

Conference Schedule

THURSDAY 19th

10.15-11.00 ARRIVAL, CHECK-IN & TEA/COFFEE at The Westcliff

11.00-11.10 WELCOME to conference – Joan Busfield on behalf of Head of Department

11.10-12.50 SESSION ONE (Chair: Michael Bailey)

PANEL: TED Talks: (Sociological) Ideas Worth Sharing

Short talks to generate debate on new ideas or projects

Robin West - Individual and environment: does calculating carbon trump the moral self?

Neli Demireva - The Good, the Bad and the Multicultural – Britain at Crossroads

Darren Thiel – The Costs of Welfare Reform

Aiko Ikemura Amaral – Indigenous in power = indigenous power? Nation and indigeneity in contemporary Bolivia

Michael Halewood - Do we really know what we mean when we say 'social' or 'the social'?

Sandya Hewamanne – Don't Kill my Dowry!

Allan Hildon – Small, Far Away

Emma Saunders - The Role of Flowers in Society

Seb Randall – Therapy as Resistance

12.50-2.00 LUNCH

2.00-3.45 SESSION TWO (Chair: Neli Demireva; Discussant: Jackie Turton)

PANEL: Lots of Smoke But is There Fire: Bringing social science objectivity to policy relevant research questions

Sarah Day - Specialist Domestic Violence Courts: What are they and what can they offer victims?

Sergi Lo Iacono - What types of social connections are relevant in the promotion of trust?

Ruth Weir - Descending the Ivory Tower: how social science research can have real impact on the lives of domestic abuse victims.

Emma Milne - Concealment of birth: what are we punishing?

3.45-4.45 SESSION THREE Reflections on Practice: parallel sessions on practical topics

Masters students (led by former Masters student: Maureen Haaker)

On the experience of writing Masters dissertations.

PhD students (led by former PhD student: Katy Wheeler)

Transformations: Publishing from your PhD thesis

4.45 - 5.00 TEA /COFFEE

5.00-6.00 SESSION FOUR (Chair: Joan Busfield)

Visual representations of work in the department: 1-SLIDE-1-MINUTE

This session invites ALL conference participants – staff and students - who haven't presented elsewhere, to submit a single SLIDE on their research (or research interests) and speak to it briefly for 60 seconds in turn.

6.00-7.30 pm

FREE TIME

7.30-12.00 pm

SUPPER and ENTERTAINMENT!

FRIDAY 20th

7.30-10.00

BREAKFAST

10.00-11.00

FREE TIME - Walk / Browse Southend (Top tip? Take a train to the end of the longest leisure pier in the world, and then stroll back...)

10.45-11.00

COFFEE

11.00-12.45 SESSION FIVE (Chair: Colin Samson)

PANEL: An approach to Human Rights; Sociology from the Margins

Tatiana Sanchez Parra - Children born as a consequence of wartime sexual violence: the production of narratives of silence

Alejandra Diaz De Leon - Lost in Transit: Central American migrants in Mexico

Helen Rand - Whose rights? Competition for the language of rights.

Stefanie Nitsche – Seeking protection under international human rights law: Legal consciousness of asylum seekers in Switzerland

12.45-2.00 LUNCH

2.00-3.45 SESSION SIX (Chair: Yasemin Soysal)

PANEL: Sociology in the age of Global Policymaking

Roxana-Diana Baltaru – Beyond Financial Autonomy: a Sociological Investigation of the Isomorphic Development of the European Higher Education Systems.

Jennifer Gresham: Foxes Guarding the Hen House? The Environmental Governance of Soy Production in Brazil.

Ayse Guveli – New Perspectives in International Migration Studies. Pains and Gains of Migration For Women's Employment.

3.45-4.15 TED Talks Back

An opportunity over coffee for Session One's TED Talkers to respond to comments posted over the two conference days.

