial inequality, the study analyses how power dynamics shapes clinicians' experiences at both institutional and individual levels.

Using thematic analysis through the phenomenological lens, the research offers a nuanced understanding of how participants make sense of racialised structures. Through this interpretative lens, it explores the meanings racial minority clinicians attach to recognition and appreciation, supportive

environment, exclusion, microaggressions, and the impact of these experiences. Preliminary findings highlight themes on both the positive (supportive environment, recognition and appreciation, flexible work arrangements) and negative (exclusion, incivility, racism) experiences. Participants report racial microaggressions, exclusion from leadership positions, recognition from patients, colleagues, and managers, support received from colleagues and managers, and the emotional toll of navigating a predominantly white institutional culture.

This research will contribute to British Sociology Association (BSA) ongoing discussion on race, ethnicity, and migration; medicine, health, and illness; and/or work, employment, and economic life by highlighting the systemic barriers racial minority clinicians face and challenging dominant narratives through rigorous qualitative methodologies. By situating racial minority clinicians lived experiences within CRT through a phenomenological lens, it will generate actionable insights to inform policies that move beyond symbolic diversity efforts toward fostering anti-racist, structural change within NHS Scotland.

Intent is Not Impact: Cultural Humility and the Lived Realities of Black Girls in UK Schools

Jade Ecobichon-Gray, Joel Dunn

(Mindset Matters UK, Paradigm Project)

Black girls in UK schools are often misrecognised, adultified and marginalised, reinforcing structural inequalities and limiting belonging. This study, conducted in Lambeth and Southwark and inspired by Milk Honey Bees' See Us, Hear Us report, explores cultural humility as a sociological lens for reframing these dynamics. Cultural humility emphasises ongoing critical self-reflection, requiring educators to interrogate their own cultural identities, norms and narratives, and to consider how these shape institutional practice.

The research adopted a convergent mixed-methods design: a creative-expression workshop and student focus group facilitated by Milk Honey Bees, online focus groups with parents and educators, and parallel surveys with 37 students and 36 staff members. Data were analysed separately and then integrated to identify patterns of convergence and divergence.

Findings illustrate a visibility gap between educators' intentions and students' experiences. While most teachers reported curiosity about cultural differences, only a minority of students recognised this. Significant proportions of girls reported discrimination, yet silence in open-text responses suggested low psychological safety. Thematic analysis highlighted recurring concerns with misrecognition, stereotyping, adultification, emotional containment, and unmet needs for representation and healing.

The study argues that intersectionality is essential for understanding the layered exclusions Black girls face, while cultural humility provides a pathway to change by shifting attention inward to educators' own practices and positionalities. Moving beyond statements of intent towards embedded, reflexive praxis can build accountability and trust, creating conditions in which Black-girl joy, creativity and resilience are nurtured rather than suppressed.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 3 - Room 2.219

Beyond Hybridity: 'Switching' as a Strategy of Cultural Identification in Postcolonial London

Seetha Tan

(University of Cambridge)

Cultural identities can be fixed during particular historical conjunctures, setting the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Indeed, the summer 2025 anti-migration protests in Britain renewed debates over the meaning of "English" and "British" as cultural identities. Existing approaches in migration studies have challenged this essentialised view of culture by emphasising how migrant identities should be understood as hybrid, plural, and multi-layered. Yet, these frameworks tend to offer limited insight into how the different 'layers' of identity are negotiated, how they respond to fixity, and how they are enacted in practice. In overlooking the relational mechanisms at stake within and between identities, these approaches risk rendering the concept of hybrid identity too intangible and theoretically imprecise

to be sociologically useful (Brubaker, 2004). In this paper, by theorising 'switching' as a strategy of cultural identification, I examine how so-called 'hybrid' identities are enacted in practice. By drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth interviews with postcolonial migrants in London, I demonstrate how individuals 'switch' between the multiple categories of identity available to them. By foregrounding processes of affiliation and disaffiliation, I demonstrate how 'switching' is used as a strategy for postcolonial migrants to negotiate their belonging in Britain. I trace how, when, and why individuals 'switch' their identification from, for example, "English" to "British", or from "British-Indian" to "British-Punjabi," demonstrating how hybrid identity formations are always historically contingent. In doing so, I intervene in studies of identity and identity formation by emphasising the mechanisms behind hybrid identity formation.

How Does the Use of Information and Communication Technology Impact the Risk of Depression in European Older Adults from Transnational Families? Findings from the SHARE Project

Dianqi Yuan, Arkadiusz Wisniowski, Nan Zhang

(University of Manchester)

Background: Increasing international population mobility brings mental health challenges for older parents separated from their migrant children. While prior research has confirmed the protective role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the well-being of migrants, its impact remains underexplored for this special group of older parents in transnational families. This study aims to quantify the effect of ICT use on reducing depressive symptoms among parents in transnational families across Europe.

Method: Considering the small number of parents with migrant children, we employed multilevel models and Bayesian inference to analyse longitudinal data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). We explored the relationship between ICT use and depression (EURO-D scale), and investigated the potential mechanisms through contact with children, children's help, and parents' social capital.

Results: Parents with migrant children reported a higher depression rate (37.2%), used ICT more frequently (61.98%) and were less likely to keep daily contact with their children. And our key finding demonstrates that ICT use is a robust protective factor, and this effect held after adjusting for covariates and using different modelling approaches. We also found that parents' social capital was significant factor, whereas factors like the parents' own immigrant status and specific living arrangements did not significantly influence the protective effect of ICT.

Conclusions: Overall, digital connection is a valuable resource for safeguarding the well-being of older adults in transnational families, highlighting the importance of bridging digital divides.

The Racialisation of Space and the Spatialisation of Race: Understanding the Whiteness of English Rurality and Contextualising the White Spatial Imaginary in Rural England

Kofi Broadhurst

(University of Cambridge)

The romanticised rural idyll has been a longstanding feature of England's socio-spatial geography. Historically entangled with claims to a racialised and classed sense of English propriety, rural civility has been painted as the pinnacle of national society represented by simplicity, peace and safety. A body of literature concentrated around the late-1990s and early-2000s explored the unique manifestations of this divisive classification of rurality, drawing attention towards complex and sustained nativist and localist narratives proclaiming the rural to be a retreat reserved for white bodies. It stressed concern with constructions of white rurality in erasing the histories and lived experiences that people of colour share with rural spaces and made calls for the critical exploration of such processes in order for efforts to be made towards rural inclusivity and accessibility. Yet, in the decades following their publication, little has been done to honour these calls. Through a contemporary reflection upon the 1990s/2000s literature, alongside some early findings from a qualitative inquiry based in England's Lake District, this paper explores race and racialisation in contemporary rural England through a focus upon whiteness and the white spatial imaginary. The paper interrogates how those racialised as white in the

Lake District feel about and conceptualise their raced identities and personal positions within the racialised social order. In doing so, the paper marks a contribution to a recently under-explored field and makes calls for targeted efforts towards building new, inclusive interpretations of the rural cultivated through local activism, policy change, stakeholder shifts, and scholarly attention.

Necropolitical Compassion: Rhetorical Care and Repressive Borders in the English Channel

Lucy Mayblin, Tesfalem Yemane, Joe Turner, Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee

(University of Sheffield)

This presentation, based on an article currently under review, examines how a discourse of compassion is used to facilitate harmful, even deadly, bordering practices. That is, governing migration through exposure to harm, including premature death. Whilst important scholarship has explored this phenomenon in terms of “compassionate borderwork” and “humanitarian bordering,” we extend these analyses by foregrounding the racial-colonial logics underpinning bordering. This is done through engagement with Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics and Carolyn Ureña’s concept of “colonial love”. These allow us to centre the relationships between contemporary bordering and colonial logics of human hierarchy. We explore this through analysis of UK political discourse surrounding the small boat Channel crossings phenomenon 2018-2024. Our analysis focuses on four archetypes: the evil smuggler, the criminal queue jumper, the vulnerable victim, and the compassionate state. This article contributes to our understanding of the political use of compassion as a racio-colonial technology of organised abandonment, banishment, exclusion and expulsion, in the UK and beyond.

Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 4.211

Moral Divisiveness and the Ambiguous Prison Community

Bisakha Nandy

(West Bengal State University)

The term "community," as both a theme and a typology, has been one of the most persistent debates in the discourse of Sociology. For instance, F. Tönnies’s categorisation of *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), and its correspondence with modern society’s historical evolution and its resultant structural transformation. Then we also have Bauman showing us the elusiveness of contemporary community, evident in the lack of its defining features like trust, security, and confidence. A community, real or imagined, has been widely understood through the hallmark components of the continued sense of belonging, rootedness, and solidarity, underscored by a shared condition of the members inhabiting the community.

This intrigues me to comprehend the popular expression of “prison community”, sociologically. To begin with, one can think of Donald Clemmer’s famous concept of “prisonisation” (1940) or the adaptation techniques that the new entrant in the prison develops in an attempt to be assimilated with the existing inmate culture. Many such inferences in prison studies are largely drawn from the behaviour and experiences of male inmates of the developed world; however, my work reviews this question through the lives and perspectives of women prison inmates of West Bengal, India. The oft-cited community formation process in the prison is frequently obfuscated by non-communal practices of hatred, animosity, and negation of belongingness within the inmate society. The divisive principles of the free world are articulated by women inmates as a plain attempt at resistance to being identified with the image of a morally tainted collective of prisoners.

Living on the Edge: Exploring the Complex Terrain of Exclusionary Inclusion among Stateless Jerusalemites

Marwa Hasona

(University of Bristol)

Statelessness is legally defined as the condition of not being considered a national of any state. Although UNHCR mobilises political action to eradicate statelessness, its narrow legal definition

excludes many affected communities and places stateless individuals into a strict category, blurring the lines between forms and degrees of exclusion and inclusion stateless people face. In the case of Palestinians in Jerusalem, the legal framework is used to justify their marginalisation. Although they lack nationality in both Israel and the West Bank and are legally defined as “permanent residents,” they remain unprotected by international frameworks and placed in the “exceptional” category. Despite the abundance of legal research into Palestinian statelessness, the Palestinian account of their story is missing. This paper adopts a sociological approach to statelessness grounded in the lived experience. It investigates how Jerusalemites understand and navigate their precarious legal status, and how they use their collective struggles as means of resistance and survival, negotiating their place in a world that does not recognise them. By conceptualising statelessness as a culturally embodied experience shaped by laws, rights, national belonging, and spatial practice, the paper contributes to debates on the everyday lives of stateless communities, exposing hidden layers of structural violence, exclusion, and resilience. It argues that space is not only structured through laws but is also reshaped by those who occupy it. Thus, this research aims to offer a framework for analysing statelessness that moves beyond legal definitions and recognises the agency and struggles of those living on the margins.

Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 3.205

'The fuel that feeds the flames': Tracing (Anti)-Inflammatory Discourses and Practices in the (Re)Making of Degenerative Disease

Andrew Bartlett, Julia Swallow

(University of Sheffield)

In biomedicine, chronic inflammation is hailed as ‘medicine’s new frontier’ with the potential to transform understandings of disease aetiology, improve risk assessment and prevention, and management for a wide range of degenerative conditions. Public and popular culture discourse also emphasises an anti-inflammatory lifestyle to prevent and reduce chronic inflammation and disease onset. Attention focuses on how to rectify the internal immune system imbalance which prompts persistent chronic inflammation by adopting a healthy diet, exercising, or avoiding stress. Together these discourses culminate in what we propose is an ‘anti-inflammatory imaginary’ which guides and coordinates biomedical research, clinical work, and shapes public and popular culture framings of degenerative disease.

Focussing on four disease areas, Alzheimer’s Disease, cancer, Multiple Sclerosis and Rheumatoid Arthritis, and drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper situates chronic inflammation as the empirical object of analysis to explore the making of scientific knowledge, reshaping of disease classification, and understandings, perceptions and experiences of disease risk and long-term management across scientific, clinical and public and popular culture spaces. Tracing (anti)inflammatory discourse and practice across these spaces we show how disease becomes moralised in new ways as inflammation acts as a metaphor for living (well) with disease by promoting individualised practices associated with management and prevention, and which emphasise the need to rectify immune system imbalance and refigure internal/external bodily boundaries. This renewed moralisation has consequences for how degenerative disease is understood, approached, managed and experienced.

mRNA Vaccine Scepticism on Substack: Remixing Scientific Expertise with Influencer Affects

Anne Kerr, Betsy Barkas

(University of Glasgow)

Vaccine scepticism is rising across many jurisdictions. The appointment of the prominent vaccine-sceptic RF Kennedy Jr as USA Secretary of Health and Human Services starkly illustrates the powerfulness of this challenge to biomedical orthodoxy.

In this paper we investigate vaccine scepticism on Substack, a rapidly establishing subscription-based platform for newsletter-based content. We focus on prominent posts about mRNA vaccines in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. We explore how orthodox markers of scientific authority and expertise are mixed with other forms of affect-laden credibility from influencer culture.

Our dataset comprises text-based Substack posts about mRNA vaccines, drawn from prominent authors claiming medical or scientific expertise between November 2023-February 2024. This gives a dataset of 38 full or partial articles from 13 accounts.

The paper analyses the affective-discursive practices of credible expertise on mRNA as a practitioner, advisor or influencer. Prominent topics include vaccine science, vaccine shedding and vaccine injury. We consider the construction of credibility and authority through credentials, network membership, scientific method and 'peer review'. We discuss aspects of form including use of scientific publications, rigour, refutation, and the use of technical language and imagery. We then explore alternate affect-laden credentials associated with influencing in these posts - authenticity, charisma, passionate care and distancing from corrupt or compromised others. We end by reflecting on the potency of this mix of old and new forms of scientific credibility and the importance of attending to affect, including the distinctive use of alarm and overwhelm.

Fragile Infrastructures, Stigmatised Conditions: Rethinking Care through HPV-Associated Cancers

Lisa Ashmore

(Lancaster University)

Sociological work on infrastructures has long emphasised their relational fragility: systems of care are not self-sustaining but held together through continuous acts of repair, accommodation, and affective labour (Star, 1999; Domínguez Rubio, 2020, 2025). In healthcare, these dynamics are intensified by moral and political economies that shape how conditions are understood, who is deemed care-worthy, and how patients are positioned within systems under strain.

This paper brings scholarship on infrastructural fragility into conversation with critical approaches to stigma and sexuality, focusing on the case of human papillomavirus (HPV) and HPV-associated cancers. Unlike other cancers, HPV cancers are entangled with discourses of infection, intimacy, and morality. Care infrastructures here are doubly fragile: materially strained by under-resourced services, and affectively destabilised by silence, shame, and moral judgement. These fragilities limit participation, silence critique, and reproduce inequities in access, experience, and outcomes.

Drawing on feminist STS and sociological critiques of health systems, I argue that analysing HPV-associated cancer through the lens of fragility illuminates how infrastructures are sustained not only by technologies, staff, and institutions, but also by patients' own relational and affective labour, often at significant personal cost. At the same time, stigma works as an infrastructural force of its own, constraining what can be said, asked, or imagined within clinical encounters.

By reframing infrastructures of care as fragile, affective, and politically saturated, this paper unsettles dominant narratives of resilience and efficiency, opening space for anti-stigmatising imaginaries of cancer care.

Technocratic Pragmatism in Carbon Dioxide Removal Governance: Between Behavioral Pessimism and Technological Optimism

Jan Gilles

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

This paper examines the dominant understanding of politics among carbon dioxide removal (CDR) experts, revealing a technocratic approach that narrows the field of climate action. Drawing on interviews with CDR experts and practitioners, I demonstrate how actors depoliticize CDR governance through three interconnected mechanisms: assumptions about the impossibility of behavioural change and societal transformation, scepticism toward democratic politics, and positioning technological innovation as the sole viable pathway forward. This constellation produces what I term "technocratic pragmatism"—a governing logic that privileges scientific evidence and crisis urgency over democratic deliberation.

The paper shows how CDR experts seek to build cross-spectrum political support by framing governance as a technical rather than political challenge. Public opinion is treated with suspicion, while

social science is instrumentalized to engineer consent rather than facilitate genuine democratic engagement. I identify a particular mode of inclusion whereby publics are consulted on deployment design but excluded from deliberating on technological necessity— as public deliberation address the "how", the "whether" remains foreclosed.

Linking these findings to broader debates on technocracy in sociology, I argue that contemporary technocratic governance operates not through wholesale exclusion of publics, but through selective inclusion that preserves expert authority over foundational decisions. This contributes to recent empirical literature on technocracy by demonstrating how the concept manifests concretely in green technological innovation, moving beyond its abstract deployment in studies of financial and government institutions. The CDR case reveals how behavioural pessimism combined with technological optimism forecloses alternative approaches to climate action, privileging technological fixes over democratic possibilities.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 1 - Room 1.218

The Politics of Queer Visibility in Manchester's Queer and Public Spaces: A Case Study of Pakistani Diaspora Residing in Manchester

Aqsa Chaudhury

(University of York)

This study explores the politics of queer visibility and belonging among members of the Pakistani diaspora in Manchester, focusing on how they navigate and negotiate their presence within the city's queer and public spaces. Drawing on queer theory as a conceptual framework, the research interrogates how the relative invisibility of queer Pakistani individuals is shaped by the hypervisibility of white, Western expressions of queerness that dominate Manchester's queer geographies. These dynamics generate complex experiences of marginalisation, where individuals often encounter exclusion both within mainstream LGBTQ+ spaces and within their own ethnic communities. As a result, feelings of belonging and not-belonging are continuously negotiated, marked by partial inclusion, conditional acceptance, and spatial strategies of adaptation.

The project plans to employ qualitative, creative, and participatory methods to explore these issues in depth. Proposed methods include walking interviews through key queer and public spaces, participatory place-drawing exercises, and semi-structured interviews. These approaches aim to examine how participants conceptualise visibility and articulate sense of belonging in relation to Manchester's urban landscape.

By centring the perspectives of a community often rendered invisible within dominant queer narratives, this research seeks to contribute to wider sociological debates on intersectionality, urban space, and queer geographies. It aims to generate new insights into how racialised queer communities negotiate marginalisation and reimagine forms of visibility and belonging within urban contexts.

Exploring Transformative Potentials of Being Attentive to Queer Grief

Trude Sundberg

(University of Kent)

This chapter explores grief and loss through an autobiographical narration of a trans nonbinary person's life, reflecting on everyday experiences related to the death of a loved one, domestic abuse & violence in the queer community. It does so by applying attentiveness as a method, an approach that has grown out 'live sociology' (Woodward, 2025). This approach turns the sociological gaze to the 'unnoticed elements of everyday lives and objects' (Woodward, 2025:1). By applying this lens, the chapter explores queer grief, and what we can learn from a trans nonbinary person's experience of violence and grief. Here, then, the everyday experience of queer grief is approached as an unnoticed part of queer experience – seen as juxtapositioned to the parts of queer lives that are hyper visible— i.e. toilets, club scenes, and drag. Building on work on queer necropolitics (Haritaworn et al, 2014) the chapter situates queer grief as formed by a wider, global structures and discourses of violence. The chapter contributes to a body of work that foregrounds the unnoticed parts of everyday life, arguing that attending to queer

grief can help us make queer grief visible and that it allows us to unveil transformative potentials of grief through being attentive to the parts of queer grief that often go unnoticed.

Disoriented in Forever Youth: Tomboy Masculinities and Queer Time in Contemporary Mainland Chinese Queer Culture

Xiaoqi Sun

(Lancaster University)

'Tomboy', also rendered as the abbreviation 'T', was introduced from Taiwan in the early 2000s and generally refers to masculine lesbians in mainland China. Whereas hegemonic masculinities are often framed through ideals of stability and maturity, tomboyhood is anchored to juvenile and boyish images evoked by East Asian pop-cultural figures of alternative masculinity. Yet as participants describe, growing older risks being perceived as 'aunties in short hair', a misrecognition that unsettles tomboy identity and produces anxiety about ageing.

Drawing on interviews with 40 self-identified tomboys and a 17-month digital ethnography in Chinese queer online communities, this paper examines how embodied tomboy subjects perceive and negotiate a disjunctive relation to time. Attachments to youth and anxieties about ageing are shaped not merely by fashion trends but by the fact that normative temporality was never fully available to these subjects, leaving them in disorientation.

Building on queer phenomenology (Ahmed, 2006) and queer temporality scholarship (Halberstam, 2005; Freeman, 2010), this study approaches the paradox through phenomenological analysis within sociology, arguing that tomboy life manifests an oblique direction where body, temporality, and identity are intricately interwoven. In situating these experiences within Chinese queer culture, the paper contributes to wider sociological explorations on how temporal frameworks shape identities and belonging, while also suggesting phenomenological approaches as a way of rethinking how we study the rhythms and disjunctions of social life.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 1.219

Avatars, Gender, and Emotional Flow: Female Players' Negotiations of Identity in Online Games

Qian Zhang

(University of York)

This paper examines how female players negotiate gendered identity through their use of avatars in online games. While avatars are often treated as neutral tools, they play a central role in both strategic and emotional aspects of digital selfhood. Drawing on 23 in-depth interviews with women gamers, two key dynamics are highlighted. First, many participants adopted male avatars to avoid harassment and ease gameplay, yet simultaneously asserted their female identity in communication. This reveals the tension between invisibility and authenticity in online spaces. Second, players described evolving emotional relationships with their avatars. Some initially framed them as mere characters or symbolic others (daughters, sons, alter egos), but long-term play and interaction gradually fostered strong affective bonds. Over time, the emotions and connections generated in-game were experienced as genuinely their own, rather than as fictional. By bringing together strategic practices and affective flows, this paper contributes to sociological debates on digital identity, gender performativity, and the politics of visibility. It argues that avatars are not simply disguises or protective devices, but sites of negotiation where strategy, authenticity, and emotional selfhood intersect.

Re-thinking Sexual and Intimate Autonomy: The Subversive Power of BDSM and Kink

Tahlia-Rose Virdee

(Birkbeck, University of London)

This paper explores the potential for BDSM and Kink customs and culture, as well as understandings of bodily autonomy and Freedom of Expression to present alternatives to mainstream societal

discourses concerning notions of sexual pleasure versus violence and consent versus coercion in intimate and sexual partnerships.

The findings which inform this paper have been extracted from the original research conducted as part of my PhD thesis, titled: 'Beaten into the Margins: The Governance and Knowability of BDSM and Kink Sexualities in England and Wales'. This socio-legal research investigated factors which contribute to the misapprehension, misrepresentation and marginalisation of BDSM and Kink sexualities. Following this investigation, this research determined desirability and feasibility of seeking more equitable treatment for BDSM and Kink-orientated persons in England and Wales and presented tangible means by which this journey may be embarked upon.

This paper illuminates how subversion of conceptions of consent, sex, pain, violence and pleasure through understanding the nuances of BDSM and kink lived experiences can reframe our understandings of dominant sexual and intimate scripts. These insights offer the potential to recontextualise BDSM and Kink as an unassuming source or new hope for improving understanding and practice of intimate boundaries and ethics.

This paper is part of in a series of papers which highlights points for consideration in endeavouring to work towards the redressing of the socio-legal treatment of BDSM and Kink intimacies in England and Wales and achieving a kink-inclusive queer jurisprudence, predicated on evidence-based deconstructions of sexual and intimate marginalisation.

Gender Parody and the Queer Art of Failure: Interpreting Ni-Su Fans in Contemporary China

Zhengyan Cai

(University of Warwick)

This paper explores how women in China navigate their gender identity through the emerging fan practice of Ni-Su, where male celebrities are interpreted in hyper-feminised narratives. My study focuses on the female “Ni-Su fans” of actor Qin Hao, whose role in the hit series *The Bad Kids* (2020) sparked widespread Ni-Su activity. Viewers began discussing Qin with nicknames such as “mommy” and “widow,” and created online works—including fanfiction, videos, and illustrations—that inverted conventional ideas of masculinity. What began as a niche fannish practice quickly moved into the public domain, drawing attention from mainstream media and industry figures.

The research investigates two key questions: first, how Ni-Su presents fans’ interpretations and reflections of gender norms in present-day China; and second, how fans sustain these activities while negotiating pressures from censorship, state ideologies, and dominant cultural discourses. Drawing on digital ethnography and qualitative content analysis of social media posts from Weibo and Bilibili, this study contributes to fan and gender studies by highlighting how seemingly mischievous yet meaningful practices, such as Ni-Su, embody deeper negotiations of identity, agency, and sociocultural change.

By applying Judith Butler’s concept of gender parody and Jack Halberstam’s idea of “the queer art of failure,” the study moves beyond the framing of Ni-Su as either liberation from or reinforcement of patriarchy and misogyny. Instead, I argue that Ni-Su offers a playful yet critical space for reflecting gender norms and identity in contemporary China. This paper presents early findings on how fandom practices embody and negotiate broader sociocultural tensions.

Violence and Gender Identity: From Subjects of Discipline to Anticipatory Responses

Sebastian Raza, Joseph Salazar

(University of Cambridge, Fundación Diálogo Diverso)

Queer and feminist theories have focused on violence and the social conditions that perpetuate it. However, there is a gap between violence and identity. Although theories of gender performativity have addressed the question of violence and identity through notions of interpellation (psychoanalysis) and discipline (Foucault), these are insufficient to explain how violence effectively shapes life trajectories, sexual embodiment and gender identity.

This paper analyzes the case of "Carolina," a sex worker from Ecuador who self-identifies as a chica trans, and not as a woman. Based on more than 15 hours of in-depth interviewing, we examine how her trans identity is built in interaction with other trans women in the context of street-based sex work and, crucially, in relation to the management of violence. Our argument is that Carolina's gender identity and sexual embodiment is linked to the capacity to anticipate and control violence. This link between gender and violence brings to the fore that, in the case of Carolina, gender becomes body and identity by reference to 'codes of the street' in a life trajectory shaped by street survival through sex work. Ultimately, the constitutive link with violence proves to be the reason behind Carolina's self-definition as a chica trans and her reluctance to call herself woman

Our paper offers an alternative to abstract concepts of violence, which moves beyond gender as category or as categorization towards a concept of gender as a tool that allows people to navigate different situations in ways that make sense to them.

Sociology of Education - Room 3.204

Manufacturing Ignorance through School Segregation: Ascriptive Hierarchies and Private Schooling in Urban India

Vishal Vasanthakumar

(University of Cambridge)

This paper examines how elite private schools in Chennai, South India, become key sites for the institutional production of privilege and ignorance around caste; India's hereditary system of social stratification. It explores how Brahmins, a historically privileged minority caste group, leverage private schooling to sustain group advantage through everyday institutional practices and selective ignorance of ongoing hierarchies.

Drawing on nine months of ethnographic fieldwork and sixty-six interviews in three private schools in Mylapore, a Brahmin-dominated neighbourhood, this study reveals how caste privilege operates within educational institutions.

These schools, following the prestigious Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum, are predominantly attended and managed by Brahmins and are embedded with caste-coded cultural markers. Meanwhile, adjacent schools serving marginalised caste groups follow local government curricula and are caste-diverse spaces. Despite being run by the same educational trust and sharing land parcels, these institutions are physically separated by high walls and barbed wire, creating distinct social worlds.

The study demonstrates how caste-coded practices, spatial layouts, and symbolic boundaries render segregation natural while enabling privileged groups to claim "castelessness." This segregation represents a deliberate institutional process intertwined with the structured production of ignorance. Privileged-caste subjectivity is nurtured through homogeneous socialisation, maintained by institutional structures favouring dominant groups, and legitimised through an "epistemology of ignorance" that obscures systemic advantage.

By foregrounding institutional mechanisms of privilege reproduction, this research contributes to global discussions on educational inequality, ascriptive hierarchies, and how private schools manufacture both dominance and ignorance to structural disadvantage.

Hidden Curriculum and Reproduction of Caste Inequalities

Abhishek Bhagat

(University of Glasgow)

The Indian social order is defined by the hierarchical realities of castes that shapes the routine socio-economic relationships, identities and practices. Schools being an inherent part of this socio-cultural system, plays a significant role in reproduction of castes inequalities. Using a theoretical lens of hidden curriculum, this study engages and analyzes the activities and practices through caste inequalities

reproduce and reinforce in the school. To explore the phenomenon, an ethnographic case study approach is adopted. In-depth interviews were conducted among ten teachers and twenty students from higher secondary level. The data reveals three hidden curricular practices; silencing, stigmatization and disciplining the students, through caste norms, beliefs and knowledge is being reproduced in the school. The dominant caste Hindu school culture and practices create a sense of fear that led to maintained pedagogic silence over castes issues. Pedagogic silence is also a coping mechanism and strategy used to avoid engaging with conflicting issues of castes. Simultaneously, student's agency is controlled and subjugated through stigmatize practices of castes and disciplining. I illustrated the hidden curriculum of caste while promoting the dominant castes Hindu beliefs, practices and knowledge that stems from the Brahmanical theology, indirectly and subtly suppresses the radical manifestation of subaltern castes beliefs, sentiments and perspectives. The study highlights school's failures of effectively engaging with conflicting issues of castes while tacitly encouraging dominant castes Hindu sentiments, beliefs and practices help maintain the status quo and perpetuates existing castes inequalities.

The Autonomy of the Social Sphere? Limits and Transformative Potential of New Popular Education Practices in Italy

Fiorenzo Parziale, Luca Alteri

(Sapienza-University of Rome)

Practices such as rescuing refugees in the Mediterranean or the recent organisation of the Global Sumud Flotilla suggest a form of “social sphere autonomy” from the political-economic system. Following Lockwood's distinction (1964), it appears that the sphere of social integration—strained by the economic and relational fractures generated by neoliberalism (Harvey 2005, 2021)—is seeking a degree of independence from systemic integration.

These global acts of solidarity are complemented by more localized forms of social mutualism. To investigate the nature and reality of this process of “social sphere autonomy,” the paper focuses on a practice increasingly adopted by new political movements (Della Porta 2020), particularly in Southern Europe (Mayo 2025): popular education (Steele 2007, 2020; Regmi 2016).

The paper presents findings from a five-year ethnographic study that began with popular schools in Rome and is now expanding to similar experiences across Italy (Parziale 2024). It examines how activists address the racialisation experienced by working-class and migrant-background students (Hall 1996; Curcio 2011) and, more broadly, the potential of contemporary popular education in Italy to enact counter-hegemonic practices against neoliberal ideology and regulation.

By adopting the theoretical framework of British Cultural Studies (Williams 1958, 1962; Hall et al. 1978; Hall 1986, 1988) and its postcolonial extensions (Hall 1990; Mellino 2006), the paper aims to highlight both the limits of this emerging form of political practice (Alteri 2014; Alteri et al. 2016) and its emancipatory potential, understood in terms of concrete utopias (Wright 2020) and prefigurative politics (Cooper 2016).

Theory - Room 4.205

Tracing a Sociological Inheritance: Gökalp, Social Imagination, and the Politics of Unity in Turkey

Mert Demir

(Istanbul Beykent University)

In this study, I discuss the impact of Ziya Gökalp, the founder of Turkish sociology, who applied Emile Durkheim's ideas to the national context. Reinterpreting Durkheim's notions of solidarity and collective conscience, Gökalp influenced the vision of early Republican modernization, in which the nation was imagined as a cultural and moral entity. This vision, emphasizing solidarity and consensus, marginalized alternative views while shaping the state-led transformation. Despite a century of dramatic ideological changes, the traces of this vision continue to frame the country's sociopolitical discourse. The clearest manifestation of this is the frequent use of metaphors such as “we are one family” and “one nation, one flag, one homeland” by today's political elites. I argue that such rhetorical devices function as

mechanisms of ideological consent, aiming to present society as a single, indivisible whole. In this sense, my central aim is to demonstrate how a sociological idea transcends the boundaries of its discipline to permeate political life and continues to construct collective imagination, offering insights into the global question of how classical sociological ideas shape contemporary politics. I adopt a genealogical approach combining the historical development of the fundamental sociological ideas articulated in Gökalp's works with conceptual history. First, I illustrate what Gökalp inherited from Durkheim and how this legacy was transformed, then explore how this vision resonates in current political discourse. It is expected that the study contributes to interdisciplinary discussions by revealing the function of this enduring sociological legacy in modern ideological practices.

What Does It Mean to 'Believe' in a Cause? Exploring Activism and Movement Formation through a Post-structuralist Concept of Socio-Political 'Faith'

Oscar Horton Chandler

(Newcastle University)

This paper explores the theoretical and methodological value of a concept of 'socio-political faith'.

My doctoral research looks at the Corbyn 'era' of the Labour Party. In a series of interviews, I asked people with a stake in this moment to tell the story of their involvement. Working through the lens of utopian social theory, my interest has been in how a moment which captured the political imaginations of so many, created space for the genuine, albeit tentative, imagining of things 'otherwise'. This paper sets out an idea which has become key in my developing understanding of this moment and its social dynamics.

Following the postmodern turn, 'faith' has become a curiously maligned phenomenon. From a normative 'poststructuralist' perspective, rightly critical of absolutes, it is easily dismissed as evidentiary of naivety and a lack of criticality. In my research, however, I encountered a kind of 'faith' which is more self-conscious than this narrow understanding allows for - one that is fragile, contingent, and yet still, ultimately, hopeful.

On this basis, this paper calls for a more nuanced understanding of socio-political faith. Drawing on the interviews conducted, along with ideas from Deleuze, Ahmed, and Dewey, it explores the ways in which people do, in practice, form emotional attachments with ideas, movements, and possible futures, while maintaining an awareness of their contingent nature. These social processes, it is posited, may be key to the operationalisation of hopeful visions of the future, in ways that can remain open-ended, deliberative, and democratic.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.212

Global Fads and Fashions: The Puzzle of Semi-Peripheral Upgrading

Alexander Hoppe

(WZB Berlin Social Science Center)

Since the beginning of the knowledge economy in the 1960s, scholars have argued that while low-technology and labor-intensive tasks can be offshored, this possibility does not extend to high-value or culturally expressive services. Fashion design is a popular example across the social sciences. The work of design is believed to depend on tacit knowledge that is locally and institutionally "sticky." A recent stream of case studies, meanwhile challenges conventional theorizing by documenting original design manufacturing from suppliers in Turkey, China, India, and Bangladesh. How this is possible remains poorly understood. I propose interaction ritual chains as a mechanism which enables the offshoring of design. With ethnographic data from first-tier suppliers in India who design for over 100 U.S. and European brands, I show how designers in semi-peripheral locations anticipate and moderate buyer tastes months ahead of market impact. Co-presence, a mutual focus of attention, and emotions like boredom or excitement play key roles in the global production of fads and fashions. Situational collaborations extend far back into the process of trend creation, at once rivaling the thickest

descriptions of localized exchange and connecting the cultural capital of Indian designers to global value chains.

From Credit to Coercion: Financialisation, SHGs, and Local Politics in Rural India

Genevieve England

(University of Zürich)

Drawing on over ten months of fieldwork in three hamlets in Erode district, Tamil Nadu, this paper examines how Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become key sites where financialisation intersects with state welfare and local patronage. In India, the institutionalisation of microcredit has taken place largely through SHGs, now numbering over nine million and central to rural governance. Targeting marginalised women and expanding access to credit, SHGs have been integrated into nationalised banks and microfinance institutions since the mid-2000s, with support from the World Bank and UNDP. They thus embody a state–market nexus at the heart of neoliberal development.

The paper argues that while SHGs have opened new channels for women’s political engagement, they have also entrenched patronage and inequality. Access to welfare schemes such as the Midday Meal Programme and Anganwadi childcare centres, on which scheduled caste (SC) women depend, is increasingly mediated by SHG leaders, producing uneven benefits. At the same time, SHGs channel larger loans for a landless female workforce tied to the fast-fashion industry. With few assets and facing caste stigma, women rely on their SHG’s credit rating and the leader’s signature to secure loans. Membership thus becomes essential for livelihoods yet conditional on political compliance, such as voting for local councillors described as “puppets” of Gounder landowners.

Rather than enabling empowerment, SHGs entrench debt, dependency, and exclusion. For SC women, participation remains shaped by caste, gender violence, and insecure work. The paper shows how SHGs, celebrated as empowering, reproduce patronage politics and contradictions of neoliberal development.

Challenges in Addressing Customer Sexual Harassment of Frontline Service Workers in Scotland’s Tourism and Hospitality Sector

Paul Prescott

(University of Strathclyde)

Customer sexual harassment (CSH) of frontline service workers in the tourism and hospitality industry is a widespread and persistent issue (Dawson et al., 2021). This problem is often viewed as part of the job (Hadjisolomou et al., 2023), and despite the increasing awareness, particularly post-pandemic, little has changed to protect workers, especially women (Beltramini et al., 2020). CSH prospers in hospitality services due to ingrained idiosyncrasies of hospitality service provision and service effort, with the nature of hospitality service fostering close involvement with customers (Folgero and Fjeldstad 1995; Poulston, 2008). The customer-centric nature of service work, however, creates unequal power and gender dynamics, which normalise undesirable and distressing sexualised experiences, particularly for women in the sector (Matulewicz, 2016). Alarmingly, research underscores the gendered challenges women face within their roles suggesting that they are more likely to experience CSH (Bragason, 2016; Gibbs et al., (2021). Despite the widespread nature of the problem, surprisingly little research has examined the role of hospitality management in supporting women who have experienced CSH.

This paper, therefore, drawing on 44 semi-structured interviews, considers how women in frontline service work experience CSH in Scottish hospitality industry and how management reacts to this phenomenon. Findings indicate that individuals, both frontline workers and line-managers, view CSH through their personal interpretive prism which forms decision making on reporting, handling, and addressing CSH. Furthermore, real-time decision making, and sovereignty of customers are commonplace pressures that effect line-manager judgement in dealing with the phenomenon, offering limited support to survivors.

Men's Violence, Abuse and Exploitation of Women's Paid and Unpaid Work: Gender Regimes and the Continuums between Everyday and Rarer Harms

Sundari Anitha, Iwona Zielinska, Michael Rasell, Ros Kane
(University of Sheffield)

This presentation draws upon life history interviews with 28 Polish women in the UK to understand the continuums in their experiences of violence, abuse and exploitation by their intimate partners in the realms of their productive and reproductive labour. We explore the ways in which violence and coercion are deployed by perpetrators to control women's paid work and to appropriate the benefits from this work. In relation to women's unpaid work, we explore the strategies deployed by men to impose an intensified labour regime, to control the conditions within which women undertake reproductive labour, to minimise the economic value of this labour to the household and to deny women the just rewards for their labour in the form of their entitlement to the family's resources. We take stock of the limitations of prevailing characterisations of this problem in the scholarship on domestic abuse as well as its elision within sociological research on work where the focus remains on gendered distribution of domestic work between couples whose relationships are deemed as normative (not abusive) or on trafficking and exploitation in relation to domestic workers. There is scant analysis of the commonalities between abuse and exploitation in relation to women's paid and unpaid work within relationships and the ways in which everyday gender regimes shape the nature of this abuse and exploitation while invisibilising it.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.213

Not Tough Enough? When Surgical Drop-outs Keep the System Going

Alexandra Pfisterer, Insa Kriwall

(Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen Nuremberg; Leibniz University Hannover)

Despite a growing physician shortage, little is done to address the conditions driving doctors in Germany out of surgery—because quitting ultimately serves the system. Particularly female, but also male physicians cite exploitative environments and dysfunctional hierarchies as reasons for leaving. Our observations show that additionally, complaint structures are largely cosmetic, discouraging formal action and stabilising existing hierarchies.

Drawing on Luhmann's theory of organisational solutions and reference problems (1999 [1964]), Acker's concept of gendered organisations (1990), and Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity (1999 [2015]), we analyse how career exits are framed as individual "self-elimination". Quitting is either narrated as empowerment or failure (Friedman & Laurison, 2019), despite functioning as a system-stabilising condition. Structural discrimination is personalised, compassionate labour devalued and competitive orientations rewarded, sustaining the façade of meritocracy (Nelson et al., 2023; Garcia, 2022).

Our qualitative study combines 39 semi-structured interviews with physicians at different career stages and 20 hours of participant observation in a surgical department. The data were systematically coded and analysed using a theory-guided category system.

Discussing hospitals as 'successfully failing organisations' (Seibel, 1991) reveals why (gender) inequality persists despite equality policies: attrition turns out to be not merely tolerated but useful to hegemonic masculine surgeons thriving in these institutional settings. Our work demonstrates that physician exits – which the public discusses as regrettable losses – are key mechanisms through which organisations reproduce hierarchies and circumvent structural change.

The Work Ethic in Europe: Overcoming Measurement Challenges to Track Change across 18 Countries (1999–2017)

Raphael Piters

(Sorbonne University)

Is European society experiencing a crisis in its relationship to work? This question gained renewed attention after the Covid-19 pandemic, notably through media debates on the “Great Resignation” in the United States, often portrayed as evidence of a broad rejection of wage labor. Yet concerns about a declining “work ethic” are not new: they have circulated for decades, raising the question of whether such claims reflect genuine social transformations or recurring narratives. Furthermore, long-term analysis of work ethic in Europe remains limited.

This paper examines the evolution of Europeans’ work ethic between 1999 and 2017 across 18 countries, using data from the European Values Study. Beyond documenting long-term trends, we assess whether the survey items used to capture work ethic remain comparable over time and across countries. Recent research shows that such assumptions of comparability are often taken for granted; to avoid this pitfall, we test the stability of the underlying measurement model through a series of multi-group confirmatory factor analyses (MG-CFA), followed by advanced tests of measurement comparability across countries and time.

Results indicate that, while perfect comparability across countries is not achieved, the measures are generally stable within national contexts, allowing reliable diachronic analysis. Overall, work ethic in Europe appears remarkably stable, challenging recurrent claims of its erosion. These findings contribute both methodologically – by illustrating rigorous approaches to cross-national measurement – and substantively, by challenging narratives of declining work commitment and highlighting cultural continuity in European labor contexts.

PAPER SESSION 6

14:00-15:30

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BSA Publications Special Activity - Room 1.218

From PhD Thesis to Monograph: A Workshop for PhD Students and Early Career Scholars

Caroline Oliver, Shuang Qiu, Louise Ryan

(University College London, University of Leeds, London Metropolitan University)

This workshop is intended to give guidance and support to early career scholars who are considering writing a monograph based on their PhD thesis. It will be led by three of the editors of the BSA/Routledge Sociological Futures book series, drawing on their experiences as editors and authors.

In the workshop, we will cover: the differences between a thesis and a monograph; the merits of a monograph as opposed to other outputs; how to go about selecting a publisher; the processes of submitting a proposal; and tips for 'converting' the thesis into a monograph.

The workshop will have opportunities for attendees to ask questions and discuss their own nascent publication plans.

Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 3.211

Housing as Migration Infrastructure: International Students and the Scottish Housing Crisis

Benjamin Mulvey, Marta Moskal

(University of Glasgow)

This paper uses the concept of migration infrastructures to examine how housing shapes the experiences of internationally mobile students in the UK. Migration infrastructures are the systems and processes that sustain mobility, comprising commercial, regulatory, technological, non-governmental, and social dimensions. While much of the scholarship taking this perspective has focused on labour migration, this study applies the framework to international higher education students. The analysis draws on mixed-methods data from a survey of 363 international students and 43 in-depth interviews conducted in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The survey captured demographic and financial information, while the interviews explored housing searches and everyday living experiences. Findings highlight how housing infrastructures—including landlords, university housing services, national policies, and migrant networks—mediate access to accommodation in ways that often generate precarity. Less affluent students are disproportionately exposed to discrimination, exploitative practices, and exclusion, while wealthier peers are able to access purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). This has led to the emergence of a two-tier housing system, in which market logics intersect with weak regulation and limited university provision. The paper concludes that housing must be recognised as a central migration infrastructure shaping international student mobility. Universities and governments need to confront their reliance on private markets and assume greater responsibility for providing affordable, secure accommodation. Without such intervention, students' housing insecurity will persist, entrenching broader inequalities in both the higher education and housing systems.

Between Home and Non-home: Approaching Home through the Lens of Ambivalence

Anna Pechurina

(Karlstad University)

In social research of recent years, the concept of home has become an effective route for critically approaching a variety of issues related to identities, belonging, everyday life, mobility, and migration. Academic literature highlights the complexity of home's meaning and its changeable, transformative and relational nature. Home is a multidimensional and multisensory space where the relationships between material, affective, and sensory dimensions are in constant interplay, characterised by complexity, fluidity and change.

To define home as complex also means recognising its challenging, or 'darker' aspects. The ability to experience home as secure and comfortable, the qualities that are considered important aspects of

feeling at home, are embedded within broader structural inequalities and intersectional power relations. Pandemic related lockdowns, temporary housing due to migration or precariousness are some of the examples when domestic spaces and their material and sensory environments are not necessarily continuous sources of security and comfort but can indicate trauma, estrangement and at times hostility.

This presentation will reflect on how sociological thinking can recognise challenging, or 'darker', aspects of home by approaching it through the lens of ambivalence, where the 'homely' and 'unhomely' aspects are simultaneously present rather than considered as opposites. By drawing on literature in migration studies, critical geographies, and mobilities, the paper will seek to shift focus further away from 'idealised versions of home' (Brickell 2012: 228) to open the way for a more nuanced and critical understanding of home that recognises more diverse and complex modes of dwelling places and spaces.

SECRET LOCATION: Unlicensed Music Venues and the Challenge to Claim Urban Space

Krzysztof Jankowski

(Independent Scholar)

Urban space in Hong Kong is at a premium, and nowhere is this more obvious than in live music venues. Music venues are expensive businesses to operate, need to be in particular locations where noise is allowed, and have limited revenue generation potential. This has led many passionate fans to operate unlicensed music venues in Hong Kong's warehouse buildings. These exist in a grey-area that is not strictly legal nor illegal meaning they need to operate in a secret or hidden nature. They have no or limited signage, limit their advertising, and operate through social media instant messaging. Their scale is not small: there are at least five currently operating regular performances with local and international acts. They serve all kinds of music, from techno raves, intimate jazz sessions, and lively heavy metal. While these venues are an invaluable lifeline for the various music scenes they serve, their hidden nature make it difficult for their operators to promote new musical genres, get new fans and build communities. Hong Kong has no shortage of stadia and indoor arenas, but is severely lacking in the smaller breed of venue where famous music icons are born. Unlicensed music venues illuminate on the challenge for finding urban space to conduct cultural and self-enrichment activities in the world's densest city.

This seminar contributes to discussions of the right to the city and networks of cultural and legalistic flows through legal, grey, and illegal spaces.

Culture, Media, Sport & Food 1 - Room 2.219

Risk, Harm, and Belonging: Gambling and Community in Grassroots Football

Blair Biggar

(University of Glasgow)

This paper presents emerging findings from an ethnographic study of a grassroots community football club in the West of Scotland. Such clubs are deeply embedded in their local communities and engage populations who are at heightened risk of gambling harm, which encompasses a spectrum of problems including debt, relationship breakdown, housing insecurity, and in severe cases suicidality. These harms are compounded by stigma and shame, which act as barriers to seeking support.

Sociological research on football has predominantly examined the professional game, focusing on sponsorship, media, and commercial arrangements in normalising harmful commodities such as gambling and alcohol. This work has also shown how working-class communities are disproportionately targeted by advertising and simultaneously excluded from professional football through rising costs. Less is known about how these dynamics play out at grassroots level, or how community football functions as a site where risk, harm, and belonging are lived and negotiated.

The paper explores how grassroots clubs operate as spaces of community and solidarity, and how classed and gendered norms, particularly those surrounding masculinity, are shaped in a grassroots

football club. It also examines the role of gambling, alongside alcohol and drug use, in everyday practices of risk taking, and the social meanings attached to these practices in this context.

Drawing on participant observation and interviews with club members and staff conducted from January 2026, the paper contributes to debates on identity, community, and sport and highlights grassroots football as a potential site for interventions that challenge stigma, foster solidarity and support.

The Impact of Sideline Behaviour on Youth Players Enjoyment in Football

Jean-Alexandria Goulding

(Canterbury Christ Church University)

This postgraduate study is in the early stages of the project, investigating sideline behaviour in football and its impact on youth players' enjoyment and long-term participation in physical activity. Using ethnographic methods, this three-year study will observe sideline behaviours in youth football games. Following this, focus groups will be conducted with players, parents, and FA youth council members (separately), and then interviews will be conducted with coaches and officials. This approach aims to gather a breadth of data across all participants in the sport and gain an understanding of their perspectives on what is currently happening and how they would like it to change. The data will be analysed and synthesised using dramaturgical theory, symbolic interaction theory and social interaction theory. Of particular interest are front and backstage interactions, how (football) society maintains an equilibrium by using communication and words, which are socially sanctioned, as well as the use of symbols and colours to communicate. Also being investigated is why certain behaviours in sport, and in particular football, are allowed to be shown, year after year, generation after generation? At this early stage, the researcher is currently grappling with the researcher's positionality, which will also be investigated. When should the researcher sit back and observe, and when should they intervene to safeguard the youth athletes?

The Rules of the Game: Informal Schooling through Immersion in Working-class Football Culture

Gary Poynton

(Birmingham City University)

Social class and football have been interlinked since the genesis of the game, from the folk footballs which predate the codification of the sport (Giulianotti, 2000:2) to the public schools instrumental in forming the world's first football association in the 19th century (Birley, 1993). I posit that this close relationship between football and social class has fostered the creation of a similarly close relationship between the sport and its fans, people whose identities are interwoven with the colours and traditions of the clubs they follow. My work explores this relationship between football and its working-class fans, and whether fans are participating in communal informal learning practices as a direct result of their fandom and the challenges that arise through these interactions. Data generated using walking interviews (Evans and Jones, 2011) accounts for the experiential and cultural cues arising from interaction with specific places. Using a novel temporal-spatial framework, my thesis analyses the narratives of working-class football fans in Wolverhampton, exploring the learning experiences of their fandom through educational models such as Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System (1979), Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978) and Illich's Learning Webs (1995). I build upon this co-construction of knowledge in conjunction with Freirian teachings to understand and build upon the pre-established canon of football literature, with a focus towards the learning benefits conferred through immersion in the culture, as well as the promotion of marginalised working-class voices in academia. This will be a complete presentation of my PhD findings and conclusions.

Culture, Media, Sport & Food 2 - Room 3.210

Encoding Resistance: Rap Culture, Police Brutality, and Black Identity in Quebec City

Atsena Abogo

(University of Canada West)

This article investigates how rap culture in Quebec City mediates the intersections of race, identity, and state power, with particular attention to Black youth's encounters with policing. Focusing on the rapper Webster and his collective Limoilou Starz, I analyze three of their songs (*Mauvaises fréquentations*, *Sortir de la rue* and *SPVQ*) through a dual methodological strategy that combines close content analysis with 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork. Content analysis illuminates the narrative, figurative, semantic, and ideological dimensions of Webster, GLD and Shoddy's lyrics, while ethnography—encompassing participant observation, interviews, workshops, and media engagements—traces how these cultural texts circulate and are taken up in everyday practices. This mixed-methods approach reveals how global traditions of socio-political rap are localized to articulate systemic inequalities in Quebec, where interculturalism is promoted rhetorically but enacted in ways that reinforce exclusion. The findings demonstrate how rap functions simultaneously as testimony, critique, and civic intervention, translating cultural expression into activism, pedagogy, and public debate. By integrating textual analysis with ethnographic observation, the study contributes methodologically to cultural sociology and substantively to debates on race, policing, and identity, highlighting the capacity of popular culture to expose and contest structural discrimination in North America.

Audience Reception among Young Men in the Brosphere

Heather Albanesi

(University of Colorado Colorado Springs)

Over the last decade, the manosphere has become a significant research area exploring online masculinist communities and the spread of misogynous discourses across digital platforms. In terms of scope, most of this research attention has focused on the more extreme examples of these online communities (e.g. incel, redpill, pickup artist, men going their own way) and podcasters/influencers (e.g. Andrew Tate, Nick Fuentes).

Some scholars, like Richard Reeves, have suggested that in overlapping proximity to the manosphere (or misogynosphere) there is a more moderate "brosphere." This proposed space shares the target young male audience with the manosphere, but is not as specifically misogynistic. This study explores the experience of young men who are engaged with digital platforms in this brosphere space. Methodologically, the vast majority of extant manosphere research has employed either content/textual analysis on produced online content (e.g. podcasts), social media (Twitter X, TikTok) and online posts in manosphere communities (e.g. reddit, discord) or social network analysis. This study instead adopts an audience-reception approach based on in-depth interviews with 30 young U.S. men (age 18-23). The first research question explores the narratives that young men report taking away from their engagement with the brosphere: what topics do they like, which parts do they ignore (while still watching) or reject, what is the emotional pull of this space, in what ways do they connect it to their identity? The second research question explores the ways these young men demonstrate agency in how they consume digital media in the brosphere.

From Convenience to Platformised Prepared Dishes: Gen Z in China, Timing, and the Moral Economy of Prepared Food

Xuannan Yang, Xueshi Li

(University of Oxford)

This qualitative study investigates how Generation Z in China understands, evaluates, and uses prepared dishes (预制菜) within the constraints of time-space coordination and evolving moral norms. Building on Warde's (1999) argument that convenience food responds less to absolute time scarcity than to problems of timing and co-presence, and Halkier's (2016) call to study convenience as practice

rather than product, we explore how platform infrastructures (Meituan, Ele.me), instant retail (Hema, Dingdong), and domestic device ecologies (microwaves, air fryers) act as “externalised pantries” enabling hypermodern time-shifting.

Our framework situates Gen Z’s prepared-dish practices in China’s platformised foodscape and small-kitchen environments, mapping moral ambivalence across contexts - self-eating, peer sharing, hosting elders, workplace dining - and examining how ideals of care, authenticity, thrift, and safety intersect with industrial food normalisation. Empirically, we ask: How do Gen Z define and classify prepared dishes? Which temporal mismatches and co-presence failures drive their use? What moral repertoires are deployed in different social settings?

Methods combine focus groups (to elicit shared discourses), in-depth interviews (to uncover biographies and situational reasoning), and ethnographic observation (to capture infrastructures, schedules, and meal preparation flows) with participants aged 18–28 in varied living arrangements and platform-use intensities.

Findings will deepen theoretical understandings of modern vs hypermodern convenience, inform dining policy and brand communication strategies, and contribute to debates on the moral economy of food in digitally mediated, time-fragmented urban China.

Environment & Society - Room 4.214

Billionaires’ Engagement with Climate Change: Patterns, Narratives, and Implications for Climate Politics

Emma Somos

(University of Oxford)

The role of economic elites in shaping responses to climate change raises urgent questions for sociology about power, inequality, and the organisation of environmental futures. While billionaires have become increasingly visible in philanthropy, investment, and public discourse, their influence remains under-examined compared with the attention given to states, corporations, and grassroots movements. This paper investigates how billionaires engage with climate change as both a political problem and their opportunity to consolidate symbolic authority.