Followed by concluding comments - Yasemin Soysal, Graduate Director

4.15 DEPARTURE

Abstracts



2nd Session: Lots of Smoke, But is There Fire? Bringing social science objectivity to policy-relevant research questions

Sarah Day - Specialist Domestic Violence Courts: What are they and what can they offer victims?

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts have been in existence since 1999 and have grown to 137 across England and Wales. Originating in New York, domestic violence courts have been reported to offer greater safety to victims while also holding perpetrators of violence to account. Although specialist courts have been in existence in the UK for some time, no systematic research into their effectiveness compared with other courts has been done. This presentation will give a brief overview of the history of specialist domestic violence courts, whilst also exploring the theoretical backdrop and key research questions.

Sergi Lo Iacono - What types of social connections are relevant in the promotion of trust?

Social capital theories suggest that social connectedness is essential in fostering generalized trust. Though the notion of social connectedness may refer to very different types of social ties, the vast majority of the literature has tested this claim by focusing on the role of associational membership. In this paper, using Putnam's own dataset (Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey 2000), I probe the solidity of his argument in the US context by looking at a variety of social ties (e.g. friendship and neighbourhood relations). In addition, by reinterpreting Putnam's thought, I test two main mechanisms that might explain why interactions with people we know would create trust in people we do not know: the collapse of negative stereotypes about the generalized other through repeated interactions with individuals unlike ourselves; the capability of networks' reputation systems to encourage the emergence of trustworthy behaviours either inside or outside the networks that originally generated it. Results show that (1) associational membership is a weaker and less stable predictor of trust in comparison to other social ties (in particular friendship relations), (2) cross-cutting ties do not promote tolerance towards the generalized other within associations, while they do it only weakly in the case of friendship relations, (3) the "spillover" or "rainmaker" effect can provide an explanation to why friendship relations are correlated with generalized trust.

Keywords: generalized trust, social networks, bridging ties, rainmaker effect.

Ruth Weir - Descending the Ivory Tower: how social science research can have a real impact on the lives of domestic abuse victims.

It is estimated that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, but only between 23% and 43% of victims will report their abuse to the police. This leaves a substantial hidden problem and with two women a week dying as a result of their abuse, it is not an issue that can be ignored. It is not known whether those who report to the police are similar in profile to those who do not report. Do they have the same demographic, social and geographic characteristics? Understanding these factors will greatly improve the provision that is provided to victims and will give more of an understanding of the risk factors that may lead to abuse.

This paper will outline the ESRC and Essex County Council funded research into the nature and extent of unreported domestic abuse. The research, which is in collaboration with the Whole Essex Community Budget, a multi-agency government pilot, links and models data from a variety of agencies to identify predictors and risk factors to victimisation. The PhD uses the British Crime Survey and data collected from a routine questioning project in maternity and accident and emergency services, housing providers, Victim Support, refuges and other voluntary sector data. The research will inform the design of more relevant and effective services for domestic abuse victims and aims to help early identification and intervention.

Emma Milne - Concealment of birth: what are we punishing?

In 1803 the Malicious Shooting or Stabbing Act (43, Geo. 3 c58), commonly called the Lord Ellenborough's Act, created the offence of concealment of birth in England and Wales – concealing the body of a newborn with intent to conceal the birth of the child, punishable by up to two years in jail. When first enacted the offence could only be committed by unwed women and it was only possible to convict a woman of the crime upon finding her not guilty for the murder of the newborn. At this time, Parliament was concerned that too many unwed women were getting away with the murder of their illegitimate newborns because the medical evidence could not support a murder conviction. The principle was that if a woman gave birth alone to an illegitimate child and the child ended up dead then the woman must have done something wrong.