We develop a novel data collection method using large language models (LLMs) as structured research assistants. Drawing on Forbes billionaire lists, we design a questionnaire of ~25 items (e.g., public statements, investments, philanthropy, lobbying, lifestyle) and task GPT to retrieve and classify evidence of engagements for each billionaire. For every response, the model provides a categorical yes/no/unsure judgement, justification, and source link, enabling the construction of a systematic dataset on elite climate engagement we validate. While initial data collection has focused on the world’s 150 richest individuals, the project aims to cover all ~2,700 billionaires, demonstrating the feasibility and the limitations of using LLMs to interrogate elites’ influence on climate change.

Our analysis shows how billionaires use their economic, social, and political power to shape climate action across five domains adopting Nielsen et al.’s conceptual framework (2021). Bringing together the sociology of elites with environmental sociology, the paper contributes to debates about how social stratification intersects with the ecological crisis, highlighting the importance of interrogating who has the power and how, to define and limit climate futures.

Exploring Eco-Islamophobia in East London Mosque Communities

Ozge Onay

(University of Cambridge)

This paper presents a preliminary exploration of Ecological Islamophobia, a concept I introduce in the forthcoming second edition of *The Handbook of Islamophobia* (Routledge), which examines how ecological harm intersects with Islamophobia that in turn disproportionately affects Muslim communities. Framing the discussion through racial capitalism, I highlight how urban planning, industrial

development, and environmental regulation operate to concentrate ecological hazards in minority and low-income areas, extracting value from some communities while exposing others to harm—even as the city pursues ambitious zero-net ambitions. This paper investigates how such dynamics shape the lived experiences of worshippers at Abbey Mills Mosque (Stratford) and Poplar Shahjalal Masjid (Tower Hamlets). Entrenched segregation, zoning policies that privilege affluent, predominantly white neighbourhoods, and businesses following the ‘paths of least resistance’ result in toxic facilities, traffic congestion, and industrial pollution being disproportionately sited in these Muslim-majority areas. Residents therefore confront a compounded burden: ecological hazards layered on top of systemic racial, class, and religious marginalisation.

Temples and Transformations: (Re-)Constructing the Sacred at the Gangasagar Pilgrimage in the Indian Sundarbans

Sohini Chakraborty

(Indian Institute of Technology Delhi)

Gangasagar is a major Hindu pilgrimage site in the estuary of the River Hooghly (Ganga) and hosts the second-largest annual gathering of Hindu pilgrims in India after the Kumbh. This paper examines the Gangasagar temple complex as a contested sacred geography. Based on year-long ethnographic fieldwork, visual documentation, and archival research, it focuses on the seventh iteration of the temple, following the submergence of earlier structures by rising waters. The paper highlights the layered meanings and negotiations surrounding the pilgrimage site, which is conventionally framed around the confluence of the River Ganga with the Bay of Bengal and the ascetic figure of Kapil Muni. It shows how new iconographic inclusions in the present temple reflect a Sanskritisation of cult worship traditions. These shifts are interpreted not merely as religious transformations but as strategic responses to environmental and everyday precarities. The rearticulation of sacred narratives and the incorporation of pan-Hindu symbols serve to both broaden the pilgrim base and assert identity through ritual continuity amid ecological instability in the Anthropocene, infrastructural marginalisation, and shifting state recognition. Analysing Gangasagar at the intersection between institutionalised and imagined tirtha, this paper contributes to broader debates on sacred place-making, the politics of religious representation, and vernacular negotiations of centre-periphery dynamics. It calls for a rethinking of pilgrimage sites not as static nodes of belief but as adaptive terrains where sacredness is constantly reinscribed.

Under the Canopy of Conservation: Green Grabs, Patriarchy, and the Erasure of Tribal Women in India

Titas Dutta

(Michigan State University)

This research investigates the gendered consequences of conservation in India, focusing on reduced access to natural resources disproportionately impacts marginalized tribal communities—especially tribal women. Grounded in the frameworks of environmental justice and intersectionality, the study critically examines access, use, and control over forest resources, situating tribal women’s experiences within broader structural inequalities of caste, class, and patriarchal power relations, thereby highlighting the complex layers of marginalization they face.

As the climate crisis intensifies, conservation efforts in biodiversity-rich regions like India have gained urgency. However, these interventions—often involving displacement, relocation, or restrictions on forest use—frequently ignore the social, cultural, and gendered costs of conservation. A key concern is the continued reliance on fortress conservation models, which aim to protect nature by excluding local communities, thereby criminalizing indigenous land use and severing people from ancestral territories. Tribal women face compounded vulnerabilities in these settings, navigating both ecological exclusion and entrenched patriarchal norms.

While literature on land dispossession and forest governance in India is expanding, there remains a critical gap in understanding the gender-specific effects of conservation-induced displacement, particularly within protected areas (PAs). This research addresses that gap through an analysis of relocation processes, pre- and post-displacement conditions, and the sustainability of current conservation practices.

By centering tribal women's voices and lived realities, this study challenges dominant conservation discourses and calls for more inclusive and just environmental governance. It argues for a reimagining of conservation that recognizes indigenous knowledge systems, respects community autonomy, and integrates gender justice as a foundational principle.

Families & Relationships 1 - Room 4.204

Power Stories: Narrative Tensions, Maternal Mental Health and Child Removal

Siobhan Beckwith

(University of Huddersfield)

Removal of children places mothers at the intersection of child protection, family law and, for many, mental health systems. Caught in a web of professionals from different disciplines, their intimate lives are subject to intense scrutiny. Their losses are both personal and social. Being stripped of everyday mothering and identities is compounded by the stigma of failed or inadequate motherhood and being excessively 'responsibilised'. Amid contemporary anti-stigma campaigns and encouragement for us all to talk about mental health more, empathy is not afforded equally to everyone. Mothers involved in this study were clear that the adversarial and conditional operation of power between themselves, multi-agency professionals and systems isolated them and made their mental health worse.

These mothers tend to live in poor communities, face multiple disadvantages such as poor mental health, adverse childhood experiences, substance misuse and domestic abuse. This paper is based on doctoral research which suggests mothers become 'collateral' and that they and their distress were 'collateralised' or offset in the systems which seek to protect their children. It attends to the tensions between dominant narratives around individual pathology and family history, social backgrounds and the political times we all live in.

This study contributes relational understandings of distress and power for mothers subject to child removal. This paper will explore the potential of telling new stories about mothers, mental health and families under the gaze of the state while advocating for further co-creation of knowledge with mothers subjected to child removal.

Queer Family Migration in the Political Now: Comparative and Community Organization Perspectives from Italy, Turkey and the UK

Francesca Stella, Erdem Avsar, Maria Izzo

(University of Glasgow)

This paper explores the neglected intersection between queer and family migration, drawing on 17 interviews with LGBTQIA+ and migrant community organizations and immigration lawyers across the UK, Italy, and Turkey. Queer family migration remains under researched in the literature, as family migration scholarship generally focuses on heterosexual kinship while queer migration literature is typically centered on individual queer mobilities. Comparative and community perspectives are largely absent from the not extensive literature on queer family migration, which has so far privileged Global North destination countries and focused mainly on couples, neglecting other experiences of queer kinship.

This paper is based on a comparative research project that explored queer family migration to and from three European countries with very different legal landscapes around LGBTQIA+ rights and migration policies: the UK, Italy and Turkey. It generated novel empirical and conceptual insights on the (mis)recognition of queer family rights and the (in)visibility of queer migrant families in three very different socio-legal contexts. It explicitly aimed to produce knowledge that can strengthen intersectional solidarities and improve awareness of and support for queer migrant families.

At a time of global backlash against human rights, when traditional gender roles and the nuclear family are increasingly mobilized against queer and migrant communities, the paper asks how global dynamics impact grassroots organizing, funding landscapes and support available for queer families navigating

immigration regimes. We draw on queer temporality to explore the alternative family formations and to chart unstable national and transnational chronologies of rights expansion and backlash.

The Value of Mothering in Contemporary Urban China

Sanna Eriksson

(University of York)

The Chinese state emphasises in its policy and rhetoric women's 'unique role' in the family as mothers and carers, as it is concerned about declining birth rates and an aging population. Yet mothering and other reproductive work within the 'inner sphere' are valued less than paid employment in the 'outer sphere' in a society that places greater value on financial income. Extant research indicates that many educated women are unwilling to 'sacrifice' for their family and want to (also) engage in paid employment from which they derive their self-worth.

In this paper I ask how educated urban middle-class women understand the value of unpaid reproductive vis-à-vis paid productive labour, how they understand their self-worth, and to what extent neoliberal logic that has penetrated the family affect how women value reproductive labour. The research is based on in-depth interviews with 31 mainland Chinese women born in the 1980s and 1990s. Drawing on social reproduction theory, I argue that career-oriented women mainly derive their self-worth from and see greater meaning in paid employment, whereas women who have been full-time mothers see mothering as valuable and meaningful. Some full-time mothers justified devotion to unpaid care labour through neoliberal logic that treated the family as a corporate unit and the mother as its manager who generates financial and social benefits enabling its members' socioeconomic success. This research thus implies that feminized reproductive labour remains under-valued but can be perceived as valuable when conceptualized in relation to the outer sphere where monetary value is created.

Beyond Capital Accumulation: Ambivalence and the Shifting Scripts of Middle-class Mothering in China

Yifei Sun

(University of Bristol)

Middle-class mothering has been widely discussed, with competence (称职) as a mother often framed as part of the "good mother" narrative in urban China, where intensive mothering and concerted cultivation are also treated as normative parenting practices, similar to their Western counterparts. However, the meaning and standards of good mothering shift across children's developmental stages from childcaring to childrearing, accompanied by changes in the associated scripts of mothering. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 34 post-1980s middle-class mothers in urban China, this study employs the concept of ambivalence to capture these processual shifts. Ambivalence is understood not only as an emotion but also as a socially constructed mental state encompassing challenges, dispositions, helplessness, and anxiety. Focusing on mothers' educational involvement in their children's extracurricular activities (ages 9–14, transition from childhood to adolescence), this research demonstrates that ambivalence is shaped by three interrelated tensions: conflicting old and new mothering scripts (social discourse), unstable expectations of the present and future in relation to mothers' own past experiences (social transformation), and contradictions with cultural ideologies challenged by children's growing self-awareness (cultural mothering ideologies). The study reveals how middle-class mothers negotiate their mothering practices, showing ambivalence as an affective response to broader social discourses, structural pressures, and family interactions. By acknowledging mothers' emotions, this research highlights ambivalence as a critical lens to understand the complexity of middle-class mothering beyond the framework of educational actors pursuing capital accumulation.

Families & Relationships 2 - Room 4.209

Stay-at-Home Fathers in Urban China Revisited: A Longitudinal Study with Wives (2021–2027)

Fei Huang

(University College London)

Stay-at-home fathers (SAHFs)—men who assume primary caregiving roles—have emerged as a non-conforming gender identity in urban China. My PhD research, based on two rounds of interviews over one year with 22 SAHFs, found that although many felt constrained by traditional gender attitudes, they prioritised their wives' and children's well-being over career advancement and continuously reflected on their once taken-for-granted norms of care. Spousal support mediated SAHFs' feelings of ambivalence during the transition into full-time fatherhood and enabled reflexivity that reshaped their understandings of fatherhood, care and family life. Contrary to studies suggesting that increased paternal involvement leaves patrilineal norms primarily intact in China, SAHFs' reflexivity—formed relationally through negotiations over “tradition” and global, regional and local aspirations, and through spousal support—opened up space for more egalitarian notions and practices.

These findings present a strong case for follow-up research: Do the nuances and reflexivity expressed by SAHFs indicate lasting change in gendered power dynamics over time? How have SAHFs and their wives withstood the inevitable changes in emphasis and calls on time that childcare entails? Have these men's perspectives sustained or regressed towards traditional gendered hierarchies in family practices? This paper will demonstrate how interrogating the relationship between reflective and routine actions embodied by SAHFs can advance theoretical debates on the non-linear transformations of gendered power within Chinese marital and caregiving practices. It will do so by synthesising my PhD findings and outlining the trajectory they generate: a relational longitudinal study (2021–2027) with the original 22 participants, now including their wives.

Crazy Dog Moms? Gendering Relational Dynamics, Carework, and Pet Parenting Practices in Multispecies Canadian Homes

Erika Cudworth

(De Montfort University)

With greater attention given to the more-than-human-world, sociologists have begun to consider the importance of interspecies relationalities in homes. Yet, to date the field of family studies has largely overlooked conceptualisations of families as multispecies. This paper contributes to the body of research contesting this anthropocentrism by recognising animal companions as family members implicated within domestic relationships. Drawing on the findings of twenty mobile and placed-based interviews and nine digital/multimedia stories, we explore caregiving in multispecies Canadian homes, with a focus on gendered dynamics and parental parallels within relationships. Our research focused on dog companions, although a small number of cats were included. Gendered dynamics identified in our dataset and artistic work entailed dogs as protectors of women, women driving dog acquisition, women's closer relationships with dogs, and gendered companion animal care labour. Participants adopted parental discourses prominently by self-identifying as mothers or fathers to their dogs, referring to dogs as their babies, discussing divergent parental roles within households, dogs' significance to empty nesters, and dogs as replacement or practice children. Our findings illustrate the ways men and women engage in canine carework differently and unevenly, and display divergent gendered performances of canine companionship. We contribute to growing work at the intersection of family and animal studies which explores multispecies households and care labour, positioning companion animals within kin networks and challenging dominant humancentric research paradigms.

The Complexities of Nighttime Parenting: Negotiating Co-sleeping with Children beyond Infancy

Dana Zarhin

(University of Haifa)

Objective: This article explores how parents perceive and navigate sleeping arrangements involving children beyond infancy.

Background: Previous sociological studies on co-sleeping have focused mainly on couples and infants. Additional empirical research is needed to elucidate the considerations, dynamics, practices, and consequences of parents' sleeping arrangements for children beyond infancy.

Method: Semi-structured interviews (n=62) and focus groups (n=63) were conducted with Israeli parents, purposefully selected to include participants from varied sociodemographic contexts. Data collection and analysis followed the constructivist grounded theory method.

Results: The findings suggest that while most participants regarded co-sleeping with children as a family practice that enhances intimacy, they also harbored concerns about potential adverse effects. Additionally, parents viewed sleeping arrangements as a means of body pedagogics that imparts cultural values and abilities to their children. To navigate competing cultural values and social demands, parents aimed to foster both connection and separation by establishing spatial and temporal boundaries. However, they struggled to enforce these boundaries consistently, especially at night.

Conclusion: Sleeping arrangements beyond infancy serve as a key site of negotiation, reflecting parents' efforts to reconcile neoliberal ideals, cultural values, and the practicalities of everyday family life. This study enriches current conceptualizations of "doing family" by extending the framework to the underexplored domain of intimate bodily practices, and by highlighting the intricate forces that shape family life today and how parents navigate them.

Chinese Parents' Perceptions and Understanding of Gender and Gendered Parenting in a Social Transforming Time

Yabo Zhang

(Beijing Normal University)

Family constitutes the primary site of children's gender socialisation, where both parental practices and family structures shape gender role development. In China, compulsory education, the one-child policy, and rapid socioeconomic transformation have reshaped gender dynamics, influencing parenting, especially among young-generation parents, in subtle ways. Yet little research has explored how young generation parents perceive and understand how to raise a girl/boy. How do they use gender labels, sayings, and everyday discourse (e.g., "raising boys frugally, raising girls richly") to make sense of and construct understandings of their children? Drawing upon interviews with six parents born after 1990, this study reveals that benevolent sexism is more pervasive than hostile sexism among Chinese young parents' perceptions. Parents appeared to show stronger expectations to raise a boy with both caregiving competency and the ability to earn more money than their future spouses. Additionally, even as gender equality has become a dominant parenting discourse, gendered expressions remain deeply ingrained in everyday discourse. For example, parents commonly used subtle phrases such as "You know, he is a boy" or "After all, she's a girl" to justify their children's behaviours. Gender, as the most fundamental label, subtly embedded in such remarks, reveals implicit parental expectations differentiated by gender. They form part of a broader reasoning framework through which parents rationalise their children's behaviours. This study contributes to advancing the understanding of Chinese parents' perceptions and understanding of how to raise a girl/boy under a social transforming time.

Lifecourse - Room 4.213

Beyond Schooling: Non-formal and Informal Political Participation as Educational Experiences

Shuang Yin Cheryl Ng

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Young people's political participation and knowledge has, in the recent years, been a concern for political elites and elected officials. This concern has led to education policies and further research into ways formal spaces such as schools and national elections could encourage young people's engagement (Uberoi and Johnston, 2022). Thus, leading to formal schooling policies implementing curricula targeted at developing young people's knowledge surrounding formal political processes. However, Wood (2017) argues young people are in constant learning about politics that impact their

everyday lives through their life transitions. Wood (2017) states young people are constantly learning through experiences, interactions with one another about the sociopolitical climate surrounding their lives. This research explores how non-formal and informal spaces of political participation presents learning and educative experiences that may present a different perspective to how young people come to understand political and social issues. Through a mix of focus groups and solo interviews, this research attempts to answer, "What do young people learn through their informal and non-formal participation in politics?". In doing so, exploring how the young people craft their own political participation both in and outside of the organisation, what they learn from such interactions, and how their experiences in various spaces beyond the youth council shape their interactions within the youth council.

What Happens Next? The Post-16 Trajectories of Young People Identified as 'At Risk' of Becoming NEET in School

Katherine Davey

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

In the UK, 12.8% of young people aged 16-24 are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET). This means nearly a million young people are not learning or earning. The long-term scarring effects of exclusion from education and employment at this early age are well known. These impact on individual young people, society and the economy. Recent years have, therefore, seen an increase in tools to support early identification of young people who may be at risk of becoming NEET after they leave compulsory schooling. Based on routine collection of school-based data they flag risk factors that enable implementation of targeted interventions before young people fall out of the system. Yet little is currently known about the longer-term impact of these early intervention practices and participant outcomes, nor how they are experienced by young people themselves. Responding to a deficiency of qualitative research, this paper reports on a longitudinal and ethnographic research study funded by the Leverhulme Trust: Mapping Interventions for NEET Young People in England (MINE). Based on sustained engagement over three years with a cohort of 81 young people (aged 14-16) identified as 'at risk' of becoming NEET, this paper reports on the young people's pathways post-intervention. From an idiographic perspective, it compares individual outcomes with how young people themselves evaluate their needs and achievements in the first year of their post-school transitions. This raises key themes of constrained agency in relation to decision-making and highlights the fractured nature of available support within this crucial transition phase.

Sociological Interventions into Suicide Methods: An Embodied Sociology

Ruth Chartoff, Amy Chandler, Georgie Akehurst, Sarah Huque

(University of Edinburgh)

Sociological theories of bodies and embodiment have been little used in studies of suicide. However, suicide is an intimately embodied practice, and methods of suicide vary cross-culturally, and between social groups. A key feature of suicide prevention efforts is 'restriction of access to means'. However, there has been little sociological attention to this issue, nor to the consideration of suicide methods and embodiment more broadly. In this paper, we draw on interview and ethnographic data from a sociologically informed, qualitatively driven study of sociocultural practices and narratives relating to suicide in Scotland, UK (2022-2024). Our analysis concerns talk about methods of suicide among those who were bereaved (n31) by suicide, and those who had attempted suicide (n16). We show how discourses about method 'choice' are problematized by experiential accounts which grapple with conflicting notions of embodied agency and control.

Across our data, participants' accounts emphasized the importance of 'planning' in suicidal practices. However, simultaneously the 'planned' nature of suicidal acts was unsettled. For some interviewees, the body itself was ascribed agency – 'rejecting' a chosen method, and orienting (Ahmed, 2006) a body to an alternative method. We find that suicide method 'choice' does not adhere to discrete notions of agency and the absence of agency; rather, the embodied agentic 'choice' of methods is relational and messy – yet also socially patterned. Our analysis provides critical reflections on the use of means restriction for suicide prevention and suggests the need for more socially and culturally situated prevention approaches.

Chinese Young People, Menstruation and Emerging Menstrual Activism: Embodied Inquiry into Lived Experiences

Sitian Chen

(University College London)

Menstruation is an important experience in young people's lives (Bobel et al., 2020). However, openly discussing menstruation remains taboo. As sexuality-related content is often considered inappropriate for children, young people's voices regarding menstruation are further silenced (Zarafonotis, 2017). The current approach to sex education worldwide reduces menstruating bodies to reproductive systems and reinforces binary thinking by framing menstruation as "a girl's problem" (Fingerson, 2006; Allen, Kaestle, and Goldberg, 2011), ignoring the daily lived experiences of menstruation.

Since the wave of menstrual activism in China began in 2020, dominant discourses about menstruation and female bodies have been challenged (Zhang and Zhang, 2023). Despite the increased visibility of menstrual activism in China, a significant gap remains between young people's experiences of menstruation and the menstruation-related knowledge provided in the country (Hennegan et al., 2019).

This paper highlights the growing issues surrounding menstruation and provides insights from the Chinese context. Drawing on the theory of embodiment (Mason and Boero, 2020), this paper explores Chinese adolescents' experiences and feelings about menstruation and menstrual activism through focus groups, diary-interviews, and zine-making as research methods. This paper shares key findings on Chinese adolescents' experiences, including their confusion and difficulties, experiences of gender-based discrimination related to menstruation, and their resistance to such discrimination. This paper not only challenges gender-essentialist and adult-centric views on menstruation but also introduces alternative research methods to amplify youth voices in sex education.

Medicine, Health & Illness - Room 3.209

Digital interventions for COPD: Risk and Everyday Resistance in Self-management of Chronic Conditions

Karolina Kuberska, Graham Martin, John R. Hurst, Mona Bafadhel

(University of Cambridge)

Self-management is an important part of COPD care, and there are many strategies in place to ensure that patients are supported in their daily efforts. Some of these strategies involve establishing a trusting relationship with the patient, while others rely more on technical interventions, e.g. offering access to educational materials and training. The last decade or so has seen the proliferation of interventions that digitally connect the patient to the healthcare system, e.g. mobile applications, wearable devices and automated telephone/sms reminders, built around helping patients reduce their individual-level susceptibility to population-level risks. Existing research reports on a variety of responses to this kind of "automated hovering" (Asch et al. 2012), from voluntary self-tracking to patients ignoring reminders. This paper examines how people living with COPD respond to automated reminders asking them to check their symptoms for chest infection, to improve management of exacerbations and reduce the risk of hospitalisation. We conceptualise their responses as "everyday resistance", e.g. non-cooperation, ignoring, misremembering, and subtle subversion in the course of self-managing long-term conditions. Although people living with COPD recognise chest infection as a serious risk, they don't centre their lives around checking for these symptoms, even if automatic reminders prompt them to think of their illness. Using the work of Morden et al. (2012) as a departure point, this paper aims to further sociological conceptualisations of risk in the context of chronic illness by examining how people living with COPD construe their understandings of risk through acts of everyday resistance to digital reminders.

Rethinking Blood Collection Regimes: Toward an Extended Typology of State–Civil Society Interaction

Lesley Hustinx

(Ghent University)

Sociologist Kieran Healy's foundational work on blood collection regimes (2000) reframed blood donation as an organizational practice rather than individual act, identifying three dominant models across Europe: state-led regimes, Red Cross monopolies, and disaggregated systems of independent blood banks. While influential, Healy's typology remains analytically limited, particularly in its treatment of public and nonprofit actors as isolated entities. This paper revisits Healy's framework by incorporating more nuanced understandings of state–civil society interactions.

Drawing on theoretical insights from Anheier (2005) and Olafsdottir et al. (2014), I argue that blood collection regimes reflect more complex institutional governance models. In systems with dominant state provision, nonprofit organizations often act as “gap fillers,” addressing unmet needs and advocating for marginalized populations. For example, in the UK, grassroots initiatives like the Imam Hussain Blood Donation Campaign have played a critical role in improving donor diversity within the NHSBT framework (Hashemi, 2022). Red Cross regimes, in contrast, exemplify a highly institutionalised relationship with the state, with little space for other, more grassroots stakeholders. Furthermore, Healy's original model overlooks the influence of regulatory environments, donor policy agendas, and the broader organizational fields in which blood collection agencies operate (Gorleer et al., 2020).

To build an extended analytical typology, I combine a thematic literature review with desktop research on national blood collection agencies. This way, I seek to advance blood collection regime theory by unravelling the institutional complexity of blood donation systems and their differential impact on donor profiles and donation practices.

Methodological Innovations - Room 4.206

Thinking with and from Materials: Making as Research Practice

Tetyana Solovey

(University of Manchester)

My PhD research explores the upcycling of worn clothes through the material and affective turns in social sciences. I conceptualise upcycling as a form of making, drawing on Ingold's (2010, 2012) “textility of making.” Upcycling follows the materiality of garments - working with holes, stains, and wornness – and exemplifies “thinking from materials” (Ingold, 2012: 437).

During my fieldwork, I find myself practicing the very activity I am researching. Therefore, I extend my research methodology to include autoethnography alongside participant observation and interviews. The appearance of this third method is a testament to the very essence of ethnography, as “insights emerge not only from doing research, but from what happens around the edges” (Günel et al., 2023: 212). In my study, making at the edges of my research evolved into something that helped me to better understand the experiences of participants. Furthermore, the approach of “making as a research practice” (Jungnickel, 2018: 494) has proven successful in various clothing-related studies (Cassar 2024; Jungnickel, 2018, 2023; Sampson 2020).

Theoretically, I draw on creative and material methods of sociological research aimed at addressing the material, sensorial, and emotional aspects of social life. In particular, researching with - phenomena, non-human beings, and practices (Coleman, Jungnickel and Puwar, 2024) and things (Woodward, 2020)—thus allowing me to think of practices “as part of the things themselves” (Woodward, 2020: 14). Upcycling as a research practice led me to theoretical engagement with the discussion of making as material practice and provide insight into participants' experiences.

The Ethical Dilemma and the Emotional-Moral Burden of Ethnographers in Conflict Zones

Aamir Shiekh

(Lancaster University)

This study critically examines the ethical dilemmas faced by ethnographers working in armed conflict zones, specifically questioning the adequacy of existing ethical frameworks/guidelines by various sociological and anthropological associations including ethical boards of various organisations. Drawing on unstructured interviews and informal conversations with researchers working in armed conflicts, and my personal experiences of doing ethnography in Indian Administered Kashmir, this study advocates for a specialised ethical approach rooted in empathy, safety, and emotional sensitivity. This paper highlights the inseparability of the researcher's moral and political positionality, which guides their (un)ethical conduct, from their findings, emphasising the need for greater acknowledgment of potential biases. The research proposes an ethical framework that accounts for the researcher's political and moral ideology, while also recognising the emotional and psychological burdens of conducting fieldwork in volatile and dangerous environments. The study also argues for a shift away from treating researchers as mere "machines of knowledge production," encouraging an approach that humanises the researcher's experience.

With examples from my recent fieldwork, this study explores and evaluates how researchers cope up with the situations of harm and the emotional turmoil. My recent experiences such as a participant's suicide, abuse by officials, witnessing war, experiencing violence, facing threats, and seeing fellow researchers jailed highlight the excesses of conducting research in conflict zones. The paper ultimately calls for an ethics of empathy and responsibility, promoting the safety and well-being of both researchers and the communities they study.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Room 2.217

Replacing Legality/Illegality in Migration Debates

Elif Demirbas

(University of Chichester)

Law is held as a linchpin of migration management systems across the world. Whether in its international/humanitarian format, hailed by activists to defend the rights of migrants or in its specific country-based format, which is more and more used to limit the rights of migrants to enter and remain, law is the language through which migration is discussed; i.e., law is both used as a system of oppression of migrants and as an institution to resist that oppression. Legal concepts on migration have connotations and consequences that affect millions of lives. So does the moniker 'illegal', as anything branded as 'illegal' criminalises and delegitimises people and institutions it refers to. In contradistinction, activists and academics who wish to defend migrants and their rights to remain and belong to the communities they live in, often explain why it is a 'legal' obligation of governments to accept and protect said migrants. This study will argue that we ought to escape these contradictory and Sisyphean points of view that rely on law as if it offers the conclusive say. Laws are man-made and thus can be un-made. Relying on 'legality' and 'illegality' to determine who can move and who cannot, creates arbitrary categories at best and discriminatory ones at worst. This study will thus criticise the inflated importance of law and invite the reader/listeners to replace legality with an ontological acceptance of mobility, where it is not enjoyed as a privilege by the few, but is considered an irrefutable part of human nature.

Insān Kāmil as Decolonial Subjectivity: Rethinking Personhood through Sufi Thought

Khawar Amir

(University of Leeds)

This paper proposes a decolonial reading of Ibn ʿArabī's concept of *insān kāmil* (the Perfect Human) as an alternative model of subjectivity that challenges Western liberal individualism. Whereas modernity often constructs the self as autonomous, bounded, and self-owning, Ibn ʿArabī envisions the perfected human as radically relational: a mirror of divine attributes, a node of connection between cosmos and community. In Indian subcontinent Sufi contexts, this model informed not only spiritual practice but also

social and political imaginaries, offering a conception of personhood embedded in networks of devotion, patronage, and care. By foregrounding how notions of self and personhood are socially constituted through religious practices, this paper intervenes in sociological debates on subjectivity, relationality, and the limits of methodological individualism. By placing Ibn 'Arabī in dialogue with contemporary decolonial theory, I argue that *insān kāmil* offers a conceptual resource for rethinking subjectivity beyond Eurocentric frames. This paper contributes to postcolonial sociology and theory by showing how premodern mystical categories can serve as living tools for unsettling modern assumptions about the self, sovereignty, and sociality. In doing so, it foregrounds the epistemic potential of Indian subcontinent Sufi traditions in shaping global conversations on decoloniality, identity, and belonging.

Constructing Transnational Political Identities: A Comparative Study of Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Migrants in South Wales

Keira Pinqiao Wang

(Swansea University)

This paper introduces an original framework for analysing political socialisation as a dialectical process shaped by the interplay between state power, individual agency, and community dynamics. It provides a lens for interrogating the sources of political values in a world experiencing escalating polarisation and fragmentation. When transnationalism challenges nation-states' control over social relations and identity, this framework critiques prevailing narratives that frame political identity as a stable product of a single nation-state's political environment. It emphasises individual agency in negotiating power relations, while state remains dominant in political socialisation.

The study draws on six months of participant observation among Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong immigrants in South Wales—across community events and everyday interactions. Through comparative exploration, it highlights distinct pathways of political identity construction. Among Mainland Chinese, the authority of the Chinese state tends to be internalised and taken for granted, with transnational political apathy being commonplace except on immigration-related issues. In contrast, Hongkongers construct their identities in resistance to pan-Chinese narratives, frequently drawing on parallels between the British colonial histories of Hong Kong and Wales to substantiate claims to citizenship and belonging in the UK. These contrasting trajectories reveal migrants' agency in navigating their relationship with the governments, employing strategies that both cooperate with and resist state-centered discourses. Identity tensions are acknowledged but often deliberately sidestepped in uncommon intra-ethnic daily interactions, which further deepen inter-group divisions. Whereas Hong Kongers openly challenge China's transnational influence, Mainland migrants often manoeuvre to maintain allegiance while circumventing sensitive political topics.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 2.218

Ghar: Anchoring, Homemaking and Belonging for British Pakistani Women

Meher Basit

(University of Kent)

This presentation is about the concept of anchoring and the role it plays in homemaking and belonging for the first and subsequent generations of British Pakistani women. Anchoring is proposed by migration scholar Grzymala-Kazłowska (2016, 2017, 2020) as a multi-dimensional and processual strategy for establishing footholds (or anchors) helping migrants develop their feelings of stability and belonging. Anchoring and stability for a diasporic minoritized and racialized community are interlinked with the search for home and the process of homemaking in migration studies and in postcolonial and feminist discourse by scholars such as Stuart Hall, Sara Ahmed, Avtar Brah. For British Pakistani women, seen as designated 'homemaker' through the lens of traditional Pakistani culture, homemaking (and unmaking) has another layer of emotional and aspirational significance of navigating their sense of stability and belonging. This paper draws upon the findings of an empirical study comprising 20 semi-structured interviews carried out between 2022 and 2023. The data comprises the responses given by the participants to questions about the meanings of home and their strategies for homemaking utilizing anchors such as the family, identity, local and transnational religious and cultural networks, identity

markers such as food, language (Urdu), clothes etc., all of which allude to the processual, relational and dynamic process of anchoring and homemaking for the women, moving beyond the binaries of stasis and mobility, origins and arrivals.

Double Marginalisation: Class, Ethnicity and Hidden Hierarchies in a Chinese Church in Scotland

Zhaowei Yin

(University of Glasgow)

This paper challenges the widely held assumption of migrant churches as egalitarian shelters, showing how class, ethnicity and religion intersect to produce hidden hierarchies and double marginalisation. Bringing together Bourdieu's concepts of space, capital and hierarchy, Collins's framework of intersectionality, and Wimmer's approach to ethnic boundary-making, it develops a theoretical lens for understanding how religious spaces may both support and stratify migrant communities.

The analysis draws on two years of ethnographic fieldwork in a Chinese church in Scotland and six life-history interviews with its members. Findings reveal that while the church provides belonging and support, it also stratifies working-class migrants: some are recognised and incorporated, while others are re-marginalised through leadership structures, linguistic hierarchies, and the unequal distribution of symbolic and religious capital. This double marginalisation represents an important yet hidden form of inequality—one that is difficult for participants themselves to perceive, but which becomes visible through careful and sustained ethnographic observation of everyday practices of worship, service and community life. The study highlights a shifting and layered configuration of inequality, operating simultaneously across mainstream society and religious communities.

The paper makes three contributions. Empirically, it brings attention to Chinese churches in Scotland and the lived experiences of working-class Chinese migrants—two under-researched sites. Theoretically, it demonstrates how class, ethnicity, and religion interact to reproduce inequality across both mainstream and faith-based spaces. Conceptually, it reframes migrant churches from “sacred refuges” into sites where belonging and exclusion are simultaneously produced, advancing debates on social inequality, intersectionality, and identity in contemporary Britain.

Racialised and Gendered Inequalities in the Transnational Investment Migration Industry

Sarah Kunz

(University of Essex)

This paper explores the uneven social relations and subject positions in the offshore investment migration industry, the interlinked private-public sector selling citizenship and residence to the global super-rich. Specifically, the paper argues that racialised and gendered inequalities shape the industry in fundamental ways, evidencing its entanglement with old and new imperial projects. The paper thereby contributes to our understanding of the investment migration industry and of the social and cultural making of contemporary offshore capitalism more broadly.

This paper conceptualises the transnational investment migration industry as an offshore industry, which is peopled by a diverse set of emplaced and embodied social actors that have forged relations across uneven political and economic terrain. These relations include collaborations and interdependencies to achieve shared profit motives; but relations also reveal intense competition, uneven power and unresolved tensions among differently positioned industry actors. These relations, roles and opportunities within the industry are embedded in and shaped by the broader power geographies of offshore capitalism, entangled with old and new imperial projects. For example, the industry privileges personal attributes such as whiteness and masculinity and rewards association with major financial players and positions in ‘global wealth hubs’. Empirically, the paper draws on qualitative research on the investment migration industry conducted between 2020 and 2024. This includes 133 in-depth interviews with industry stakeholders based in 28 countries; observation at 22 online and 1 in-person industry events; and the collection and analysis of diverse documents such as industry news, corporate websites and advertisements, and leaked corporate documents.

Weaving the Black Tapestry: A Decolonising Counter-Storytelling of Black Doctoral Student Experiences in the UK, Analysed with Loom Analysis

Lonceny Kourouma

(University of Westminster)

The lived experiences of Black doctoral researchers in the UK is an area which remains under-researched in contrast to comparable Western countries (Ahmet, 2020), and as such, could benefit from additional research to help illuminate the experiences, challenges, and opportunities personally and systemically for Black researchers. I aimed to give space for Black researchers to tell their stories in their own voice in a way that is ethical, decolonial, and healing (Maseti, 2018; Pratt et al., 2017), building upon existing insights pertaining to the perceptions, navigation, and experiences of academia by Black students along with the ways they are impacted (Arday, 2021; 2018b; 2017; Allen, 2020; Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury, 2018; Alexander and Arday, 2015).

Hence, I developed the overarching Loom Analysis methodology, tapping into decolonial and ancestral ways of knowing to protect stories which have historically lost prominence or nuance due to being analysed through a colonial lens. This paved the way for autoethnography, photovoice, and storytelling on the move/walking interviews as being the main methods of analysis.

I was able to collect rich historical and creative insight from my participants and then weave their stories together in a final tapestry which allowed their individual story threads and details to be preserved while still forming a bigger picture of the Black doctoral experience in the UK. It preserved the critical aspects of their intersectional characteristics, contextualising their journeys within the landscape of present-day UK Higher Education against the nuances of their cultural, geographic, and familial backgrounds, and more.

Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 4.211

Claimed Spaces and Discourses: Theorising Women's Political Participation (WPP) in Authoritarian Political Systems

Gilanis Changachirere

(University of Birmingham)

Women's political participation (WPP) in authoritarian political systems is paradoxical. Authoritarian systems use coercion to exclude women from politics. At the same time they adopt women's rights frameworks to include them. This paper suggests that women construct political participation as occurring in, and embodied in informal and formal spaces and discourses. This shapes the relations of power between women and the authoritarian state. I use cross-sectional qualitative data from women members of parliaments (WMPs) and women in social justice movements (WSMs) in Zimbabwe and Uganda. This illuminates that women's meaning making of experiences with state violence constructs their spaces and discourses as sites of reclaiming, owning and exercising their collective power. Informal spaces such as women's social justice movements, and formal spaces as parliamentary positions held by women are not neutral. They are sites of contesting state power and its domination of women. Discursively, the articulation of women's political participation is not neutral. It is constructed as constitutive of mobilisation, recruitment; trainings of women political candidates and advocacy by WSMs. It also includes processes of WMPs contesting elections, and their role in parliaments. This analysis offers a conceptual understanding of women's agency as situated in 'Claimed Spaces and Discourses' within and outside the state. Within the state, parliamentary seats for women are claimed as sites for women to exercise their power. Discourses centre WPP as a state obligation. Outside the state, women's social movements are claimed as sites for collective organising. Discourses pivot WPP as a social justice issue.

The Rise of 'Alternative Pride Events': LGBTQIA+ Activism between Conflict and Community-building

Francesca Romana Ammaturo
(London Metropolitan University)

In recent years, LGBTQIA+ communities have witnessed a wave of Pride events that position themselves in partial or direct contrast to mainstream Pride celebrations such as London Pride or Brighton Pride. This phenomenon represents a global shift in the landscape of LGBTQIA+ organising, and presents important challenges and opportunities for LGBTQIA+ activists worldwide (Ammaturo 2025).

Alternative Pride Events create spaces for communities who feel excluded or underserved by mainstream celebrations, such as trans people, Black and Brown LGBTQIA+ individuals, queer women, and disabled people (Mbasalaki 2018; Podmore 2016). Such events frequently challenge the corporate, commercialised, and exclusionary aspects of mainstream Pride (Currans 2012; Ammaturo 2025), reclaiming Pride as a site of protest, solidarity, and visibility.

This presentation addresses this gap, showing how Alternative Pride Events offer an intersectional perspective on the lived realities and activism of marginalised groups within LGBTQIA+ movements. This will be achieved by deploying theories of horizontal hostility (Ghaziani 2008) and political agonism (Mouffe 2014), which can explain cross-collaboration and conflicts between social movements, to the rise and success of Alternative Pride Events, building on fieldwork with 60 pride organisers from 29 countries around the world, as well as analysing emerging trends across Europe. This presentation seeks to demonstrate that conflicts and divisions within LGBTQIA+ movements, and more specifically, in the context of the organisation of Pride Events are integral to the pursuit of a global intersectional social justice agenda, one that exceeds the current confines of LGBTQIA+ (neo)liberal politics.

The Ambivalent Queer Politics under Interlocking Social Structures: A Typological Analysis of Violence on the Queer Community in China

Yuanchen Qiang
(Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen)

In post-socialist China, under the interlocking social structures of neoliberalism, the authoritarian state narrative and the family-kinship culture, the queer politics in China exhibits both the "agency" of utilizing the neoliberal market and "vulnerability" under state control and deprivation from intimate familial life (Lo, 2024). Despite the unanimous recognition of the underprivileged status of queer communities in China (Chou, 2000; Kong, 2012), there are few studies that comprehensively define or analyze what types of "violence" are inflicted on queer individuals in contemporary China.

Following structuralism-constructionalism and Galtung's (1990) typology of violence, this paper attempts to descriptively illustrate what forms of sexual-orientation-based "violence" are inflicted on the queer community in China, and provide insights of preventions. From a top-down perspective, the state narrative may adopt a lenient and passively helpful attitude toward the queer community on condition they do not jeopardize regime stability (the Yanzi case, 2014). From a bottom-up perspective, the queer communities may adopt an eclectic model of "coming with" (Huang & Brouwer, 2018) to balance queer sexuality and familial harmony.

By conducting in-depth interdisciplinary literature review, this study illustrates that: regarding structural violence, homosexuality remains negated by the state narrative, marginalized by the neoliberal work force market, and banished from the family-kinship culture; regarding cultural violence, queer individuals remain stigmatized and demonized ideologically, and homosexual behaviors are reprehended empirically; regarding direct violence, externally, verbal humiliation on homosexuality on digital media remains common. While internally, dating violence among queer couples stays an alarming issue.

Feminist, Community-based and Transformative Justice Approaches to Sexual Violence in Spain

Maeva Thibeault

(University of Edinburgh)

This paper explores transformative justice in cases of sexual violence in the Spanish context. Transformative justice is an alternative, community-based approach to justice that focuses on the needs of survivors, reparation, healing, and responsibility, rather than punishment and retribution. It works toward long-term preventive and educative frameworks to transform the social structures that create, perpetrate, and legitimise cycles of violence. Transformative justice is under-researched, particularly as a response to sexual violence in Europe. Most of the academic literature on transformative justice is theoretical and comes from the United States and/or is Anglo-centric. My research is part of recent efforts to decentralise U.S. narratives from the genealogy of transformative justice. I focus on Spain because it has a rich history of anarchist and anti-imprisonment movements. I draw on penal abolitionist and decolonial feminist theories and use feminist ethnography and oral history to explore how the life stories of Spanish practitioners have shaped their approach to transformative justice as a response to sexual violence and to identify what these experiences and practices can contribute to transnational efforts to develop alternative forms of justice. This paper will focus on findings from my fieldwork with groups based in Catalonia, analysing 1) how practitioners' experiences of transformative justice in response to sexual violence have shaped the collective history of Spanish grassroots communities, 2) how these communities practice transformative justice today and 3) how these life stories can advance transnational efforts to develop collective and non-punitive forms of justice.

Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 3.205

AI in the State: Insights into Democracy, Justice, and Public Matters

Sara Munhoz

(University of Campinas)

The recent proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, especially generative models, has taken center stage in political and academic debates about social transformations and the edge of capitalism. On the one hand, promises of acceleration and efficiency multiply; on the other, criticisms emerge concerning embedded biases, structural opacity, data colonialism, and the extractive demands required to sustain the energy infrastructure that keeps these technologies running. This presentation addresses the issue from a different perspective: examining how the overwhelming incorporation of AI into state practices and discourses reshapes concepts such as democracy, public patrimony, the commons, and the *res publica*. The empirical focus is on recent debates promoted by the Brazilian Judiciary, particularly in its higher courts. The functioning of justice, a cornerstone of the democratic rule of law, is increasingly entangled with AI tools. These technologies are presented as an inevitable and seductive revolution, yet their power necessarily requires regulation. While promising to liberate the state from the weight of slow bureaucracies, they simultaneously demand the creation of new bureaucratic controls and regulatory protocols. I argue that a critical attention to the discourses surrounding AI in the justice system allows us to move beyond a binary view of risks versus benefits. It also opens up the possibility of analytically problematizing the very notions of justice and democracy, reframing them in light of the growing presence of intelligent technologies in state functioning.

The Social Life of Algorithms: How Algorithms are Socially Imagined and Unequally Navigated in Social Commerce Affiliates

Nur Syamsiyah, Pingkan Sekar Savira

(Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia)

In this study, we examine the social life of algorithms from the perspective of social commerce affiliates in Indonesia. Although previous research has explored algorithmic sensemaking among digital content producers on platforms like YouTube, the affiliate marketing economy remains poorly understood, despite its growing importance to platform capitalism in the Global South. Using digital ethnography on

social commerce affiliate Facebook groups, we show how, as a group, participants co-construct an algorithmic imaginary: an unstable yet resilient structure that dissolves hypothetical thinking and peer-participated experiential knowledge. Such imaginaries form the foundation of informal monetization literacies, structuring practices like product choice, keyword experimentation, and cross-site promotion. Algorithmic imaginaries are also deeply social. Algorithms do not just operate as technical systems. They are interpreted, narrated, and lived through social practices. Sudden-wealth tales function as motivational folklore; rumor and gatekeeping establish symbolic boundaries; and aspirational hierarchies bestow authority on those perceived as algorithmically competent. Significantly, "experts" trade this symbolic capital for material reward by selling tutorials to beginners, creating new levels of inequality in ostensibly shared spaces built to provide mutual support. We contend that such dynamics illustrate how everyday negotiation of algorithmic systems reproduces casual knowledge economies and precarious labor relations under structural conditions of opacity. By so doing, the study contributes to digital sociology debates about the precarity of platforms and algorithms' transparency, particularly in the emerging Global South platform economies.

Platform as infrastructure: developing an STS-informed methodology for the digital terrain

Yuhan Wang

(Bath Spa University)

This paper aims to explore how Science and Technology Studies (STS) can inspire the sociological exploration of digital platform in terms of methodological development. I argue that STS expands our understanding of platforms, effectively switching the predominant research attention from user-generated content to the devices, which are socio-materials often overlooked (Gillespie et al., 2014). From this perspective, platforms are artifacts that assemble technological, social, cultural, economic, political elements into their design (Winner, 1980). Meanwhile, STS underlines the dynamic relationship between society and technology, showing that political, economic, and cultural power can be manifested and observed through technological design. This approach encourages us to develop a new methodological framework for actively tracing and examining the affordances of platforms as socio-technologies, moving beyond the current methodological focus on employing platforms as data collection tools.

Using WeChat, China's most popular 'super app', as an example, I demonstrate a methodological approach that combines technography (Butcher, 2018) and the walkthrough method (Light et al., 2018). This approach facilitates us to invert platforms as contextual and relational infrastructures (Bowker, 1994), allowing us to unpack how a platform's datafication strategies (technological design) are deeply intertwined with socio-cultural and political values (social design). In this sense, through the lens of STS, this methodological approach expands platforms' capacity to offer new research terrain for emerging digital sociological inquires.

From Promise to Peril: AI, Cybercrime, and the Crisis of Digital Governance in Nigeria

Adaora Okafor

(Teesside University)

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds significant potential to drive innovation and socio-economic development. However, in contexts with fragile digital infrastructure and weak regulatory oversight, AI technologies are weaponised, amplifying existing inequalities and facilitating new forms of cybercrime. This article examines the paradox of AI in Nigeria, where technological advancements coexist with systemic failures in digital governance. Using a qualitative analysis of social media discourse, the study looks at how limited digital literacy, inadequate cybersecurity frameworks, and socio-economic marginalisation contribute to the growing exploitation of AI-driven scams. These developments disproportionately affect already vulnerable populations, functioning as a poverty multiplier: a force that not only thrives in conditions of poverty but also reinforces and accelerates them. To mitigate these risks, the study recommends strengthening inclusive digital governance, investing in cybersecurity and digital literacy, regulating AI-enabled platforms, and implementing socio-economic interventions that create digital employment opportunities and reduce structural vulnerabilities to cybercrime.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 1 – Lecture Theatre A

Gender and Digital Exclusion in Northern Nigeria

Oyedoyin Oyerinde

(Loughborough University)

Digital technologies are often framed as pathways to opportunity, but their benefits are unevenly distributed across social groups. This paper examines gendered patterns of digital exclusion in Northern Nigeria, where cultural norms, economic barriers, and institutional structures converge to limit women's participation in digital life. Rather than viewing exclusion as a technical issue of access, the study approaches it as a matter of inequality and identity, showing how technologies both reinforce and reconfigure social divisions.

Using a sequential mixed-methods design that combines survey research with in-depth interviews, the study investigates differences between women and men in digital access, levels of competence and confidence and the outcomes associated with technology use. The analysis draws on digital divide theories and feminist sociology to explore how inequalities of access, skills, and outcomes are embedded within broader power relations and lived identities.

The paper highlights how digital technologies frequently mirror and intensify existing gender inequalities, restricting women's opportunities in education, work and civic life. At the same time, it identifies spaces of negotiation and agency, as women creatively mobilise digital tools to navigate restrictions and expand opportunities. By highlighting the intersections of gender, inequality, and digital exclusion, the paper contributes to wider sociological debates on how technologies mediate and reproduce social inequalities in the Global South.

From #MeToo to the Manosphere: Tracing the Emerging Divide between Young Men and Women's Political Orientation and Voting Behaviour

Zoe Abrams

(University of Oxford)

Amongst the under thirties, politics is increasingly a battle of the sexes. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Generation Z (born 1996 onward) was perceived as a cohesively progressive cohort driving movements for equality and climate action (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). However, large gender gaps in political preferences subsequently emerged, exceeding those in older generations (Miloslav et al., 2025). Young women favour left-wing and ecological parties, while young men lean conservative and support the far right (Abou-Chadi, 2024; Cokelaere, 2024).

Using data from 24 European democracies, I investigate how these cleavages relate to Generation Z's divergent responses to feminism and gender equality (Campbell et al., 2024). Young women participated enthusiastically in movements like #MeToo (Herrera Hernandez & Oswald, 2022), whereas young men gravitate toward 'Manosphere' subcultures promoting 'traditional' masculinity (Dickel & Evolvi, 2022). I argue that these gendered mobilization and backlash dynamics are central to young people's political socialization, fuelling broader ideological divides.

I apply multilevel modelling to the 2023 European Social Survey to assess whether gender and generational gaps in left-right political position and right-wing voting are explained by support for gender equality, hostile sexism, and identification with normative gender characteristics. Results reveal significant gender divides that are consistently larger amongst the under thirties. Gender attitudes – particularly hostile sexism – explain a larger proportion of the gap amongst younger than older voters.

This study provides new, cross-national evidence on the shifting dynamics of generational politics, highlighting gender as the central axis of democratic conflict for young Europeans.

Managing Menopause in Neoliberal HE: Sexism, Ageism, and Tokenism

Hyun-Joo Lim

(Bournemouth University)

This paper examines the effectiveness of recent menopause initiatives introduced by universities in England in destigmatising the menopause and providing support for affected staff. The data is drawn from an online survey of 153 employees from 42 universities in England who are experiencing menopause, as well as three focus groups with individuals holding protected characteristics.

Our findings suggest that some universities have made notable progress, providing meaningful support through menopause toolkits, cafés, training, and policies that are implemented in practice. Nonetheless, this progress has been inconsistent. In many cases, initiatives were described as patchy and superficial, often reliant on the efforts of a few individual volunteers or wellbeing officers. Participants frequently highlighted the sexist and ageist structures and cultures of academia that marginalise the experiences of women and other minoritised staff. Their accounts also reflected heightened job insecurity and a reluctance to disclose struggles with menopausal symptoms, due to fears of redundancy under neoliberal managerialism and cost-cutting measures. Within this context, menopause policies were widely regarded as tokenistic, poorly communicated, and rarely followed through with concrete action. As a result, stigma around menopause persists, and support for staff remains insufficient in many English universities.

We argue that deeply gendered and ageist organisational cultures pose serious challenges to transforming traditional attitudes towards menopause. Furthermore, the neoliberal managerialism of higher education has created additional barriers to meaningful structural and cultural change, prioritising productivity and efficiency over staff wellbeing.

Social Divisions / Social Identities 2 - Room 1.219

The Epistemic Bind: How Allies Navigate Knowledge, Authority, and Voice in Identity-based Movements

Ruth Blatt, Gilly Hartal, Orna Sasson-Levy

(Bar Ilan University)

This paper focuses on the epistemic conflict that can arise in identity-based social movements between allies and beneficiary activists. Allies are individuals from dominant social groups who work in solidarity with marginalized communities to advance social change. We examine how identity-based social movement allies negotiate epistemic conflicts when their knowledge, expertise, or strategic assessments differ from those of movement beneficiaries. Through in-depth interviews with 36 cisgender allies nominated by trans activists, we explore how these "good allies" understand and respond to potential disagreements with the communities they support. While participants reported that their work with trans activists was generally harmonious, they also described critical moments of potential conflict in which epistemic tensions of ally-activist relationships become visible.

We found that despite being recognized as effective allies by trans activists, participants reported experiencing both relational and epistemic precarity that shaped how they handled disagreements when they arose. Allies sometimes withheld potentially valuable input, deferred unconditionally to trans voices even when they had relevant expertise, and avoided challenging ideas they believed might harm the movement. While such deference was intended to respect trans leadership and avoid reproducing oppression, it often meant that important knowledge went unutilized.

Our analysis suggests that when lived experience becomes the sole legitimate basis for knowledge claims, identity-based movements may lose access to other forms of expertise crucial for achieving social change. We discuss theoretical implications for standpoint theory and social movement strategy and decision making.

Conceptualising Hate Narratives as a Driver of Coordinated Destruction

Rachel Rafferty

(University of Derby)

Organised violence against members of a different social group can take many forms including war, conquest, genocide and terrorism that all fall within Tilly's concept of 'coordinated destruction'. Although coordinated violence always results from the interaction of multiple factors, it is important to recognise the capacity for narratives to reduce the social and psychological barriers to engaging in such acts. The role of propaganda in promoting war and genocide has long been recognised, while more recent research points to ways that partisan conflict narratives fuel interethnic hostilities and grievance narratives support radicalisation into violent extremism. However, a unified conceptualisation of the features shared by narratives that drive collective violence is lacking.

This paper develops early ideas around the common features and functions of narratives that encourage and enable participation in these multiple forms of coordinated destruction. The paper puts forward the term 'hate narratives' to describe these narratives, due to their capacity to evoke hatred towards members of a particular social group and to encourage participation in violence against that group. Hate narratives are conceptualised as sharing key features that rationalise violence as both justified and necessary. These features are framing acts that (re)draw symbolic boundaries to exclude the target group, depict the relationship between ingroup and target group as one of existential conflict, dehumanise the target group and position violence as the only viable way to achieve security for the ingroup.

Composed of Critical Contexts: University Student Sensemaking across Religion and Worldview Difference

Beth Ashley Staples

(Stony Brook University)

This study examines how students engage in meaning-making processes as organizational actors who are experiencing collective change through increased religious and worldview diversity on university campuses in the United States. Using the critical sensemaking framework, this study explored how students are making sense of their encounters with worldview diversity at public institutions. Critical sensemaking combines seven tenets of organizational sensemaking (Weick, 1995) with a critical interrogation of the macro-context (formative contexts, organizational rules, and embedded discourses) in which sensemaking is occurring (Helms Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010). The study used a content analysis methodology (Mayring, 2000) and a two-tiered structural and concept coding analysis strategy (Saldaña, 2011) to explore secondary qualitative data from five public institutions included in the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS), a project designed to examine worldview diversity and interfaith engagement at U.S. universities. The analysis illuminated three ways student sensemaking is affected by the macro-contexts of higher education: religious or worldview identity is a salient intersecting identity, institution's organizational rules are perceived to privilege worldview-majority student groups, and students use both communicated and uncommunicated messages about religion and worldview to make sense of new encounters. To help center less-dominant identities and understand how dominant assumptions and organizational power might be privileging some identities over others, an important hallmark of critical sensemaking (Helms Mills et al., 2010), the findings are presented using a composite counter-story method (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) grounded in the real-life experiences and contextualized social situations grounded in students' stories.

Sociology of Education 1 - Room 2.220

Unsettling Deficit Narratives: Race, Identity and Belonging in English Schools

John Doyle

(Sheffield Hallam University)

This research examines how structural racism is reproduced and resisted within English secondary schools. It unsettles deficit assumptions that problematise racially minoritised students and frame their cultures as barriers to achievement. Drawing on 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork in a school setting, the research illuminates how everyday practices, relationships, and policies embody what Warmington (2024) describes as the 'vanishingly small' space for recognising racism in education, and how a 'discourse of denial' (Bhopal, 2024) shapes teachers' and leaders' responses.

The study integrates Critical Race Theory (CRT), Yosso's (2005) cultural wealth framework, and decolonisation theory (Moncrieffe, 2022) to reframe the conversation from student deficits to institutional responsibilities. Fieldwork included participant observation in a 'My Story' class, in which students explored their heritages and fluid identities; a focus group with Year 10 students on how the curriculum can reflect their lives; and interviews with school leaders, teachers, parents, and community figures, including local Imams. The data revealed tensions between the school's narrative of deficit and the community's resilience, care, and cultural wealth.

By analysing how curriculum design, behaviour policies, and staff perceptions intersect with wider structures of whiteness, the paper offers new insights into how inequality is sustained and how it might be challenged. It contributes to sociological debates on education, race, and belonging by showing how students' knowledge and identities can form the basis for alternative pedagogies. In doing so, it considers how sociology can engage with and challenge the everyday operation of institutional racism in education.

A Cultural Turn in Citizenship Education: Classrooms as Tiny Counterpublics

Soon How Loh

(National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University)

There is a growing interest in developing students via citizenship education programmes into active citizens who can participate meaningfully in society. To address this, discussions and research on citizenship education frequently focus on school curricula, pedagogical approaches, civic competences, or classroom discursive processes to develop democratic citizenship. While these are meaningful approaches in citizenship education research and practice, researchers and educators often find difficulties in trying to reconcile their curricula, teaching content, and teaching methods to students' citizenship development outcome. It is an understandable challenge as students who acquire civic competencies and skills may not necessarily apply them. Moreover, such approaches have the tendency to reduce the teaching of citizenship education to a narrow emphasis on the development of competencies and skills, limiting citizenship education to a psychological developmental framing, contributing to the individualisation of society and citizenship practice. Furthermore, these teaching approaches can become overly prescriptive and structured, thus leading to the learnification of citizenship education and deviating from the broader goals of citizenship education. Development of civic skills and competencies, though important, are often arguably inadequate. In this conceptual paper, a cultural turn in citizenship education is proposed. Drawing on Gary Alan Fine's notion of tiny publics for the school context, a cultural approach to citizenship education in the classroom is suggested on the rationale that classrooms as tiny counterpublics foster not only a democratic citizenship culture but also a sense of belonging that can encourage active citizenship.

Schooling Citizenship and Character in a Therapeutic Society

Peter Hemming, Anna Strhan, Joanna Malone, Sarah Neal

(University of Surrey)

Schools in the UK are reportedly facing an acute mental health crisis due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cost of living pressures, leading to a renewed focus on therapeutic education and a growing prominence for wellbeing and emotion-based initiatives. These developments form part of a longer story about the increasingly dominant influence of psychology and the therapeutic ethos in late modern societies, but one that has been subjected to various critiques in recent years. This paper approaches schools as a lens through which to interrogate the evolving nature of the therapeutic ethos and how it manifests in education, through a particular focus on pedagogies of

citizenship and character formation. Drawing on in-depth qualitative data from four primary schools across Britain, it explores the nature and scope of therapeutic education in the post-COVID educational context, its relationship with citizenship and character education, and the role of religion as a significant case study for understanding these processes. It is argued that psychological and therapeutic sensibilities emerge as dominant influences on the development of young selves, but in rather more complex ways than is reflected in the existing literature, resonating with recent scholarship on therapeutic cultures emphasising their hybrid, heterogenous nature. The paper offers a sociological analysis of the continued rise of therapeutic education, while advancing wider theoretical debates about contemporary therapeutic cultures, the emerging relationship between religion and psychology, and the significance of schools as social institutions.

‘You laugh at it as a joke, but it’s not funny’: Young People’s Experiences of Colourist Humour

Jamila Thompson, Aisha Phoenix, Nadia Craddock, Annabel Wilson

(Kings College London)

Colourism is a form of prejudice that penalises individuals based on the darkness of their skin and the extent to which their features diverge from those associated with whiteness. This paper explores how adolescents in the UK use humour to perpetuate colourism, particularly targeting peers with darker skin tones. Drawing on reflexive thematic analysis of 129 interviews with minoritised ethnic students aged 13–18 years in London and Bristol, we argue that although colourist humour is often framed as harmless or playful, it reinforces racist and colourist tropes that can dehumanise and harm both those targeted and those who witness it. Notably, such humour was also used by young people with dark skin themselves. While this may point to the internalisation of colourist ideologies, our research indicates a more complex picture: colourist humour can also be understood as a means through which young people navigate and cope with the pervasive reality of everyday colourism.

Within the field of Sociology of Education, this work builds on a long history of research documenting the racialised experiences of minoritised youth in schools. The language used by participants in this study bears a striking resemblance to the language historically used to dehumanise darker-skinned young people, suggesting that while the forms of expression may evolve, the underlying structures of colourism persist.

Sociology of Education 2 - Room 3.204

Considering the Role of Theory in Addressing Racialised Inequalities in Higher Education

Patricia Gilbert

(University of Portsmouth)

This paper considers the issue of attainment disparities in higher education within the wider context of debates around, and understanding of, racial inequality within the UK. As these issues are highly contested, the paper suggested that a desire to reduce inequalities within higher education institutions is not always accompanied by consensus regarding the ways in which racism can be understood to operate, at individual, institutional and structural levels. As Nicola Rollock’s review of the first phase of the Race Equality Charter reported, a deeper understanding of race equality was not always found among participants, with some operating “in a conceptual vacuum with a lack of understanding or engagement of how race and racism operate” (AdvanceHE, para. 3, 2020).

While studies of the attainment differentials of minoritised students have become more nuanced, this paper argues that deficit models, and a neglect of the role of structural racism, can still inform policy, practice and discourse in this area. The paper investigates whether, despite recent reductions in the awarding gap in higher education (Universities UK, 2022), more focus on anti-racist education is needed to address a range of ongoing inequalities. The paper draws from a mixed methods PhD study that examined issues of ethnicity, attainment and academic support, and the impact of intersectional identities on experiences of teaching and learning within higher education. It asks whether there are potential tensions between institutional imperatives regarding attainment differentials and sociological critiques of educational inequalities, and what can be done to bridge this gap.

Non-Performativity through Scripts of Inclusion: A Comparative Study of REC Submissions in UK Higher Education

Cynthia Lawson

(Durham University)

The Race Equality Charter (REC) was established to support UK higher education institutions in addressing racial inequalities affecting racially minoritised students and staff. Institutions are awarded a bronze or silver award based on the submission of evidence, action planning, and reported progress. Despite its prominence, Advance HE's (2021) review of the REC identified anti-Black racism as an ongoing concern, while scholars have also criticised the Charter for performative action (e.g., Bhopal and Pitkin, 2020; Campion and Clark, 2022).

Grounded in Critical Race Theory and employing Institutional Ethnography as a method of text analysis, the study undertakes a comparative policy analysis of REC submissions from a bronze-awarded Russell Group university and a silver-awarded post-92 university, examining how institutional commitments to Black heritage students are represented and enacted. The analysis shows how language within the submissions obscures the reproduction of whiteness, with incremental actions and survey data positioned as markers of transformation. Staff narratives further reveal how the processes behind submissions, such as institutional underinvestment, risk aversion, and bureaucratic delays, serve as disguised forms of resistance to race equity work.

This study concludes that despite differences in award level, both institutions reproduce similar dynamics in which race equity commitments are articulated rhetorically but remain non-performative in practice. In this context, procedural compliance functions as a mechanism that sustains whiteness and upholds white supremacy. The study calls for closer scrutiny of how REC submissions enact symbolic compliance, and for race equity work that centres the lived realities of Black heritage students.

Closing Ethnicity Awarding Gaps: Evidence from Inclusive Pre-assessment Support

Daniela Perez Aguilar

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

This mixed-methods study evaluates the implementation of the Racially Inclusive Practice in Assessment Guidance (RIPIAG) pilot across five undergraduate courses at LSE, spanning first-year to final-year modules in geography, statistics, management, philosophy, and social policy.

Drawing on Campbell's (2022) framework of social and cultural currencies, different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), and research on structural inequalities in higher education (Li, 2024; Mountford-Zimdars & Moore, 2024), the study examined how targeted pre-assessment support can reduce persistent ethnicity awarding gaps. The intervention comprised four components: Assessment Schedule, Assignment Brief, Modified Seminar Workshop, and Active Group Marking Exercise.

The study's sociological significance lies in showing how modest but systematic pedagogical adjustments can disrupt the reproduction of structural inequalities within assessment systems. Unlike deficit-based approaches, which locate problems within students, RIPIAG reconfigures institutional assessment practices that systematically disadvantage ethnically minoritised groups. The cross-disciplinary design reveals how barriers to academic capital operate differently across quantitative and qualitative subjects: while clearer briefs proved effective across all courses, group marking exercises generated more varied outcomes depending on disciplinary context.

Qualitative findings show that students reported greater confidence, reduced anxiety, and improved access to academic capital when support was tailored to subject-specific norms. Academic staff, on the other hand, developed racial literacy and translated abstract commitments to inclusion into concrete changes in assessment design and delivery.

Attainment data will be presented alongside these experiential insights to provide a comprehensive evaluation of intervention effectiveness and to offer practical recommendations for addressing ethnicity awarding gaps in higher education.

To Be(long) or Not to Be(long)? If that's the Question, Is the Transfigured 'Postracism' Frame the Answer to Understanding the Seemingly Paradoxical Experiences of Inclusion and Exclusion for Black Students in HE

Paul Campbell

(University of Leicester)

Positive senses of belonging are widely recognised as foundational to 'student success' in higher education (HE). 'Black' heritage students experience acute exclusions in all areas of the academe. Despite this, relatively minimal research exists to specifically understand their experiences of belonging in HE in late-modern Britain. Drawing on the qualitative accounts of over 100-Black British undergraduate students, and employing Campbell's (2024) transfigured 'postracism' theoretical-frame, this discussion responds to this lacuna.

Findings illustrate how Black students are privy to simultaneous experiences of belonging and of feeling 'in' (a part of) and 'out' (excluded) of the academe and how the impact of interventions for belonging can be both transformative and liminal.

Ultimately, the discussion seeks to move the canon beyond conceptualising race in HE through a binary inclusion/exclusion lens and past what Mendes (2023) describes as an increasingly redundant way of framing the moments when examples of both realities exist, or are entangled, within one space, as merely paradoxes.

Theory - Room 4.205

Taming Capitalism?

Nick Fox

(University of Huddersfield)

This paper explores how a more-than-human, micropolitical theoretical perspective supplies new insights on how to 'tame' capitalism in the interests of the future well-being of the natural and social world. Its analysis derives from recent research in political economy and social theory over the past five years. In a nutshell, this research revealed hitherto unremarked features that indicate that capitalism has a life of its own and is running out of control.

The implications of this are profound: capitalism is neither the panacea for global prosperity (as argued by neoliberal and other classical economics proponents) nor an irredeemable system requiring total replacement by a global socialist alternative (the neo-Marxist riposte). Rather, if left to its own devices, capitalism will draw the entirety of human endeavour and the natural environment into a deepening vortex of social inequalities, environmental destruction and political and military conflict. The micropolitics of the capitalist market is dooming workers to a life of increasingly precarious employment and bosses and shareholders to business uncertainty.

But if there is the prospect of social and natural ruination in this analysis, could 'taming capitalism' supply the basis for a programme of actionable and politically feasible economic and social reforms to counter capitalism's destructive forces. These steps principally entail mitigating the ways in which supply and demand operate in markets independent of human intention. Can these modest measures supply the means to ameliorate capitalism in a programme that cuts across political and social divides?

Towards a Sociologically Informed 'Just Transition'

John Bone

(University of Aberdeen)

The concept of just transition (JT) has increasingly been employed in debates around the measures needed to combat climate change, and the need for equity and inclusivity in their delivery. However, the term has become contested of late, where many of JT's wider, pro-social, and progressive connotations have been diluted and co-opted by opportunistic corporate actors as a form of

greenwashing, reducing its meaning to imply a narrow focus on supporting workers moving from fossil fuels to renewables. Implicit in this reframing is an emphasis on gradualism, legitimizing an extension of fossil fuel production, a position also being advanced by many right-wing politicians as a feature of their regressive and divisive agendas. By contrast, this paper draws on a growing body of original research conducted by the Aberdeen Just Transition Lab to argue that the just transition concept has much wider potential, if conceived and advanced through a sociological and wider interdisciplinary lens, recognizing that confronting the challenges posed by climate change - and others confronting our societies - presents opportunities as well as risks that may be best approached from a holistic perspective. In this view, just transition becomes a catchword that aligns with a wider, more ambitious, progressive agenda, addressing issues around work, housing, communities, social justice, cohesion, democratic participation and health. Such an inclusive, whole-systems JT agenda offers an approach to repairing our fractured societies while confronting the multidimensional challenges posed by the climate emergency, as well as those waiting in the wings through advances in AI.

On the Theoretical Value of Conceiving Capitalism as a Relation of Power

Yannick Lacroix

(Université Grenoble Alpes)

Capitalism belongs among those general entities that struggle to take heuristic shape in the study of practice. Inherited from a tradition more Marxist than Marxian, it remains relatively static, designating a typical and modern mode of production that appears as the backdrop to everyday life. In this sense, it imposes itself as a ground upon which practices unfold without it — gender, race, class, age, and so forth rarely needing to be anchored to capitalism in order to account sociologically for what individuals do. Yet the work of Pierre Bourdieu shows that the economic is not reducible to the economy, for there exist ordinary logics of accumulation and appropriation at the very heart of social life which strongly contribute to logics of domination. Thus, we suggest that capitalism is better apprehended as a relation of power through which the economic comes into the lived world. This, indeed, allows us on the one hand to avoid falling into an objectivism and reductionism that risk reifying economic power as an exogenous determinism imposed upon the individual, and on the other hand to apprehend the economic dynamically, by bringing to light how Capital — understood as concept and not merely as stock — works upon the individual within lived experience. From this perspective, existentialism becomes complementary to the sociological enterprise, grounding a phenomenological approach to freedom that enables us to grasp the ambiguity of the effects of a power which itself valorises freedom, and thereby to move beyond the opposition determinism/freedom.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 1 - Room 3.212

De-coding Embodiment: Care Work at the Nexus of Digitalization and Privatization

Seray Bircan Afsin

(University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

My research reveals that the rapid adoption of AI technologies such as decision-support systems, RFID tracking, and pain measurement scales has profoundly reshaped the experience of care work. Drawing on multi-sited qualitative research, I examine how AI technologies such as decision-support systems, RFID tracking, and pain measurement scales reshape care work. While scholars argue these tools render bodies as data points to be managed through risk metrics, this framing overlooks how quantification produces a paradoxical embodiment: bodies become simultaneously absent from physical care encounters and hypervisible and hyperembodied through data interfaces.

The decline of in-person communication and shared physical presence among care workers has eroded their capacity to witness each other's labor, weakening the empathy and solidarity that once sustained their professional relationships. As nurses navigate increasingly large hospital spaces through digital platforms, they lose sight of each other's embodied workload. Nurses describe it as a dangerous illusion: colleagues appear simultaneously absent (as physical co-workers) and omnipresent (as data points),

generating false assumptions that others are always available, that one's own urgent tasks take precedence, and that colleagues are less burdened. While care remains deeply embodied, their labor is increasingly validated only through digital documentation. This undermines the visibility of bodily work and erodes the shared empathy that once emerged from witnessing each other's physical engagement with patients. Through my research, I demonstrate that AI technologies not only reorganize the technical dimensions of care but also reshape its emotional and ethical foundations.

Paying for Internship: The Involution Discourse and Social Reproduction by Educational Agencies in China

Ziyu Wang

(University of Warwick)

Pressured under the COVID-19 and Sino-US trade war, tens of millions of college graduates in China are facing a bleak job market with a record-high unemployment rate that continues to worsen. Astonishingly, business students begin to pay for an internship offer to avoid unemployment status, adding to the "involution" phenomenon, known as the increasing investment does not yield proportional returns. This research examines the commodification of the internship market from three aspects: why customers opt to purchase, how sellers manufacture purchasing motives, and, eventually, how the market impacts involution. First, through 15 interviews with students and four-month participation observation, this paper argues that, given education credential inflation, internship experience now serves as a credential to add one's employability for a positional advantage. The study also applies Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction (1982) to delve into the customer profile — to highlight the classist nature of these internships, driven by middle-class anxieties about maintaining social status. Second, through critical discourse analysis of 1,451 advertisement posts by educational agents, I demonstrate how educational agencies manufacture purchasing anxieties by generating a seductive solution to unemployment as an individual's lack of internship credential acquiring, rather than a public or political concern. I argue that purchasable internships reinforce involution by creating an opportunity trap. As more individuals opt for purchasable internships, the value of such credentials becomes inflated. As a result, increased investment does not yield higher returns; instead, it raises the entry barriers into the labor market and eventually diminishes workers' rights.

Resilience is Relational: Moving Beyond Individual Traits in Organisational Contexts

Tamzin Ractliffe

(Impact Trust, University of Surrey)

Resilience at work is increasingly understood not as individual "bounce-back" ability but as a dialectical, collective accomplishment emerging from person-organisation alignment. Yet research remains largely fragmented between psychological approaches focusing on personal traits and sociological perspectives emphasising structural conditions.

Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theory, this research develops an integrated socio-ecological model examining how personal dispositions and organisational climates co-produce resilience outcomes and vice versa. Using workplace-adapted resilience scales alongside participant sensemaking through self-signified narratives (n=393 across UK, South African, UAE and international organisations), we identify four personal dimensions (mattering/identification, relational openness, self-efficacy, self-regulation) and two organisational factors: Resilience-Supportive versus Responsibility-Abdication norms.

Combining these dimensions reveals distinct "personal-organisational ecologies." Supportive environments consistently correlated with higher resilience across all personality types, while abdication cultures suppressed outcomes regardless of individual characteristics. The research shows little evidence for traditional "buffering" effects: individual strengths cannot compensate for abdication cultures. Resilience emerged from alignment between people and supportive environments, not from individual toughness overcoming poor environments. After all, resilience is not synonymous with resistance.

These findings challenge individualised "coping skills" approaches, pointing instead toward organisational stewardship practices that enable identification, voice, and reciprocity. Resilience is built

through organisational relationships and everyday practices, not just individual psychology. This demands shifting from trait-based assessments and individually focused intervention strategies toward socially embedded relational diagnostics and collective resilience building. Reframing both measurement and intervention strategies toward collective rather than atomised approaches would centre the relational in a sociology of work.

Masculinities and Labor in China's Platform-based Food Delivery Work

Jenny Chan, Zihao Zhang

(Hong Kong Polytechnic University)

Global corporations are becoming lean platform infrastructures. Despite the “asset-less” nature of these ventures, we contend that capital accumulation depends on its grounding in the social and physical necessities of their workforces. Food delivery stations—the subcontractors of platform companies—commonly provide workers group housing close to their areas of service. This is a “spatial fix” intended to facilitate the mobility of their preferred job applicants to sites of employment. Supervisors prioritize to hire men, particularly poor migrant workers, who would rely on the platform to make a living. They consider women physically weaker and less tolerant of difficulties like lifting bulky items and driving quickly to deliver multiple orders. Gender influences hiring decisions in the platform economy, which are not simply operated by algorithm.

Workers' mobility implies the possible loss of labor productivity and the cost of new recruitment. To retain experienced workers, management seeks to incentivize workers by rewarding them with piecework pay, bonuses and status distinctions. Entrepreneurial workers cultivate good relationships with supervisors to get better shifts and more benefits. In the event of disputes over pay, supervisors often deflect workers' struggle over working conditions by framing worker struggles as their “personal failings as a man.” This culture of masculinity contests among workers is essential to management's efforts to get workers to submit to intensification of the work.

This ethnographic study of food delivery services at the workplace level offers a fresh understanding of the gendered organization of work and labor subjectivity in a male-dominated setting.

Work, Employment & Economic Life 2 - Room 3.213

Persistent Inequalities at Work: The Sociological Path to Social Justice

Paraskevi-Viviane Galata

(Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences)

Drawing on Runciman's *Treatise on Social Theory* (1997, Vol. III), applied to twentieth-century English society, it becomes clear that for sociology nothing is taken for granted. Its role is embedded in four distinct functions: reporting the modes of production, persuasion, and coercion; explaining why they have evolved under selective pressures; describing the resultant changes; and assessing their impact on those affected. Through this framework, sociology seeks to understand the causes of historical events, social transformations, and collective reactions.

Yet, despite decades of research, persistent inequalities at work—expressed through widening social polarization, precarious conditions, and the enduring exploitation of the less advantaged—highlight the urgent need for sociology to adopt a more active role. These inequalities are not episodic but structural, reproducing themselves across generations and contexts, which demands that sociology move beyond interpretation to proposing concrete solutions and contributing to the pursuit of social justice.

Romero (2020) reminds us that sociology has been historically intertwined with struggles for social justice, while Grow, McKie, and Scott (2023) emphasize that historical perspectives on British sociology's future can open multidimensional debates about the direction of social structures and change. Building on these insights, this paper explores the history of sociology across European and non-European contexts, from the center to the periphery, and within processes of internationalisation

and local sociologies. It seeks to identify how sociologists have conducted research, advanced specific practices, and engaged in advocacy for social policies aimed at improving people's lives, working conditions, and career prospects.

Precarity in Nordic Countries: Levels and Trends across Various Notions of Precarity

Lena Nare, Markus Jäntti

(Stockholm University, University of Helsinki)

How widespread is precariousness in the Nordic countries and how has it evolved across time? In this paper, we discuss different aspects of precarity and vulnerability in the labour market and in terms of well-being, with a focus on how their extent can be measured. We are especially concerned with including groups that are not typically covered by household-population-based data, such as undocumented migrants and seasonal workers. We then use publicly available data sources to examine how many persons can be said to be in a precarious position in three Nordic countries -- Finland, Norway, and Sweden -- and how this has changed over time. We also study how geographically concentrated precariousness is within each of the countries.

Transnational Control in the Chinese Context: The Creation of the "Good Expatriate" in High-tech Multinationals

Muhao Du

(University of Bristol)

Expatriation is often understood as a practice reserved for elite managers tasked with integration, leadership and knowledge transfer. Yet in Chinese multinational corporations (MNCs), expatriation is not an exceptional opportunity but a compulsory stage of career progression that encompasses managers, engineers and new graduates alike. Drawing on three years of qualitative fieldwork with repeated interviews conducted independently with 27 respondents in two leading Chinese high-technology firms, this paper examines how firms manufacture what I term the "good expatriate": workers who are disciplined, hardship-tolerant and loyal to both firm and nation.

The analysis reveals three interconnected dynamics. First, recruitment and selection practices filter for endurance and deference, positioning expatriation as a non-negotiable rite of passage. Second, overseas assignments are governed through dense webs of coercive, bureaucratic and normative controls, including contracts, pledges, dormitories and performance systems. Third, expatriates themselves embody a deep ambivalence: fatigue, curtailed autonomy and family strain coexist with pride in representing China abroad.

The study reframes expatriation from integration into host-country contexts towards containment within firm- and nation-bounded regimes. It shows how labour control regimes travel across borders, with expatriates themselves acting as carriers of disciplinary systems. By situating expatriation within the sociology of work, the paper highlights how the global expansion of capital depends not only on financial and technological resources but also on the disciplined, ambivalent labour of expatriates, who serve simultaneously as agents of national projection and as subjects of organisational containment.

PAPER SESSION 7

16:00-17:30

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BSA Publications Special Activity - Room 1.218

Writing a Great WES Article: Publishing Insights from the Editors

Marek Korczynski

(Work, Employment and Society Co-Editor in Chief, University of Nottingham)

In this interactive workshop, one of the WES Editors-in-Chief, Marek Korczynski, will talk about publishing in WES, share experience of what makes a great WES paper and tell you how you might want to get involved in the journal. There will be opportunities for participants to consider papers they think have made the most significant impact on their work, and that have made them think about things in new ways.

Cities, Mobilities, Place & Space - Room 3.211

From Pubs, Bars and Nightclubs to the Night-time Economy: Nightlife as a Social Problem in Urban Governments in the UK and France from the 1990s to the 2000s

Audrey Safa

(University of Lille)

In the years 1990-2000, nightlife became a subject of debate in the UK and France, as evidenced by the ideas of the “24-hour city” and the “night-time economy” (NTE), and the UK’s Licensing Act 2003, and the emergence of the “Charte de la vie nocturne” and “politiques de la nuit” in France. In many cities, these years were a turning point in the way nightlife was managed as local authorities supported the liberalisation of licensing laws. Following on Talbot’s work (Talbot, 2007), this paper examines this period of change to understand how this shift occurred, focusing on two cities: Bristol (UK) and Lille (France).

Drawing on critical socio-history (Bourdieu, 1980) and the sociology of social problems (Bernardin, 2022; Gusfield, 1984; Spector and Kistune, 1977), this research mobilises a constructivist approach to understand how nightlife has been defined and developed by local governments. The research combines local archives, press archives, and interviews with NTE actors, elected officials, and local civil servants.

Despite the apparent similarity, the comparison reveals that this turning point is different in Bristol and Lille. Not only can this be explained by the divergent trajectories of licensing laws, but also by contrasting sociologies of the stakeholders involved in nightlife government, which has led to diverse framings constraining potential change. In Bristol, the economic perspective of nightlife has prevailed, pushed by local nightlife actors and urban planners. Whereas in France, the public order aspect has predominated, pressed by groups of residents and some bar and club owners.

"Come As You Are": Performativities of Tolerance and Inclusion in Black Queer Nightlife Spaces

Zo (Sandiswa) Mapukata

(London School of Economics and Political Science)

This paper focuses on three Black queer parties in London and Johannesburg (Pxssy Palace, Attack the Wick, and Same Sex Saturday) that functioned to enable the “choreographies of support that facilitate...individuality on the dance floor” (Adeyemi 2022: 65) and produced collectivities of Black queer joy. The parties all had a stated aim of creating safe spaces for their attendees through various performativities of inclusivity and accountability. Moreover, they aimed to create what Poe calls “alternative worlds where Black queer people can experience corporeal freedom and different forms of being, temporarily freed from the capture and control of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy” (2025:1). However, the stated aims were rendered complex by socio-economic and socio-political factors that contributed to the ruptures of these performativities of inclusivity and accountability. These ruptured performativities manifested through the construction, albeit in some cases subconscious, of other hierarchies. Furthermore, the ephemeral and event-based nature of these parties undermined

their attempts at creating speculative Black queer places and worlds that rejected the racist and homonormative structures that often appear in fixed gay bars and gay-bourhoods (Poe 2025). Ultimately, the paper argues that there remains value in these ephemeral spaces as the performativities of inclusivity and accountability that occurred within them provided the means for embodied spatialities which enabled the temporary realization of Black queer utopias.

Working the Urban Environment: Tourism, Labour & Precarity

Kath Bassett

(University of York)

Sociological studies of tourism labour have predominantly emphasised its human-centred dimensions, particularly emotional, aesthetic, and performative work, illuminating how workers stage and manage interactions with visitors. Whilst vital, this focus has tended to underplay the more-than-human entanglements through which tourism is enacted. Building on scholarship in nature tourism that highlights workers' attunement to and management of ecological forces, this presentation argues that urban tourism work must likewise be understood as environmental labour. Drawing on ethnographic research with touristic organisations in Edinburgh, I show how workers continually manage environments that are ecological, material, cultural, and technological. First, they negotiate weather and material environments, contending with rain, slippery pavements, broken signage, and other infrastructural instabilities. Second, they manage urban cultural atmospheres, navigating masculinised drunkenness, heckling, and other affective disruptions to sustain a safe and welcoming scene. Third, they engage with technological environments, managing algorithmic infrastructures like TripAdvisor where reputational value is converted into spatial visibility on platformed maps. Conceptualising tourism work as environmental labour unsettles the dominant focus on human-centred service interactions and expands sociological accounts of labour, care, and infrastructure. It also foregrounds how the volatility of urban environments is absorbed by precarious workers, showing that precarity is not only a feature of their employment but also of the environments they are tasked with stabilising in sustaining sociability and touristic placemaking.

Culture, Media, Sport & Food 1 - Room 2.219

Impeachment and Backlash: Visual Clashes at the 2025 Seoul Queer Parade

Hyeran Jeong

(Seoul National University)

This study analyzes the visual and affective clashes surrounding the 2025 Seoul Queer Parade. Following the anti-impeachment rallies against President Yoon Suk-yeol in April and the Namtaeryeong solidarity protest, queer groups emerged as powerful political actors. The Seoul Queer Parade thus became a stage where their expanded political influence was visibly enacted during a moment of democratic crisis. Conservative Christian groups responded with counter-protests and placards such as "Repent," seeking to attack and delegitimize the parade.

These confrontations exceeded mere homophobia or moral denunciation. They revealed a struggle between democratic profanation of urban space and authoritarian attempts at re-sanctification. Drawing on Agamben, the parade can be understood as profaning restricted urban sites and reclaiming them as common sensory grounds. Conservative groups, in turn, engaged in what Szcześniak and Zaremba (2019), drawing on Sedgwick, call "paranoid looking"—interpreting queer bodies and images as signs of sin. Their 'iconoclastic impulse' (Latour) to suppress rainbow flags and drag performances was less an expression of hatred than a reactionary response to queer political visibility and the visual current of democratization.

The metaphor of "religious sin" and practices of visual repression allowed far-right actors to articulate, in displaced form, their desire to return to authoritarian order at a time when their legitimacy was weakened after impeachment. The 2025 Seoul Queer Parade, therefore, exposes how publicness is constituted not by harmony but through visual clashes in which democratic aspirations confront reactionary nostalgia.

Neither Queer, Nor Just a Transaction: Double Moral Anxiety and the Boundary Work of Intimacy in Otome Cosplay Commissions

Ziyu Deng, Qing Xiao

(Oxford Internet Institute)

This article explores how young women in China engage with otome cosplay commissions—transactions in which fans pay female cosplayers to embody male romantic characters from dating simulation games—in ways that both subvert and reproduce dominant gender and intimacy norms. Drawing on 32 interviews with clients and performers, we trace how participants navigate a double moral anxiety stemming from two intertwined forms of stigma: transactional shame (the fear of being seen as purchasing or selling affection) and queer shame (the unease around same-sex emotional intimacy between women).

While the practice enables participants to experiment with a feminized, consumer-driven model of intimacy—where women actively define, purchase, and orchestrate their ideal romance—it simultaneously triggers anxieties about violating patriarchal scripts of heteronormativity and emotional propriety. To manage these tensions, participants produce what we term realignment speech, discursively distancing themselves from any association with sex work, homoeroticism, or moral deviance. Through this boundary work, they reframe their actions not as “buying love” or “loving a woman,” but as “immersing in fantasy” and “reviving a character.”

We argue that this ambivalent mode of intimacy—transgressive in practice yet normatively policed in self-understanding—reveals how patriarchal and market logics converge to structure not only what forms of intimacy are possible, but also how they must be talked about. This study contributes to cultural sociology, gender theory, and the sociology of emotions by showing how shame, fantasy, and legitimacy intersect in shaping the fragile moral order of feminized digital intimacy labor.

“Be Fun and Flirty, Not Raunchy”’: Post-Hefner Playboy’s Digital Rebranding

Daisy McManaman

(University of York)

This paper examines how Playboy, once synonymous with mid-twentieth-century soft-core print culture, has sought to reinvent itself in the post-Hefner era through creator-led digital platforms. While much feminist scholarship has treated Playboy as either an icon of sexual liberation or a site of entrenched patriarchal power, less attention has been paid to how its legacy has been reworked in digital economies of sexual labour. Drawing on critical discourse and visual analysis of Playboy’s digital platforms (Playboy Plus and The Playboy Club), this paper interrogates how familiar tropes of the “girl next door” are repackaged for online consumption, and how tensions around consent, nostalgia, and empowerment are negotiated in a contemporary digital platform based context.

The analysis highlights three key dynamics: first, the persistence of aesthetic conventions and branding strategies that reproduce Playboy’s historical ideals of desirability; second, the ways in which digital creators assert new forms of agency while remaining bound by corporate governance and content restrictions; and third, the ethical complications of image reuse and archival repurposing, which raise questions about continuity, consent, and labour.

By situating Playboy’s digital platforms within debates on postfeminism, digital sexual labour, and platform governance, this paper argues that Playboy’s ongoing presence illustrates how the cultural logics of legacy media institutions are reworked rather than erased in digital contexts. In doing so, it shows how histories of gendered representation continue to resonate within the shifting temporalities of online media economies.

Cabaret as Health Promotion Empowering LGBT+ Lives

Julie Peters

(University of Melbourne, Deakin University)

In the current political era, there is an urgent need to demystify/demythologise LGBTQA+ lives. We can't be what we can't see. Nor do some people want us to be what they don't want to imagine. Shared stories, have for millennia, helped us build both our individual and the group conscious, both through onto-formativity (Kosik 1976) and function status declaration (Searle 2010). Our subject formation is highly dependent on observing this doing and declaration. Allain De Button (2014) suggests we use the techniques of the art of storytelling to emotionally connect and shed light on hidden psychological, social and political themes. It then seems obvious to use storytelling to influence novel ways of being, doing and saying.

The author has embraced a number of strategies for translating her research into helping trans and gender diverse individuals archive more liveable lives. Strategies for improving physical, psychological and social health, gaining agency and even for making one's life a work of art (Nietzsche 1882).

In this proposed paper the author critiques her use of cabaret, trans'ing and queering the narrative, using levity and humour to demythologise trans and gender. The cabaret content is directly based on her research into the sociology of gender and gender non-conformity, as well as promoting social justice and equity.

Culture, Media, Sport & Food 2 - Room 3.210

Women on the Oche: Gender, Culture and Consumption at Televised Darts Events

Catherine Themen, Ellis Goddard

(Manchester Metropolitan University)

This research examines sports fandom through the lens of women's spectatorship and consumption at darts tournaments. We explore the extent to which nostalgic discourse is positioned relative to conventional understandings of gender and social class which have utility for sports broadcasting based in a 'hyper-version' of a traditional public house recreated at live darts events, and the ways in which this is negotiated by women darts fans. The analysis sits in the broader body of sociology of sport literature, specifically to examine the narrative that gentrifying demands and contemporary consumption in popular sports. Using auto ethnographic and interview fieldwork, the research advances knowledge on women's participation and fandom at PDC darts events, and understood as a site of contestation that disrupts established discourses on gender and fandom. The carnivalesque atmosphere plays a role in this, as participants were found to perform a sense of identity and form belonging that have materiality in narratives on biography, sociality, belonging and nostalgic consumption.

Between Liberation and Confinement: Women in the W(NBA) Metaverse

Nurhanis Abdullah Sani

(Leeds Beckett University)

The sport metaverse is increasingly imagined as a transformative space for fan engagement, offering new opportunities for immersion, connection and participation. These developments have been celebrated for their potential to reshape digital leisure and sport, yet they also raise critical questions about power, exclusion and inequality. While scholars have examined digital fandom, consumer behaviour and athlete representation, the experiences of women as fans remain notably underexplored. This paper addresses this gap by situating women's fandom in the sport metaverse within broader sociological debates about technology, embodiment and power. Drawing on the theory of claustropolitanism, it highlights the paradox of mobility and confinement in digital society, while digital feminist theory interrogates gendered hierarchies of visibility and participation. This paper therefore considers how these perspectives illuminate women's engagement in immersive sport environments. Together, they show how the metaverse creates opportunities for connection and creativity, while also reproducing structures of surveillance, marginalisation and constraint. By bringing these theories into dialogue, this paper contributes to debates on digital leisure, gender and sport, and examines whether women's experiences in the metaverse are better understood as liberating or confining.

Hiking Together by Hiking Alone: A Case Study of a Profitable Hiking Club in Beijing

Jie Su

(University of Hong Kong)

The past few years have witnessed the rapid growth of profitable hiking clubs and urban residents' increasing participation in organized hikes in Beijing. Against the backdrop of dissolving traditional social ties and rising estrangement among urban residents, this research combines interviews and participant observation to explore the emergence of hiking clubs through a case study of a profitable hiking club. The findings reveal that the club caters to urban individualism in China. Both the nature of hiking and the guidance of the club encourage participants to focus on self-assessment and self-care rather than bravery or cooperation. This hiking culture strengthens the individualized disposition of participants, particularly in high-intensity hiking groups, predominantly composed of individuals with higher socioeconomic status. These participants prioritize their performance and health, feeling at ease and free from pressure. But hiking actually creates a "liminality" space where participants can construct a "patchwork of a new self", starting with self-introductions. In low-intensity groups, participants downplay their professional selves, highlighting personal hobbies. By contrast, participants in high-intensity groups often retain a focus on their "socially established selves", such as professional identities, thus not fully achieving self-remaking. Only by constructing a "new self" can participants immerse themselves in hiking, blending into the group while taking care of themselves. This process of "hiking together by hiking alone" not only renews the self but also offers a way to rebuild relationships with "others". The research can help us understand urban China's mentality and the possibility of a new morality within an individualized culture.

Emerging Themes & Special Events - Room 4.206

Special Event

Book Launch: *Walking: A Sociological Field Guide*

Emma Jackson, Karis Champion, Viji Kuppan, Kirsteen Paton, Robin Smith, Katherine Quinn, Charlotte Bates

(Cardiff University)

This special event/book launch at the BSA Conference celebrates the publication of *Walking: A sociological field guide*. The event will feature a fireside chat with the editors, Charlotte Bates and Emma Jackson, who will share their reflections on the collection and their experiences of walking as a teaching technique and as a research practice, and readings and a discussion with some of the contributors, including Karis Champion, Viji Kuppan, Kirsteen Paton, Robin Smith, and Katherine Quinn. After the event, there will also be an opportunity to go out in small groups to try out some of the walking exercises published in the collection together.

Walking: A sociological field guide
Edited by Charlotte Bates and Emma Jackson
Manchester University Press, 2026

Drawing on and contributing to a wide interest in walking across the creative arts, humanities and social sciences, the sociologists and writers in this collection put on their boots and take to the streets to craft their work in lively, mobile and sensuous ways. Together, their work explores the significance of studying social life on foot, and shows what can be gained from thinking on the move. Interweaving key sociological ideas with walking concepts and methods, the collection opens new possibilities for both learning about and representing social life. By going for a walk, each essay develops an openness to the world around us and cultivates new ways of writing about people and places. At the same time, the book offers a distinctively sociological perspective. Each unique walk is an encounter with key sociological ideas, showing that sociology is for everyone and can be found everywhere, even in the most unexpected places.

Environment & Society 1 - Room 4.213

Gongs of Teesside: Place, Voice, Industrial Transitions and Climate Futures

Sarah Irwin, Nell Catchpole

(University of Leeds)

A tradition of research has explored deindustrialisation and its material and cultural legacies as these are inherited and reworked through time and across generations (Mah 2012, Strangleman 2017). How people think about and relate to place and its past, and perceive current constraints and possibilities, all influence how regional Net Zero policy initiatives are received or contested, in turn shaping prospects for transitioning to a just, sustainable, low carbon future (Thomas et al 2022, Devine-Wright 2022). Teesside offers a fascinating context for interrogating these dynamics with current government interventions seeking to bolster Net Zero technologies, low carbon manufacturing, job growth and regional renewal. In our novel collaborative sound art research project, supported by Historic England, we are working across generations and diverse social groups in Teesside to explore citizens' affective engagement with local places, and their views about possible futures. We have made gongs of steel with local blacksmiths, held ceremonial gong soundings in places chosen by local people, and engaged young adults in documenting these activities and curating an exhibition. Listening as a method interrupts the usual flow of daily living and invites different kinds of engagement with place, helping to surface participants' memories, meanings linked to chosen places, and ideas about place-based continuities and changes. Through these practices, conversations across generations, and interviews, we interrogate the diverse ways in which our participants experience and think about continuities and changes in a region marked for transition, and how they perceive local economic, ecological and climate-relevant interventions.

'It's not a normal house': A Qualitative Longitudinal View of Everyday Life and Change in Innovative Low Carbon Homes

Fiona Shirani, Nick Pidgeon, Karen Henwood

(Cardiff University)

In order to meet UK government net zero targets and address the climate emergency, changes to housing are required. However, social scientists recognise that material changes to housing hold implications for the experiences, lives and relationships of those who live in them. In this paper, we consider whether new build low carbon homes represent a transformational innovation to residents. To do this, we draw on a qualitative longitudinal dataset involving interviews with residents of innovative housing developments over a four-year period. Adopting this temporally sensitive perspective enables us to consider residents' motivations for moving to the homes, how these are informed by past experiences and anticipated futures, as well as how views change over time in relation to lived experience. We consider moments where residents make connections to longer-term futures and how this differs from other research findings where people describe feeling too overwhelmed by concerns in the present to engage with what may be perceived to be temporally distant challenges, such as climate change. Our presentation makes the case for a qualitative longitudinal methodological approach as one which supports temporal thinking and accounts for participants' dynamic lives. In particular this is important for elucidating continuities and changes in participants' accounts of their present experiences and anticipated futures, which are impacted by seasonal variations in the homes' performance. In light of wider imperatives towards decarbonisation, our qualitative longitudinal approach also enables us to consider individual impacts of broader social changes.

What is a Transition Narrative? Story, Place and Reality in the Hunt for Decarbonisation

Dominic Hinde

(University of Glasgow)

This paper critically examines the pervasive narratives of transition in contemporary climate discourse and its claims to diminish and manage future risk. While such narratives often project optimism and inevitability, they can also be deceptive, masking the material and social complexities inherent in

adaptation and decarbonization. Central to this analysis is the concept of climate as both a boundary object in media space and as a hyperobject manifesting in physical space, and how these interact. This paper critiques not only the dominant 'just transition' narrative and explores the disconnect between elite-produced stories of decarbonisation and the realities on the ground, but also the processes of media production that lead to such narratives emerging. It argues for a realist, materially grounded approach to storytelling, emphasizing ethnographic sensitivity and the limitations of narrative alone as a tool in the face of physical climate realities. Using a brief case study of post-industrial West Virginia, the paper explores how media, politics, and community experience interact in shaping and resisting transition narratives. Ultimately, it proposes a methodological framework that combines critical media analysis with ethnographic study to produce more effective and honest transition narratives.

Environment & Society 2 - Room 4.214

Resisting Climate Colonialism: Competing Knowledge Formations in the Radical Climate Movement

Tobias Mueller

(University of Cambridge)

The climate crisis is deeply entangled with colonialism; in its origin, its impacts and the possibilities for meaningful responses, as concepts such as climate colonialism indicate. What has received little attention to date is how colonial political economies and epistemes shape present responses to the climate crisis. What could decolonial climate politics look like and what are the challenges activists face in advancing these ideas? This paper addresses these questions by investigating how activists in a radical part of the global climate movement, Extinction Rebellion, draw on different forms of knowledge in order to make sense of the entanglements between colonialism and climate breakdown. The paper draws on an ethnographic vignette of a direct action on the 230th anniversary of the Haitian Revolution, where activists climbed the balcony of the Corporation of London's Guildhall, to call for climate reparations and decolonial "co-liberation". From such actions' vantage point, I will discuss different knowledge orders that have shaped the movement globally, from climate science to anticolonial Pan-Africanism, and how activist intellectuals develop new concepts to combine ecological and decolonial concerns such as planet repairs, Maangamizi and ecocide/genocide.

The paper is part of a multi-sited ethnographic study of the movement from its foundation in the UK to its contested rise in Mexico, South Africa and the US. The paper seeks to push debates in the sociology of the environment and critical studies of race and decolonization to take more seriously activists' intellectual contributions, making the case for a planetary social theory from below.

Entangled Rhythms: River, Community Life, and Hydrosocial Transformations on Sagar Island in the Indian Sundarbans

Sohini Chakraborty

(Indian Institute of Technology Delhi)

The deltaic region of the Southern Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal is marked by the rhythmic 'play' of rivers, recurring changes in geography, and shifting island terrains. Intensified by the climate crisis, this instability aggravates the ecological fragility of estuarine islands. This paper focuses on Sagar Island, the largest inhabited island in the Indian Sundarbans, to discuss how the dynamics of water flows and land loss are entangled with the lived experiences of its inhabitants and shape community life. Everyday life on the island reflects an uneasy coexistence of the remnants of a prosperous past and present precarities. To understand the continuities and transformations, the paper analyses three interrelated processes: first, the decline of the island's earlier maritime prominence; second, the reconfigurations of a prominent Hindu pilgrimage site; and third, the urgency of inhabitants to migrate to relatively safer resettlement zones or colonies. Drawing together cartographic and archival records with ethnographic findings, it highlights the social implications of this shift, particularly how islanders are rendered ecological refugees while simultaneously exercising agency in remaking place and community. Within the cycles of displacement and resettlement, place is actively negotiated through the entanglements between changing community life, the persistence of memory, and the anticipation of safety. The paper

shows that in waterscapes where social, political, and economic life remain entangled with the ebb and flow, the framework of hydrosociality offers critical insights into how communities adapt, endure, and transform under ecological uncertainty.

Swimming in Compromised Waters: Practising Care, Risk and Ethics in Contaminated Blue Spaces

Kate Moles, Rebecca Olive
(Cardiff University)

In this paper, we reflect on what it means to swim ethically in compromised times, where climate breakdown, pollution, and cultural and material inequalities shape our engagements with blue spaces. Drawing on my research with outdoor swimmers and swimming communities, we explore how ideas of 'clean' and 'safe' water are not only about physical health, but also saturated with moral, political and emotional weight.

Drawing on the concepts of polluted leisure (Evers) and purity politics (Shotwell), I attend to how swimmers manage the contradictions of swimming in places marked by environmental degradation. Rather than resolving these tensions, we suggest that swimmers live with and through them, using everyday strategies of vulnerability, complicity and connection to justify or reframe their practices. These negotiations often reflect broader social inequalities, privileging those with the capacity to mitigate risk, access cleaner sites, or retreat from polluted environments altogether. We consider how swimmers' bodies become sites where the ethics of environmental engagement are felt, contested, and enacted, and argue that ideas of 'clean and safe' swimming reproduces exclusions, obscuring the uneven ways that pollution, harm and access are distributed across communities and geographies. Our work argues that outdoor swimming offers not just a site of leisure and community, but a sociological site of inquiry through which to reimagine ethical relations to polluted environments in ways that attend to responsibility, complicity, and the refusal of purity as an enduring ideal.

Families & Relationships 1 - Room 4.204

Night-time Care as a Gendered Parenting Practice in Finland, the UK and Spain

Erika Grigorjew, Petteri Eerola, Katherine Twamley, Pedro Romero Balsas, Armi Mustosmäki
(University of Jyväskylä)

This study examines how gendered (in)equalities are embedded in parents' night-time care practices in Finland, the UK, and Spain. Previous research has shown that night-time care and sleep are highly gendered matters. Mothers usually have main responsibility for caregiving at night, experiencing more disturbed sleep than fathers. Families also tend to prioritize fathers' sleep. The theoretical background draws on feminist care ethics and parenting culture. In line with feminist care ethics, night-time care is approached as a relational and responsive practice. The concept of parenting culture is used to examine how gendered patterns of night-time care reflect broader cultural ideas and expectations about parenting.

The empirical data consists of individual in-depth interviews conducted in three socially, culturally and politically different countries: Finland, the UK and Spain. The interviewees were mothers and fathers of young children, and the sample included parents from both mixed-sex and same-sex parent families. Using a narrative-comparative approach, the ongoing analysis examines both country-specific patterns and cross-national similarities in the cultural frameworks that shape night-time care.

A Good Send Off

Yvonne Bennett
(Independent Researcher)

Is death one of the last British societal taboo subjects, a conversation few seem prepared to tackle? This paper examines the theme of death and funerals, focusing on funeral rituals in the present day and the role women play in them. My research was a comparative study involving data analysis from a

fieldwork trip to the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, alongside interview responses from women residing in other parts of Britain. Additionally, I share my own experiences.

My study delved into Christian funeral rituals in Britain, exploring the role of women in these traditions, drawing on qualitative research conducted within an ethnographic framework. This paper will discuss who holds the power when it comes to organising a funeral; who decides what role each of the bereaved will undertake.

A main theme that emerged during analysis was that of “doing the right thing” for the deceased. For all other major life events there is a plethora of advice and information: from Pinterest to Wedding Fayres yet it seems there is only the undertaker to guide one through this event, one that we all will face.

However, times are changing. Women are no longer banned from attending the internment although, on Lewis, the majority still choose to do so. People are also beginning to organise their own funerals ensuring that in times of grief their bereaved can indeed “do the right thing”.

Tattooing as Storytelling: The Tattoos of Mothers Who Have Had Their Child Removed from Their Care

Lisa Morriss, Siobhan Beckwith
(Lancaster University)

Our project, Marking Motherhood, funded by the Sociological Review Foundation Kick Start Fund, explores the significance of tattooing for mothers following state intervention and child removal. Taking a material methods approach to ‘object interviews’ (Woodward, 2020), we found that the women create an archive inscribed on their skin (Morriss and Beckwith, 2025).

All seven mothers we interviewed made the connection between tattooing and storytelling. The stories and meanings of the tattoos may be visible or hidden, with the placement of the tattoo as a key consideration. Moreover, tattoos could be visible, but in the form of carefully chosen emblems, with deep significance to the mother, yet the meaning not comprehensible to others. The shame of child removal complicated this decision-making process as visible tattoos often led to difficult questions.

Our analysis identified five elements of storytelling:

- Who are the stories told to?
- A story of separation.
- A story of ongoing motherhood.
- A story of change.
- A story of the future.

We will discuss each of these in turn. Finally, the audience will be invited to collect a set of postcards created as part of the project.

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Families & Relationships 2 - Room 4.209

"This is family": How Russian LGBTQ+ Parents Maintain Relationships with Families of Origin against All Odds

Olga Doletskaya
(University College London)

This paper examines how Russian LGBTQ+ parents build and maintain relationships with families of origin, particularly the grandmothers (the babushki) which may become either sources of support or

potential danger. The paper is based on fieldwork conducted in 2022-2023 combining in-depth interviews with parents, in-person participant observation, and an online ethnography in order to examine the experiences of queer parents having and raising children in authoritarian Russia. The dominating body of research on queer kinship discusses how queer people's relationships with families of origin are often disrupted or severed, and instead, queer people form families of choice. In this paper, I will challenge this paradigm, exploring how LGBTQ+ parents in Russia maintain relationships with their families of origin despite the risks of those families reporting them to the hostile government. I will explore how these relationships, particularly those with babushki, had both a deep cultural significance, and shielded parents from potential risks and queerphobia. I will analyse those relationships through the lens of kinship, care, and power. The material may offer rich comparative insights with the work of Jennifer Utrata and Anna Shadrina, respectively, who both show how straight Russian women often rely on and exploit their mothers' role as babushka. I will further show how my interlocutors managed to build robust networks of families of origin, chosen families, community members, and trusted practitioners which formed self-described 'bubbles'. Those bubbles both shielded them from queerphobia and simultaneously disconnected them from the everyday political and social reality in Russia.

Comparative Analysis of Colonial Legacies in Global Queer Politics: Colonialities and Resistances in light of Global Historical Sociology

Matthew Waites

(University of Glasgow)

This paper offers insights from a comparative analysis of colonial legacies from empires associated with Eurocentrism, developed with Sonia Corrêa and Gustavo Gomes da Costa in our forthcoming co-edited volume *Colonialisms and Queer Politics: Sexualities, Genders and Unsettling Colonialities*. The third wave of global historical sociology associated with sociologists such as Julian Go and Gurminder Bhambra has emphasised transboundary social processes and colonialities persisting within former empire frames, and in light of the call for such connected sociologies, this research examines different colonial legacies with respect to sexualities and genders beyond heterosexual norms and the gender binary. Colonial legacies considered include those from Portuguese, Spanish, British, French, Dutch, Ottoman, Russian, Belgian, German, Italian and United States empires. The focus is on periods following formal decolonisation, with particular attention to the present. An initial section discusses legal regulation, especially contrasting the British Empire's criminalisation legacies with decriminalisation legacies such as in French and Dutch contexts, and recent decriminalisations in former Portuguese colonies. A further section considers wider social regulation, including through religious legacies (especially Christian churches of different denominations) often associated with educational institutions, and biopolitical effects such as of the 'homosexual'. A final section turns to contestations of colonial legacies, with attention to differing extents of LGBTIQ+ movement activity including NGOs and networks, as well as governmental actions. Overall the paper presents an argument for the value of comparative analysis between former imperial frames in the analysis of sexualities and genders in contemporary sociology.

"I Really Wanted to Marry a Woman": Sexual Identity among Tongzhi in China Born in the 1960s and the 1970s

Yuan Zhong

(School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

Same-sex marriage has not been legalised in China, compelling most same-sex-attracted men, commonly referred to as tongzhi in the Chinese context, to enter into heterosexual marriages. While there has been a growing body of research on tongzhi men's marriages, three problems remain. First, scholarly exploration has largely centred on younger generations born after the 1980s, marginalising older generations. Second, with an emphasis on sociocultural factors, these studies have paid limited attention to the socioeconomic forces shaping Chinese heteronormative marriage and family systems. Third, many studies are confined to Western modern frameworks of (homo)sexual identity, failing to adequately capture the diversity and complexity of Chinese homosexual practices. To address these gaps, this research investigates tongzhi men born in the 1960s and the 1970s, and poses the question: How have the socioeconomic conditions shaped their sexual experiences inside and outside marriage?

Drawing upon in-depth interviews conducted between 2018 and 2019 with 10 tongzhi men from both rural and urban China, this research qualitatively examines their experiences through the lens of sexual identity. The findings suggest that for this older generation, homosexuality is more likely to be a sexual relationship and/or an act rather than a sexual identity. Empirically, this research enriches the existing research on Chinese tongzhi men. Theoretically, it challenges Western models of (homo)sexual identity through including the non-western Chinese case into wider debates on (homo)sexuality.

Coming out in Chinese families: A Relational Approach to Politics, Individualisation and Experiences of Coming out to Parents

Fengqiang Wang

(University of Bristol)

This paper rethinks 'coming out' through the lens of relational politics (Kong, 2023). While coming out has often been framed in Euro-American frameworks as an act of individual self-assertion or visibility politics, my doctoral research demonstrates that in contemporary China it is fundamentally relational: a process negotiated through intergenerational ties, obligations of filial piety, and shifting expectations of family life. Drawing on in-depth semi-structured interviews with 28 participants, including 14 young adults and their 14 parents (interviewed together first and then follow-up individual interviews with adult children), I argue that coming out in China, or in any context where family remains central to identity, responsibility, and care, is embedded in ongoing negotiations within kinship networks. Rather than detaching from family, individuals navigate complex dynamics of personal identity and emotional interdependence. Coming out is theorised as a site of tension and relational transformation, where cultural values such as filial piety, family continuity, and interdependence are both challenged and reaffirmed. Empirically, it contributes new insights into the lived experiences of Chinese LGB+ individuals and their families, a growing area in global sexuality and family studies. Theoretically, it offers a culturally grounded rethinking of coming out theory, highlighting relationality and familial negotiations. It also advances the theory of individualisation by reframing it through a relational lens, offering the concept of relational individualisation as a useful analytical tool for other contexts where family plays central cultural roles.

Medicine, Health & Illness 1 - Room 1.219

A Tale of Two Autonomies: Medicalisation and the Legitimation of Assisted Dying in Parliamentary Debate

Janna Bryson

(University of Cambridge)

Medical assistance in dying (MAID) now accounts for 4.7% of all deaths in Canada and is supported by 70-85% of the public. Yet less than a decade ago, it was a highly stigmatised and rarely committed criminal offence. The introduction of MAID in Canada involved a significant socio-moral shift through which the intentional infliction of death upon oneself or another, under specific circumstances, was legitimised. This paper examines the role of medicalisation in this legitimisation process. It presents a critical discourse analysis of the parliamentary debates for legislation that introduced MAID for fatal illnesses in 2016 (Bill C-14) and for non-fatal illnesses in 2021 (Bill C-7). This analysis shows that 'autonomy' is frequently used in arguments for MAID; however, the distinction between autonomy as a liberal political value and as a bioethical principle is often blurred. The paper argues that this blurring is made possible by the medicalisation of MAID. The blurring makes political arguments for autonomy more effective by implicitly invoking the strengths of the bioethical concept of autonomy, which benefits first from its association with the highly trusted, altruistic, and scientific reputation of the field of medicine, and second from its status as a dominant principle in the field of bioethics. Ultimately, this dual discourse of autonomy helped legitimise MAID by drawing on and reinforcing the medicalisation of MAID. These findings highlight the political capacity of bioethical frameworks, pointing toward the importance of the sociology of bioethics for understanding the growth of assisted dying in Canada and beyond.

The Power of Ambivalence and ‘Going Rogue’: A Critical Phenomenological Exploration of Experiences of Seeking Help for a Suicide Attempt within Scotland’s Statutory Services

Ruth Chartoff, Amy Chandler, Rebecca Helman, Georgie Akehurst, Joe Anderson, Sarah Huque
(University of Edinburgh)

Recent work in the sociology of suicide applies a critical phenomenological lens to consider embodied experiences of suicide, as socially situated and shaped (Chandler 2019). While phenomenology has a long and sometimes contested history, critical approaches engage with the complexity of individual experiences in relationship with broader cultural, socio-political structures, with an eye toward action and influencing change (Guenther 2021, Fanon 1952). As such, this approach is well-suited to exploring narratives of help-seeking before, during, and after a suicide attempt, and considering how these experiences can help us to re-envision what care in the context of suicide means. In this paper, we present an analysis centred on narratives from people who had attempted suicide about their experiences seeking help from statutory institutions, including police, ambulance, and hospital services, drawn from a large, multi-site qualitative study of suicide in Scotland. Our findings highlight the importance of ‘bending’ or breaking institutional rules to individualise care, temporality and changing experiences with services, and the role of ambivalence in highlighting help-seekers’ understanding (but not acceptance) of the structural constraints of statutory services. This analysis incorporates an orientation toward futurity (Ahmed 2007) and drive by people who have attempted suicide to use their stories to make services more responsive to lived experiences across diverse social positions (including at the intersections of social positions and diagnoses); these stories challenge us to consider possibilities for change within existing services, impacting lives presently, alongside a radical reimagining of care praxis to celebrate multiplicity and flexibility, building new approaches.

Disrupting Suicide? The Role of Activism in Creating Liveable Lives

Paro Ramesh, Ana Jordan, Lynne Gilmour
(University of Edinburgh)

Activism can play a vital role in shaping or challenging responses to suicide, yet it is under-examined and to date there has been little sociological work to understand how activists contribute to understandings of suicide mitigation and/or prevention. This presentation draws on a qualitative analysis of 20 UK campaigns on suicide to explore the intersection of activism and suicide.

Preliminary findings suggest that activists often reframe suicide as a collective issue of justice, rather than as an isolated personal tragedy. Activism can highlight how conditions of ‘unliveability’ (Cover 2016) - such as structural inequality, political violence, and social exclusion - render some lives disposable. Activists frequently further contest the depoliticised language of suicide prevention by situating deaths within broader struggles against oppression, and by using political activity to address cultural and structural conditions that contribute to suicidality (Mills 2018). At the same time, some activist campaigns can (partially) replicate and reinforce dominant, medicalised understandings of suicide as primarily a matter of individual mental illness. For example, some reflect wider policy discourses of ‘surveillance’ and ‘risk’ which can obscure the social, political, and economic contexts within which deaths by suicide occur (Oaten et al, 2023).

Exploring activists’ complex engagements with suicide broadens sociological understandings of the social and political contestation of suicide and underscores the importance of collective strategies in confronting conditions that produce vulnerability to suicide.

Medicine, Health & Illness 2 - Room 3.209

Buyers Clubs as Counter-Spaces: AIDS and Activism in 1980s America

Yi Wang
(University of Hong Kong)

Reflecting on the context of the AIDS crisis of the 1980s reveals that the disease was a medical as well as a sociocultural phenomenon. During the height of its epidemic in the 1980s and early 1990s in

America, AIDS was frequently constructed in discourse as a distant 'other' (Herek, 1999). This delineation not only intensified the widespread panic surrounding the disease but also marginalised those living with the virus.

This study examines the social, political, and medical narratives surrounding AIDS in 1980s America, with a focus on the role of 'Buyers Clubs'. 'Buyers Clubs' refer to underground organisations that arose during the height of the AIDS epidemic, to provide access to unapproved, experimental, or hard-to-get medications for people in desperate need (Epstein, 1996, p.224). Born in the midst of a socio-medical crisis, these clubs arose as significant counter-spaces, challenging both established boundaries in medical accessibility and dominant discourse. By analysing archives in 1980s, including Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, AIDS Treatment News, the paper situates Buyers Clubs as grassroots medical activism and mediated phenomena shaped through contemporary public discourse. The study proposes a space-based framework for medical sociology that links heterotopia, counter-space, stigma, and governmentality. In addition, this study reveals the transformative partnership between AIDS activists and non-governmental scientific bodies, highlighting how marginalised communities evolved from passive observers to formidable influencers in AIDS research and policy formulation.

The Lost Girls' and the Double Exclusion of Autistic Women

Eleanor White

(University of Edinburgh)

Understandings of autism are primarily androcentric—constructed and maintained through male-centered research, theory, and diagnostic processes. Accounts of Autistic women are rarely engaged and their voices 'lost,' indicating a need for sociological research that centers experiences previously marginalized. This paper critically examines the category of autism as socially constructed, elucidating how gendered expectations influence recognition, diagnosis, and lived experience. The experiences of these 'lost girls' are analyzed through sociological concepts of performativity (Butler, 1989), stigma (Goffman, 1986), minority stress (Meyer, 1995; 2013), and the social construction of health and illness.

Drawing on a sociologically informed phenomenological approach, eight late-diagnosed Autistic women participated in semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The small sample enabled the generation of thick description of experience, drawing on interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to foreground participant experience. Reflexively situating my positionality as a 'lost girl,' this study contributed to Autistic-led research aligned with 'nothing about us without us' (Charlton, 2000).

Findings indicate that participants felt left out of a neurotypical world, and how this led to masking behaviors. These behaviors, rooted in gendered norms, reveal how stereotypes of autism are both imposed and internalized. Analysis revealed how masking could be interpreted as a performative response to the compulsory system of neuronormativity, and how stigma leads to detrimental strategies of survival. The experiences of these Autistic women demonstrate their double exclusion arising from the intersection of their gender and neurominority identities—on the outside looking in at neurotypicality while simultaneously excluded from dominant constructions of autism itself.

Pain with What Name? The Enactment of Fibromyalgia within and beyond the Clinic since the 1990s

Lily Slanickova

(London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

This paper explores fibromyalgia as a 'contested' diagnostic category. It examines the enactment of its meaning, legitimacy and materiality in the United Kingdom over the last three decades. Drawing on Mol's (2002) concept of enactment, it investigates the configuration of fibromyalgia, not as a fixed clinical entity, but as produced in the clinic, by patient narrative, embedded in institutional logics and within diagnostic criteria. It explores how unstable sociomedical understandings of the condition reflect broader tensions of chronic illness, subjectivities of pain and uncertainty in biomedical practice.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain condition with no consensus regarding aetiology, treatment, symptomology or care, resulting in its characterisation as a 'contested illness'. Since its recognition by the WHO as a distinct and diagnosable clinical entity in 1992, fibromyalgia has occupied a paradoxical

position within and beyond the clinic. The recent history of fibromyalgia is fraught with struggles for recognition, management of uncertainty and provision of appropriate care. Through documentary analysis, I map how fibromyalgia related knowledge has been constructed, embedded and maintained through interconnected sociomedical structures. Part of a wider project, I trace the complicated web of meaning between the clinic, research, patient and healthcare practitioner, forming a basis for interviews with healthcare practitioners and those identifying with fibro-like symptomology. In tracing how fibromyalgia has been shaped since its recognition in the 1990s, this paper highlights how genealogies interact to structure care and recognition where a diagnostic category is a historically contingent site through which illness is enacted and negotiated.

Towards a Dynamic Framework of Care Burden: An Interim Analysis of Family Carers Raising Independently Mobile Technology-Dependent Children in Japan

Ikuko Tomomatsu

(University of Osaka)

This study presents an interim report from an ongoing mixed-methods investigation into the care burden experienced by family carers raising independently mobile Technology-Dependent Children (TDC) in Japan. A web-based survey was distributed to 80 carers; preliminary analysis is based on responses from 39 participants. Of these, 12 consented to participate in qualitative interviews, which were thematically analyzed.

Our findings reveal that carers' burden can be broadly categorized into Quantified Carers' Burden—such as care time and self-rated care burden—and Unquantified Carers' Burden, particularly persistent psychological anxiety about device safety and risk management. Even with access to home medical and welfare services, both forms of burden remain significant, and their type and intensity shift dynamically with the child's motor function, cognitive development, and medical care modalities. Based on the quantitative and qualitative data analyzed so far, we are developing a conceptual model mapping how improvements in motor function and mental growth, together with diverse medical care modalities, influence both measurable and unmeasurable dimensions of carers' burden. This model also illustrates how mobile TDCs may transition from passive recipients of care to active participants in self-care, reshaping the care relationship. Our interim results suggest the need for a more collaborative and flexible framework for supporting families—one that adapts to evolving child abilities and family dynamics. The final analysis will further refine this model and propose targeted support strategies to enhance mutual understanding and shared agency within the care relationship.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 1 - Room 2.217

When the Left Speaks Like the Right: Labour's Migration Discourse under Starmer

Jack Napier

(University of Cambridge, Department of Sociology)

The ascendance of Reform UK in electoral polling across England – and particularly in traditional northern Labour strongholds – has dramatically changed the cost-benefit analysis of the Labour party regarding its migration governance-related policy choices. This paper will analyse shifts in the Labour Party's migration governance proposals according to this developing electoral context through the lens of the governing Starmer Ministry. It will ask how the Starmer Ministry's approach to migration governance has been shaped by the British public's contentious debate on modern migration, analysing governmental justification narratives surrounding migration policy and changes to migration governance, specifically through conducting a discourse analysis of parliamentary debates, manifestos, interviews and speeches from the past year. It does so to understand who the government might be targeting with its messaging, expecting to reaffirm that the Starmer Ministry utilises anti-migration policy platforms partly to regain the electoral support it has lost to Reform UK. It will also assess whether the Starmer Ministry has effectively transformed the Labour Party into one that near-uniformly supports the Ministry's anti-migration platforms, or whether any pushback against the Ministry exists within the party's backbenches in the domain of migration governance. Contributing to the literature more broadly, this paper seeks to argue that, in climates of polarisation and illiberalism, even ostensibly left-of-centre

political parties can (and do) internalise anti-migration narratives, arguing essentially that civic efforts must be made to hold all political forces accountable for their respective roles in the ascendance of populism and illiberalism across the North Atlantic sphere.

"What Do We Do?": A Qualitative Study on Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Access to Emergency 999 Care for Injuries

Ashra Khanom, Lydia Jones, Helen Snooks, Alison Porter

(Swansea University)

Introduction: As European countries host increasing numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring equitable access to emergency healthcare becomes critical. In the UK, emergency care is free at the point of use, yet disparities in outcomes by ethnicity persist. This study explores the experiences of people seeking sanctuary in accessing emergency services following injury, focusing on their knowledge of services, help-seeking behaviours, and interactions with healthcare providers.

Methods: We used qualitative methods to explore these experiences, conducting four focus groups with 35 participants (16 male, 19 female) from Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, including asylum seekers (n=12) and refugees (n=23). Recruitment was supported by voluntary sector partners, and interpreters facilitated communication in Arabic and Ukrainian. Vignettes depicting injury scenarios were used to prompt discussion, and sessions followed a structured interview schedule. Data were analysed using a Framework approach informed by Dixon-Woods et al.'s Candidacy Model, which examines recognition of need, service knowledge, and navigation ability.

Results: Participants described multiple barriers to accessing emergency care, including long ambulance wait times, lack of NHS registration, language difficulties, and inadequate interpreter support. These challenges often led to reliance on informal networks and voluntary organisations. Confusion around emergency pathways and frustration with service responsiveness were common. Participants expressed a need for clearer information and culturally sensitive support.

Conclusion: Findings highlight the need to improve awareness, accessibility, and communication within emergency healthcare services for migrant populations. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensure equitable care and better health outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers.

Immigrant Voices in Historical Context: Sentiment and Textual Analysis of 'Moving Here' Digital Archive

Fatima Farakh dust

(Loughborough University)

This paper will present findings from studying immigrant experiences of moving to and settling in the UK, using sentiment and textual analysis of the Moving Here database. Created as a public initiative in early 2000s and covering more than a hundred years, the database contains self-submitted stories from immigrants and their families, offering a unique, ethically sourced corpus of personal narratives. The study coded each narrative by time period, country and region of origin, differentiating between the Commonwealth status and other territories, UK settlement location, and migration pathway (e.g., visa, family reunification, irregular entry). Analysis focused on migrants' descriptions of travel, settlement, and integration, including accounts of discrimination, barriers to employment, and perceived cultural differences. The research question guiding this study therefore is: how did legal status and geographical location shape the sentiments and lived experiences of immigrants settling in the UK? The findings reveal differences in experience based on both country of origin and region of settlement. Narratives from Commonwealth migrants often expressed high expectations of belonging, but these were tempered by disappointment when facing discrimination in housing or employment. Also, metropolitan areas generated more mixed accounts, combining opportunities for support with experiences of bias, while smaller towns were more frequently associated with feelings of exclusion. By systematically analysing immigrant stories in their own words, this study moves beyond statistics and policy papers, offering direct insights into how migrants themselves perceived their journeys and settlement experience, highlighting patterns of prejudices and biased behaviour rooted deeply within the British society.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 2 - Room 2.218

At Home in the Black Barbershop: An Ethnography of Domesticity, Community and Everyday Life in South London

Karis Champion

(City St Georges, University of London)

This paper draws on insights from an ethnographic study of a black-owned barbershop in South London. It uses 'domesticity' as an analytical lens to move beyond a discursive analysis of barbershops as dialogical spaces, by turning to explore how black people inhabit these spaces as part of their weekly routines and practices. The paper proposes that barbershops are everyday 'protected racialised spaces' that can foster a sense of belonging, comfort, and stability for diverse black publics. By exploring how one barbershop serves as a physical accessible space in the urban landscape where diverse black publics congregate, sometimes without even using the primary grooming service, I demonstrate their expansive capacity as community assets. In the context of urban change, which produces uneven racialised effects, the paper highlights the urgency of the local barbershop as an everyday space that can nourish black urban life and culture in the city.

The Perpetuation of Racial Inequality in the English School Leadership System

Lisa Thomas-Brown

(Leeds Beckett University)

This paper navigates the experiences of Black and Asian school leaders and will argue that while there have been some changes, the levels of under representation has remained static over several decades.

In 1981, an interim government report on English schools recommended that there should be an increase in the number of teachers from Black backgrounds (Rampton 1981). This was supported by the full report which echoed the need for increased representation (Swann 1985). Later research continued to give the same messaging but there was still little progress in increasing the numbers of teachers and school leaders from ethnically diverse backgrounds (Ross and Hutchings 2003). A decade later, Earley et al stated that 'teaching remains a largely white-ethnicity profession...' (Earley et al 2012 p40).

A further twenty years on from Ross and Hutchings, Worth et al (2022) noted the continued lack of representation within education. Within the school workforce it is noted that whilst over 18, 000 headteachers are from White British backgrounds, there are 405 Asian headteachers (including Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) and fewer than 250 Black (African and African Caribbean) headteachers (DFE 2025).

Using Counterstorytelling as used a methodological tool to advance the voices of minoritised teachers (Solorzando and Yosso 2002) this research shows the experiences of school leaders and the challenges that they encountered along the way. The findings include dynamic teachers who became school leaders whilst navigating unsupportive colleagues and culturally ignorant school systems.

Hair Discrimination and the Racialization of Black Young People's Bodies: A Critical Analysis of Racism in U.K. School Settings

Karis Champion, Siobhan O'Neill, Sweta Rajan-Rankin

(City St Georges, University of London)

Black children and young people's bodies have long been a site where questions of identity, representation, conformity, and control are contested both at the individual and the institutional level. Relatively little research has explored how race, racisms and racist logics operate through hair discrimination in U.K. schooling and the impacts of this on Black children and young people. This article considers Black children and young people's bodies as sites of struggle in school settings in the context of discriminatory school uniform policies which discipline their hair, thereby denying their right both to religious, cultural, and/or racial self-expression and to an education. Drawing on Critical Race Theory

as well as theories around racial embodiment, the article highlights contemporary stories of Black children's exclusion from school—both formally through suspension and exclusion and informally through the engendering of feelings of non-belonging—to explicate the ways in which systemic racism unfolds. The article illustrates that hair and hair discrimination are a unique way 'in' to understanding how Black children are racialized in school settings. It argues that the contemporary policing of the hair of Black children and young people is connected to longer histories of institutional banishment and institutional racism in educational settings.

On the Trajectories of British Anti-Racism: An Outline for a Genealogy of Political Blackness

Rajesh Bhattacharjee

(London School of Economics and Political Science Sociology)

My contribution aims to offer some reflections on my theoretical and methodological approach to understanding the changing nature of community-based anti-racist organising in Britain from the 1970s until the present. It will be based on my ongoing archival research and interviews with activists, focussing on the intellectual output of several key organisations including The Black Liberator, the Race Today Collective, Newham Monitoring Project, Black Lives Matter UK, etc. I aim to contest contemporary renderings of the history of anti-racist activism in Britain, specifically the teleological histories of anti-racist and community praxis which explicitly or implicitly ascribe elements observable in present day activism as necessary outcomes of inevitable progression (or regression). I aim to offer an alternative to this approach that identifies and tracks discontinuity as well as continuity, offering an account of anti-racism in Britain that comprehends the complexities of its trajectories. My contribution will offer a brief account of the rise and fall of the concept and practice of 'Political Blackness' to outline some of these shifts and continuities in the ideas and practices of community-based anti-racism in Britain, particularly in relation to the neoliberal state and economy, the decline of the British Left, and the rise of religious and ethnic nationalism. I aim to show how an alternative account of the trajectories of British anti-racism might be of use to scholars and activists struggling to combat the growing power of new right-wing formations in Britain today.

Race, Ethnicity & Migration 3 - Room 4.205

Special Event

Race, Capital, Critique: For a Theory of Racial Capitalism

Julian Go, Ali Meghji, Meghan Tinsley

(University of Chicago, University of Cambridge, University of Manchester)

This lecture ponders the possibilities and pitfalls of the "racial capitalism" concept as a social theory. While the literature on "racial capitalism" has grown in recent years, theoretical systematicity, acuity or coherence has yet to be attained, leading to multiple criticisms of the concept. This talk addresses these criticisms and offers a synthetic theory of racial capitalism that can absorb them. It argues that most existing critiques are misplaced, and a "contingency-contextual" theory of racial capitalism offers a way forward.

Rights, Violence & Crime - Room 4.211

Masculinity and Disclosure: A Comparative Study of Male Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in India and the UK

Disha Handique

(Edge Hill University)

Sexual violence against children remains a pervasive issue, cutting across geographical, economic, and cultural boundaries. While women and girls continue to remain afflicted by this issue, cases

concerning boys and men are underreported and underrepresented. Societal expectations of masculinity often discourage disclosure, reinforcing the notion that men should be invulnerable, further contributing to stigma, shame, and limited access to support. This comparative study examines how male survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) perceive their experiences with abuse and disclosure in India and the UK.

By employing a qualitative approach, the research incorporates in-depth interviews with male survivors and professionals working with them to provide the support they need. While both India and the UK provide support to male survivors, stark differences exist in terms of the kind of support available, including legal, cultural, familial, and institutional. However, despite their differences, both countries continue to struggle with stigma, shame, inadequate gender-sensitive interventions, and systemic barriers to justice.

Therefore, the study explores these factors through a cross-cultural lens, contributing to the global discourse on masculinity, disclosure, and cultural implications on CSA and male survivorship. By doing this, it advocates for legal reforms and awareness initiatives that challenge restrictive gender norms.

Rapping for Change: Creative Youth Work and Abolitionist Feminism in the Fight against Gender-Based Violence

Baljit Kaur

(Birkbeck, University of London)

The ongoing humanitarian crisis of violence against girls and women remains a pressing concern that starkly contrasts with the often-depoliticised nature of contemporary youth work practice. This paper draws on a decade-long engagement with Bass Youth Club – a creative youth space in East London offering free programmes for young people – where I was involved both as a volunteer and, later, as a researcher. From June 2019 to March 2020, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork at the youth club as part of my PhD, exploring how working-class young people expressed their lived experiences of violence through the production of rap music. In 2023, I returned to Bass Youth Club to extend this research through a smaller project, Mapping ‘the Streets’: Young Women Music Creatives and Violence in East London. This project centred on young women who co-produced a music track titled Voices to narrate their personal stories. Grounded in abolitionist feminist principles of community and political education, this paper argues for urgent policy and pedagogical interventions within youth programmes as alternatives to carceral responses to gender-based violence. In doing so, it highlights the transformative potential of youth-led creative practice as a vehicle for social justice and systemic change.

Digitalised Childhood & Safeguarding Responsibility: A Quantitative Analysis of Parent/Carer Perceptions of AI-facilitated Peer-on-Peer Abuse in UK Schools

Danielle Hotz

(Durham University)

This MSc in Criminology & Criminal Justice dissertation examines the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) to create child sexual abuse material (AI-CSAM), focusing on peer-on-peer abuse in UK schools through nudification tools such as NudifyAI. It is the first UK-based study to survey 57 parents and carers within a multi-academy trust, exploring awareness, gendered attitudes, and views on schools’ safeguarding responsibilities. The research adopts a post-positivist quantitative approach and is informed by Moral Disengagement Theory (Bandura, 1990; 1996; 2002; 2011), Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973; 1977), and Information Gap Theory (Loewenstein, 1994; Golman & Loewenstein, 2016), alongside feminist criminological frameworks including Kelly’s (1988) continuum of sexual violence and McGlynn’s (2015) concepts of image-based and image-based sexual abuse (McGlynn & Rackley, 2017; McGlynn, Rackley & Houghton, 2017).

Findings reveal a significant gap between the rapid escalation of AI-related harms and the limited capacity of parents, schools, and national safeguarding policy to respond. A gendered divide emerges: parents of girls are more likely to view AI-generated image abuse as serious, while parents of boys are more inclined to minimise it. The dissertation calls for urgent safeguarding reform, including enhanced digital literacy within the curriculum, stronger accountability for technology companies, and greater

international cooperation. It concludes by advocating a systems-based approach to protecting children and young people from emerging forms of AI-CSAM and peer-on-peer abuse.

Protecting At-risk Adolescents through Community-based Social Care Model

Sabri Sulaiman

(Universiti Malaya)

This study examines the experiences of at-risk adolescents in Kuala Lumpur to explore their unmet needs, engagement in prosocial activities, and exposure to antisocial behaviours. Using a qualitative approach, the research foregrounds the voices of adolescents to understand how they interpret and navigate daily challenges, relationships, and survival strategies within the community. The socio-ecological model was adopted as the conceptual lens to analyse how individual, family, school, and community contexts shape adolescents' vulnerabilities and resilience. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with adolescents aged 10 to 17 years, complemented by field observations in their everyday environments. The findings reveal that at-risk adolescents face multiple deficits, particularly in basic care, educational access, and emotional well-being. While many expressed a capacity for prosocial behaviours such as peer solidarity and community contribution, they also recounted experiences of exclusion and marginalisation that pushed them towards antisocial behaviours. These behaviours were significantly influenced by their school environment, past experiences of neglect, and underlying psychological conditions. The study demonstrates that community-based support systems, when inclusive and responsive, can mitigate harm and foster positive developmental outcomes. Drawing from adolescents' narratives, a community-based social care model is proposed that prioritises prevention, strengthens family and peer networks, and fosters school-community collaboration. This model offers practical insights for improving child welfare interventions and advancing national child protection policies, while ensuring that the perspectives of at-risk adolescents remain central in shaping care practices.

Science, Technology & Digital Studies - Room 3.205

The Gendered Governance of Gig Work: Algorithmic Control, Mobility, and Precarity in London and Shanghai

Yin Wang

(King's College London)

Online labour platforms are fundamentally reshaping flexible employment, yet their impact on workers, particularly women, remains underexplored. Whilst platforms are frequently characterised as promoting autonomy, emerging evidence reveals complex and gendered challenges in working conditions. This study investigates the experiences of female delivery riders with a view to unravelling the mechanisms that shape their labour and mobility.

Despite the growing interest in the field of algorithmic management, there is a paucity of research on the role of local socioeconomic contexts, including gender norms, labour protections and cultural expectations, in mediating its effects. Existing literature frequently fails to consider these contextual differences, thus necessitating comparative research.

Adopting a critical realist approach, the paper draws on data from a mixed-methods study in London and Shanghai, combining non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and survey analysis. This design facilitates a nuanced understanding of the manner in which algorithmic control interacts with local legal, economic, and sociocultural factors.

The findings of the study call into question the assumption of technological neutrality and contribute to theories of digital capitalism, algorithmic governance, and labour precarity. By centring the voices of female riders, the study offers practical insights for policymakers and platform designers seeking equitable gig work arrangements, highlighting the resilience and inequalities embedded in the global platform economy.

Sexual Self-experimentation in the Age of Platform and Algorithm: The Case of Sexfluencer / Wanghuang in Hong Kong

Chi Fung Wong

(Chinese University of Hong Kong)

In the contemporary digital era, social media platforms and algorithmic technologies have profoundly shaped societal norms and everyday life. The rise of platforms such as OnlyFans, Patreon, and X (Twitter) has revolutionised the sex industry and adult entertainment by facilitating the commercialisation, accessibility, and monetisation of sexual content creation. This shift has produced a new digital sexual culture and identity embodied in the phenomenon of sexfluencer/wanghuang—sexual content creators who leverage their bodies and sexuality to share explicit or suggestive content online, while utilising platforms for self-expression, performance, visibility, and monetisation.

This MPhil thesis employs an exploratory qualitative design using grounded theory to investigate sexfluencers/wanghuangs in Hong Kong as a case study. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 participants, the study examines how the technological affordances of OnlyFans, Patreon, and X (Twitter) enable or constrain individuals in reforming, reproducing, or reshaping norms of the body and sexuality. Findings are organised around three themes: (1) The Experiment of the Self explores how sexfluencers engage in sexual self-experimentation, identity construction, and self-discovery in algorithmically mediated environments. (2) Invisible Rules of Algorithms analyses how platform algorithms implicitly govern digital presence and constrain visibility. (3) The Politics of Social/New Media investigates strategies of digital migration and platform diversification, as sexfluencers navigate risks linked to geopolitics, platform governance, censorship, financial institutions, and payment restrictions. This research ultimately highlights how digital affordances are precarious rather than neutral, shaping individual agency and discourse power, while contributing to broader debates on the role of platforms in transforming norms of body and sexuality.

Social Divisions / Social Identities - Lecture Theatre A

The Escalation of Systematically Distorted Communication in U.S. Federal Transgender Healthcare Policy

Karoline Anderson

(Education University of Hong Kong)

Transgender populations' healthcare rights have become increasingly politicized during Trump's presidential terms. Habermas' theory of communicative action describes systematically distorted communication as strategic discourse to destruct communication and meaning. The present study conducts a comparative critical discourse analysis of three government texts from Trump's 45th and 47th presidential terms: the 2020 Health and Human Services final rule on "Nondiscrimination in Health and Health Education Programs" and the 2025 executive orders, "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism" and "Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation." The study aims to identify discursive frames and strategies employed to politicize transgender populations' healthcare rights and compare them across presidential terms, mapping the evolution of systemically distorted communication. The results demonstrate a discursive shift from bureaucratic textualism and deregulation to overt moral panic strategies to make ideological claims. This discursive shift is contextualized within changes in legislation and institutional policies, illustrating how the escalation of systemically distorted communication at the federal level fuels prejudice. The study has theoretical and practical implications, including identifying communication distortions used at the federal level to target social groups and developing counter-responses to challenge prejudiced discourse.

Dear Future Self: A Participatory Exploration of the Impact of Trans and Gender Diverse Exclusionary Policies on Young People

Angharad Morgan, Kayden Schumacher

(Lancaster University, Coventry University)

Educational institutions are ecosystems for debate and perpetuation of sex and gender-based violence (Women and Equalities Committee, 2023). After the recent supreme court ruling (April, 2025) on the legal definition of a “woman”, transphobic narratives have intensified (O’Thomson, 2025). The dissemination of misinformation and disinformation within sociopolitical life, has led to division (Brooks, 2025) directly impacting everyday experiences (Karageorgou, 2022), mental wellbeing and feeling of belonging for transgender and gender-diverse youth (TGD) (Dominguez-Martínez & Robles, 2019). Evidence shows that within educational institutions TGD youth face disproportionate levels of bullying and exclusion (Sares-Jaske et al., 2023). This is prominent when discriminatory discourses and intersectional perspectives of identity (i.e. disability, ethnicity and socioeconomic status) are left unaddressed in educational settings (Evje et al., 2024). We reflect on the historic roots of the recent ruling and argue that it is a regression back to Section 28 (1988-2003) favouring “traditional moral values” (Thatcher, 1987).

We take a participatory approach to investigate the impact on TGD people in UK schools, centring their voices and integrating their experiences with those of TGD people who have been interviewed previously about the impact of section 28 on their lives. Alongside narratives interviews, participants will take part in letter writing as a method of inquiry to their future selves. We selected this method for its restorative, and personal element in the hope that this research will encourage reflection, so that we can learn from the past, and prevent future harm toward marginalised groups.

Trans Athletes in the Media Spotlight: A Decade of Polarised Narratives

Yen Nee Wong

(University of Leeds)

In recent years, anti-trans narratives have increasingly shifted from the political margins to the mainstream, driven by strategic alliances among right wing, populist, religious and conservative actors (Hines, 2025). This convergence has politicised trans bodies, with tangible impacts on access to public participation, healthcare and legal recognition. Elite sports have become a key battleground, where trans athletes face increasing exclusion. In the UK and US, news media play a pivotal role in amplifying gender-critical discourses (McCann, 2023) that support bans on trans athletes from competitions (Fae, 2023).

This study critically examines the representation of trans athletes in mainstream media in the UK and US, across a 10-year period from 2015-2025. Using BERT-based topic modelling and sentiment analysis on a corpus of 14084 legacy media articles, findings reveal the dominant framings of trans athletes to be categorizable into five aspects: (1) medical and biological discourse, (2) prominent athletes, (3) sporting bodies, (4) legal and policy frameworks, and (5) media and political commentaries. Two polarised narratives camps (gender-critical and pro-trans) mirror the ideological rhythms of each nation’s political cycles, positioning trans issues as a kind of political theatre. Media narratives of trans athletes often serve as fuel for political actors to mobilise moral outrage and reassert symbolic control under the guise of fairness. This study calls for ethical journalism, inclusive media practices and the centring of trans perspectives to challenge exclusionary framings and promote equity in sports discourse.

Sociology of Education 1 - Room 2.220

Podcasts and Poetry: Untold Stories of Black UK Professors

Dami Folayan, Grace Idahosa, Tyra Amofah-Akardom, Éireann Attridge

(University of Cambridge)

“The dream was within me, since I was a child” (Prof Kyla interview)
I carried it ‘round for miles and miles,
Inspired to become a professor with style,
Keen to learn and to teach, even if it took a while.”

The proposed oral presentation explores the use of podcasting and poetry in sociological research. We utilise the Untold Stories of Black Professors Project as a case study through which scholars can understand how poetry and podcasting can enhance theoretical understandings of sociological issues such as inequality, underrepresentation and discrimination. The Untold Stories of Black Professors Project explores the career trajectories and lived experiences of tenured Black professors within UK higher education. Opening our presentation with a performance of research poems, we provide an overview of podcasting and critical poetic inquiry as methods of research, outlining how they function to subvert colonial modes of knowledge production.

We examine the role of poetry and podcasting in recasting lived experiences and theoretical ideas from objects of intellectual consideration into means of emotive academic engagement. This presentation will reframe conceptualisations of research and notions of how data can be developed and processed outside the standard models of research dissemination to enhance public engagement and improve the accessibility of research to non-academic audiences. We detail how engagement in novel creative research processes can encourage the reimagining of sociological research. Our presentation contributes to the understanding of sociological research methods and theories of work, as well as the sociology of education.

Expressions of Femininity among Women Academics in UK Universities: Identity, Elitism and Everyday Authority

Natalia Cama

(University of Portsmouth)

This paper presents work in progress from a qualitative study that examines how women academics in UK universities express and negotiate femininity in professional settings. The research draws on 26 semi structured interviews, with 25 completed and one pending. It uses narrative and thematic analysis to investigate how gendered self presentation intersects with class, cultural capital and institutional prestige. Recruitment was broadened during fieldwork to include professional mailing lists, LinkedIn reposts and wider academic networks as well as initial outreach through social media. As a result, the sample includes academics across the full spectrum of UK universities. Many participants are drawn from Russell Group institutions, which provides an opportunity to consider comparative questions about prestige and elite culture.

Preliminary analysis indicates that femininity operates both as a resource and a constraint. Participants describe drawing on styles of dress, emotional labour and conversational strategies to claim authority, sustain collegial relationships and navigate gendered expectations. At the same time, these practices may reinforce classed and elitist boundaries that shape academic careers in different ways across institutions. By examining these micro level performances, the study contributes to debates on gendered professional culture, Bourdieusian accounts of cultural capital in higher education, and wider questions about inclusion and equity.

The paper presented will focus on one theme, the strategic use of authority and emotional labour, supported by extracts from interview data. It will also reflect on the broader implications of these findings for women's career trajectories and for the institutional cultures of UK universities.

Capital and Inertia in the Semi-Periphery: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Academic Capital Devaluation in Turkey

Ahmet Zahit Ekren, Maissam Nimer

(Central European University)

This paper offers a multi-level analysis of capital struggle and its devaluation among migrant scholars within the Turkish academic field. Applying a Bourdieusian framework, we analyze how the accumulation, transformation, and ultimate legitimation of capital are profoundly challenged at the intersection of global academic capitalism and national-statist policies.

The research is grounded in a tripartite sociological methodology: (1) a theoretical analysis of the conversion of capital forms (cultural, linguistic, symbolic); (2) Constructivist Grounded Theory based on

27 in-depth interviews with international academics; and (3) a Comparative Mezo-Level Case Study across six key universities (state and foundation).

We argue that mobility induces a rupture in habitus, compelling academics into an active, often detrimental negotiation of their institutionalized capital (degrees, publications). Findings show that administrative hurdles (e.g., complex bureaucratic processes, non-recognition of foreign titles) systematically devalue this capital, exposing scholars to the "citizenship trap"—where the pursuit of stability threatens the liquidation of accumulated career assets. Furthermore, the mezo-level analysis reveals a deep "implementation gap" between universities' internationalization rhetoric (aiming for field-specific symbolic capital) and exclusionary daily practices (short-term contracts, insufficient support). This institutional inertia limits the field's capacity for recognition and assimilation, constraining the individual's legitimate agency and ability to convert accumulated capital into secure, long-term positions. The paper contributes to the sociology of academic work by detailing the dynamic operation of capital devaluation and the reproduction of precarity within a semi-periphery field.

Between Zoom Classroom and Lullabies: Stories Of Survival and Strength among Women Academics in Qatar

Suhad Daher-Nashif

(Keele University)

The COVID-19 pandemic magnified long-standing gender inequalities in academia, particularly through increased teaching and service demands, reduced research productivity, and disproportionate caregiving responsibilities. This qualitative study explores the experiences of women academics in Qatar, a higher education landscape characterised by diverse institutional models and an internationalised workforce. Seventeen women from government and semi-government universities participated in semi-structured interviews, analysed thematically through an intersectionality framework. Findings highlight the dual impact of the pandemic: while participants reported increased workloads, stress, and blurred work–life boundaries, many also described gains such as improved digital competencies, greater research focus, and strengthened family relationships. Key moderating factors included marital status, childcare responsibilities, household support, and institutional flexibility. Coping strategies ranged from restructuring domestic roles to engaging in leisure and time or energy management practices. The study reveals how intersecting identities that include gender, nationality, marital and family status, shaped women's vulnerabilities and resilience during the crisis. Ultimately, the research underscores the urgent need for higher education institutions to address gendered inequities by developing inclusive policies on workload distribution, flexible working arrangements, and caregiving support. These measures are critical not only for advancing equity in academia but also for ensuring institutional resilience in times of emergency and crisis. The findings contribute novel insights from the Arab region to global debates on gender, wellbeing, and academic life during crises.

Sociology of Education 2 - Room 3.204

What Factors Influence Parental Attitudes to Tertiary Education Attainment, and What Can We Do to Address Them?

Sudeshika Wathuwa Durayalage

(Bangor University)

This article examines the influence of family capital on the aspirations for tertiary education and perceived obstacles among disadvantaged urban youth in Sri Lanka. Utilising Bourdieu's theoretical constructs of economic, cultural, and social capital, alongside the concept of emotional capital, the study investigates how family resources shape parental attitudes and educational decision-making within the context of urban poverty. The research employs qualitative interviews with forty parents and students from low-income urban communities in Colombo, analysed thematically through Bourdieu's framework and an intersectional perspective. Five principal themes emerge: economic capital as both a facilitator and a constraint, the transmission of cultural capital through parental education and exposure, social capital derived from networks and community influence, the role of emotional capital and parental encouragement, and aspirations for intergenerational mobility. The findings indicate that although

limited economic resources often restrict educational opportunities, low-income families make considerable sacrifices to invest in education. Parental education levels and access to supportive networks further influence the specific guidance and awareness of tertiary pathways available to students. Significantly, emotional capital emerges as a potent compensatory mechanism, with parental encouragement sustaining educational ambitions despite structural barriers. The study underscores the perception of education as a primary strategy for breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and achieving upward social mobility. These interconnected forms of capital collectively shape parental attitudes and decisions regarding tertiary education, underscoring the need for interventions that not only alleviate financial constraints but also expand cultural awareness and strengthen supportive networks for disadvantaged urban families in Sri Lanka.

Physics Capital: A New Conceptual Lens on Gendered Inequalities in Physics Uptake

Agata Lynch

(University of Limerick)

Gender disparities in post-compulsory physics uptake remain entrenched across educational contexts. Existing research drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice – particularly the concepts of habitus, field, and capital – has shown how physics is constructed as a masculine-coded domain, privileging male dispositions and marginalising female students (Archer et al., 2017; Francis et al., 2017; Turnbull et al., 2019). Students who do not align with dominant masculine norms in physics describe facing a choice between enduring symbolic violence or opting for self-exclusion. Girls who persist often undertake significant identity work to align with dominant norms. These dynamics are compounded by unequal returns on cultural and social capital, particularly for working-class girls.

Archer et al.'s (2014; 2015) concept of science capital has proven pivotal to explaining these patterns. Taking inspiration from their work, this paper introduces physics capital as a novel conceptual tool to capture the disciplinary specificity of physics as a field. Drawing on focus group data from over 100 teenagers in Irish secondary schools, the paper demonstrates how physics capital offers a more granular understanding of the gendered habitus and capital shaping physics uptake.

In proposing the concept of physics capital, this paper responds to the conference's call for reflexive engagement with sociology's conceptual foundations and for the development of new tools to interrogate persistent inequalities. Physics capital provides a lens to critically reflect on the limitations of existing frameworks, examine the symbolic boundaries of physics as a field, and reimagine more inclusive futures in science education and knowledge production.

Struggling to Match: How Young People Navigate the Ideal of Professional Self-realisation in School-to-Work Transitions

Michael Duncan

(University of Vienna)

This paper examines how the ideal of professional self-realisation shapes young people's perspectives on future work and how they navigate this ideal during school-to-work transitions in post-Fordist capitalism. In post-Fordism, work is no longer simply a means of securing a livelihood but a means of self-realisation, requiring young people to formulate their selves as productive resources in capitalist production.

Combining Farrugia's "labour supply to capital" perspective with Threadgold's Bourdieusian concepts of struggle and strategy, the paper analyses how young people engage with this ideal based on their social positions. The study draws on longitudinal interview data with youth from general track lower secondary schools in Vienna (aged 13-15 at baseline).

The analysis reveals that young people engage with the ideal by attempting to establish a "match" between their personal characteristics, interests, and skills and future careers. However, social background fundamentally shapes this engagement: middle-class youth can take the match for granted and aspire beyond it, working-class youth must balance self-realisation with securing income, while those facing precarity find the match unattainable.

Three longitudinal case studies demonstrate how experiences during transition - financial insecurity, workplace difficulties, school bullying, or successful placements - lead young people to maintain, abandon, or rebuild their pursuit of matching self and work. The findings challenge individualised understandings of transitions by situating them within the subjectifying demands of post-Fordist work organisation, while demonstrating young people's agency in strategically navigating these demands based on their social circumstances and opportunities.

Teenage Dream: Understanding the Aspiration–Realisation Gap in Scotland

Hannah Glover

(University of Edinburgh)

In previous work, I evidenced an aspiration-realisation gap for working class young people in Scotland in terms of post-school destinations that do not exist for their middle- and upper-class peers (Glover, forthcoming). In my multinomial logistic regression models, social class was not statistically significantly associated with young people's post-school aspirations, despite post-school destinations being known to be stratified by social class in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2023). I argue that such a gap is problematic as it unfairly limits the future flourishing of young people, and that policymakers should seek to dismantle structural barriers preventing all young people from fully realising their aspirations. However, to understand which interventions might be appropriate, we must understand which young people in particular face these barriers.

Growing Up in Scotland (henceforth GUS) is a longitudinal birth cohort study that follows the lives of 5217 young people at frequent intervals born in Scotland between June 2004 and May 2005 (ScotCen 2025). Using GUS, we can analyse a wide variety of young people's characteristics and experiences from birth (including their post-school destination aspirations at age 14, and their actual post-school destinations when they leave secondary education) to determine the magnitude of this aspiration-realisation gap for certain groups. I aim to reveal the intersections of social characteristics and experiences (including gender, social class, educational attainment, and rurality) associated with young people whose aspirations do not align with their post-school destinations. With this knowledge, we can target future research on reducing the aspiration-realisation gap more effectively.

Work, Employment & Economic Life - Room 3.212

Toiling in the Peripheries: Livelihood Transitions and Notions of Work in Rajarhat, India

Anindya Basak

(Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati)

This paper explores the multifaceted concept of toiling (khata in vernacular) as articulated by peri-urban communities of Patharghata, located in the north-eastern peripheries of Kolkata, India. Drawing on ethnographic evidence and life histories, the analysis foregrounds three interrelated dimensions of toiling. First, toiling as peri-urban situates manual work and menial labour within the peri-urban territorialities and populations, constructing it in opposition to the urban babu culture of sitting idle and reaping the benefits of others' toil. Second, toiling as a translational instrument highlights how historically marginalised communities engage in self-exploitation as a mechanism to achieve affluence, political influence, and upward socio-economic mobility. Third, toiling as family labour underscores the centrality of household labour, intergenerational reliance, kinship networks, and peri-urban solidarities in facilitating livelihood transitions. By conceptualising toil as an analytical category rather than a descriptive one, the paper identifies three key contradictions. First, agrarian transitions, petty commodity production, and growth of small capitalist enterprises, both in past and present, have been driven by family labour rather than hired labour. Second, regimes of gruelling work entail self-exploitation, reflecting both an internalisation of capitalist discipline and a measure of autonomy over surpluses produced and reinvested. Third, toil operates as both a vehicle of emancipation and a mechanism of producing new inequalities, revealing tensions between its emancipatory potential and its role in generating new forms of stratification. Through exploring these contradictions, this paper

demonstrates the dialectical tensions embedded in the livelihood transitions of Patharghata's peri-urban communities.

Care Independence: Gaming Mechanism for Labour Governance and Resistance among Female Precarious Teachers in Public Education Sector of China

Ying Huang

(University of Warwick)

The post-reform China is characterised by the commodification of social reproduction and labour. The former has brought individual care burden, the latter, precarious employment entrenched in the public sector, to reduce public expense. Against this backdrop, the degree of reliance on public provision has become a salient measure of individual leverage when facing employment inequality. In practice, those less dependent on public provision—like education, healthcare, childcare, or eldercare—gain greater room for negotiation and resistance. Within China's public education sector, large numbers of precariously employed teachers, mostly female, are experiencing injustice in pay, workload, and social protection. Their underresearched experience speaks to systemic gender inequality in a contracting labour market and the tension rising from care provision in both spheres.

Drawing on six-month fieldwork on precarious female teachers, a central finding is that their capacity to manage family care responsibilities through personal resources becomes their primary form of negotiation power against workplace precarity and exploitation. Many of them choose to stay in regardless of the injustice to meet their care responsibilities. Simultaneously, public schools as state employers utilise their care burden as a tool of labour governance, reinforcing compliance and limiting resistance. Moreover, intersecting factors, including the family background and marital status, are included in assessing the worker's vulnerability or leverage for easier governance or resistance.

This finding reveals the connection between labour governance and care provision in China from the lens of gender, pushing forward the discussion of social reproduction and double movement with non-homogeneous workers' agency.

Career Pathways under Constraint: Social Capital and the Mobility of Low-paid Workers in Bucharest's Labor Market

Beatrice Manole

(National School of Political Science and Administrative Studies)

Research shows that individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds are often confined to low-status jobs due to immediate financial pressures and limited access to economic, social, and cultural capital. Job search decision-making processes are shaped by forms of capital that emerge and function within specific social contexts.

Drawing on Granovetter's theory of the strength of weak ties, this paper examines how social capital enables low-paid workers to access employment opportunities. It challenges classical economic models of job search, arguing that labor market behavior is deeply embedded in social relations. Findings underscore the importance of informal networks - particularly ties with neighbors and acquaintances, in securing jobs. However, because these networks typically consist of individuals with similarly limited resources, they rarely lead to upward mobility or access to more prestigious positions. Informed by Bourdieu's theory on the interplay between different forms of capital, the study also finds that the social capital available to low-paid workers is closely linked to their level of cultural capital, which significantly influences their occupational status.

The paper draws on qualitative fieldwork conducted with 20 middle-aged unskilled and semi-skilled workers in Bucharest, employed in sectors such as garment manufacturing, security, and waste management. Data was collected through in-depth life story interviews, complemented by participatory observation in their workplaces.

By exploring the occupational trajectories and job-search strategies of these workers, the paper contributes to a better understanding of how social capital influences career mobility among the working poor - an area still underexplored in existing literature.

PLENARY PANEL

17:45-18:45

Lecture Theatre B

EXPLORING THE COMMONALITIES, SOLIDARITIES AND INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY

Bandana Purkayastha, *University of Connecticut*

Beáta Nagy, *Cornelius University*

Maitrayee Chaudhuri, *Jawaharlal Nehru University*

Chaired by Shoba Arun, University of Essex, BSA Publications Trustee

This panel brings together leading sociologists to examine the commonalities, solidarities, and institutional challenges shaping contemporary global sociology. Engaging debates on epistemic justice, methodological power, decolonisation and academic freedom, the panel reflects on how sociological knowledge is produced, institutionalised, and contested across unequal global contexts. Drawing on Bandana Purkayastha's call to "braid" diverse sociological traditions while resisting surveillance and data extraction regimes, Beáta Nagy's analysis of illiberal pressures on Hungarian sociology, and Maitrayee Chaudhuri's reflections on neoliberal metrics and parochial nationalism in India, the session foregrounds the political-economic conditions under which sociology is practised. Together, the contributions explore a field of global sociology that highlights the need for genuinely plural theory-building, ethical and solidaristic research practices, and comparative collaboration to sustain and democratise sociology in an era marked by authoritarianism, marketisation, and global inequality.

Braiding Global Sociologies

Bandana Purkayastha,

Over the past decades, sociologists continue to debate existing knowledge hierarchies, methodological approaches, and ways to build global sociologies. In my role as Vice President of National Associations for International Sociological Associations, I have been learning from several national associations of sociology (and sociologists). Based on these experiences, I will emphasize the critical need to consider histories of the discipline in different parts of the world, and the political-economic-social-cultural structures in which each version of the discipline unfolds in today's unequal world. These histories constitute different sociological braids (or tributaries of rivers) for building theoretical approaches and methodologies. At the same time, we are all subject to data mining, the intensive and invasive data extraction processes that work in tandem with surveillance systems nationally and globally. As compliance within the new systems becomes the norm, sociologies and sociologists, who emphasize power and inequality, are objects of suspicion in many societies. The challenge to build truly global sociologies begins with understanding the headwinds, and to respect sociologists' attempts to survive and build legacies based on their histories. Global sociologies will require both braiding distinctive strands of sociology and maintaining strategic distance to allow many sociologies to bloom.

Illiberal Pressures on Sociology: Lessons from Hungary

Beáta Nagy

In recent decades, Hungarian sociology has faced increasing political and institutional pressures. Political transformations, such as the rise of illiberal principles, have resulted in attacks on academic freedom and significant institutional changes. Critical social sciences have become less tolerated and less popular under ideologically charged social and economic circumstances. Funds available within the country and coming from the European Union have also narrowed considerably, leading to less

intense international academic cooperation. It has not left sociology education untouched either. Drawing on the Hungarian case, this paper outlines the key challenges facing sociology under illiberal conditions and reflects on their consequences for researchers and sociological research.

Global Metrics, Parochial Nationalism and the Challenge to Sociology: Notes from India

Maitrayee Chaudhuri

The institutional and political challenges to sociology stem from both neoliberalism and authoritarianism. Teaching and research institutions in India are increasingly governed by global metrics and triumphant cultural nationalism. Restrictions on academic freedom and critical perspective stem from both. This presentation explores how geopolitics, state and market impinge upon the everyday minutiae of teaching, research, classrooms and funding by looking at the intended and unintended consequences of market driven global metrics on one hand and state diktats on the other. While this impacts all disciplines, sociology in India is perhaps seen as a 'natural' fit for the state agenda, with the discipline's long association with the study of culture, tradition, religion, caste, family and kinship. This presentation draws from happenings in contemporary India. But this is not a unique story. The need of the hour is therefore to initiate comparative studies that document the divergences and convergences in the practice of sociologies. Such a process of scholarly engagement and collaboration would help build both sociological research and solidarity.



Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Sociology **Bandana Purkayastha** is the Vice President for National Associations in the International Sociological Association. She is the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, Regional Campuses, and Community Engagement at the University of Connecticut. Passionate about moving away from Euro-America dominant knowledge frameworks, her scholarship on migration and migrants, human rights, violence, and intersectionality appears in over 100 publications. She has worked with organizations such as WHO and IOM (UN) on topics related to migrants. She was a co-recipient of American Sociological Association's Jessie Bernard award, "which recognizes significant contributions to improving the lives of women." She has also served in many leadership positions in national organizations in the USA. <https://sociology.uconn.edu/person/bandana-purkayastha/>

Beáta Nagy is a professor in the Institute of Social and Political Sciences at Corvinus University of Budapest and the Director of the Centre for Gender and Culture. Since 2021, she has served as the president of the Hungarian Sociological Association.

Her current studies focus on gender and executive search, as well as the transposition of the wage transparency directive. Between 2018 and 2024, she was an elected board member of the European Consortium for Sociological Research. She helps with several non-profit initiatives.

Further details:

www.beatanagy.com

www.szociologia.hu

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/hungarian-sociological-association/>





Maitrayee Chaudhuri is a retired as Professor of Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Her research interests have been on the making of the public discourse in modern India with a focus on nationalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, populism and feminism in India. She was a DAAD Visiting Professor at Albert Ludwig University, Freiburg in Germany (2003), a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University (1995-1996) as well as at the University of Massachusetts (1995-1996) and ICCR Visiting India Chair, McGill University and ISID (2015). Her published works include *The Practice of Sociology* (2003), *Feminism in India* (2005), *Sociology in India: Intellectual and Institutional Practices* (2010), *Refashioning India: Gender, Media and a Transformed Public Discourse* (2017) and *Doing Theory: Locations, Hierarchies and Disjunctions* (2018). She is

one of the co-founders of Doing Sociology – a digital resource dedicated to the cause of public Sociology. She has been the President of the Indian Sociological Society (2024-2025).

75th SOCIAL

Thursday 9 April 2026
19:00
Whitworth Hall

Join us for the BSA's 75th Anniversary Social. It will be an informal evening with drinks, hot canapés, music, and a chance to come together as a community in the middle of the conference.

BSA President, Les Back, will give a short welcome and present both the Distinguished Service Award and the Philip Abrams Memorial Prize.

Tickets are £25 and must be booked in advance via [conference registration](#). Some tickets may still be available to be booked during the Conference at the registration desk.

(Cloakroom available at the venue 18:00-22:00.)

The 75th Social has been kindly sponsored by Sage Publishing.