Two-hundred years later, the crime can be committed by anyone and is a standalone offence, which 17 people have been convicted of in the last ten years. But considering the advancement of medical science and the abilities of pathologists to determine if a child was born alive and how they died, what unlawful action is

The offence aiming to punish? This paper will examine the themes surrounding concealment of birth from a feminist perspective and presents the early findings of my doctoral research. I propose that whilst the offence is no longer targeting only unmarried women, the intent to punish is still centred upon those women whose pregnancy may seem “inappropriate” to the rest of society. The principle is that the discovery of a dead baby following a concealed pregnancy deserves to be punished, even if the evidence is ambiguous.

Key words: concealment of birth, concealed pregnancy, infanticide, illegitimate child, feminism.

5th Session: An approach to Human Rights; Sociology from the Margins

This panel gathers research projects that focus on the experiences of stigmatised, and therefore often marginalised populations. We aim to explore how a non-legal approach to human rights can enrich the understanding of the lived reality and the meaning that is given to human rights in the 'real' world by social actors. By analyzing the cases of refugees, migrants, sex workers and children born as the result of sexual violence in conflict we aim to contribute to an interdisciplinary research agenda, while making visible hidden narratives and structures of power within human rights bureaucracies.

Tatiana Sánchez-Parra - Children born as a consequence of wartime sexual violence: the production of narratives of silence.

Whenever sexual violence has been systematically used as a strategy of terror and control, children born as a consequence of such gender-based practices emerge within the society as generations conceived from violence. Due to the context of their conception, these children are often stigmatised, neglected, ostracised and frequently the targets of more violence and discrimination. However, they have not emerged as an independent subject of concern among the categories of war-affected children. Based on the review of case studies and reports on gender-based violence during armed conflicts, I explore the production and reproduction of narratives of silence. First, within the communities and second, in the human rights agenda. I conclude by arguing that narratives that represent them as symbols of national trauma in general, and women's trauma in particular have shaped certain types of silence around these children.

Alejandra Díaz de León - Lost in Transit: Central American migrants in Mexico

For many Central American migrants, the most dangerous part of migrating to the United States is crossing Mexico. According to national and international NGOs, these migrants are vulnerable to kidnappings, sexual assaults, robberies, beatings, and even murder. Many reports illustrate the severity of the situation and the vulnerability of the migrants. It is puzzling that the violence comes from a country who has a long history of defending its own migrants' rights abroad and that has almost 10% of its population living in the USA. This paper introduces my ongoing research on this vulnerable population. I start from the premise that the status of 'transit' makes these migrants in Mexico exceptionally vulnerable to xenophobia and violence. A number of factors come into play: a) limited social resources and lack of personal networks; b) limited economic resources; c) demographic characteristics that have been shown to increase vulnerability (age, ethnicity, gender). I also discuss the challenges of getting data about this population.

Helen Rand - Whose Rights? Competition for the language of rights.

Human rights has historically been a field of enquiry in the disciplines of law, philosophy or politics. However, in the last decade, human rights has become an area of enquiry within sociology. This paper will seek to establish the importance of understanding human rights as a social process, drawing on a case study of the sex worker's rights movement in London. The paper will discuss how the meaning of human rights is negotiated from a place of 'rightlessness' by sex workers to frame social action. Sex workers use the framework of human rights to defend the right to work, the right to health care and to live free from violence. Conversely, campaigners who want to abolish prostitution use the human rights framework to condemn prostitution as a violation of women's human rights. Thus this paper

will question the validity and usefulness of the language of rights when campaigners compete over the meaning given to human rights. This paper will argue that this process is a social process and therefore worthy of sociological enquiry.

Stefanie Nitsche - Seeking protection under international human rights law: Legal consciousness of asylum seekers in Switzerland

The provision of protection for refugees and asylum seekers under international law has been mostly analyzed through the perspective of implementation and interpretation of human rights by nation states. Less attention has been given to the experience of asylum seekers during the process of seeking protection, a highly bureaucratic process in which is decided who falls under the definition of the refugee under international law. This paper is based on interviews conducted with 18 asylum seekers in Switzerland in 2014 about their experiences during the process of seeking asylum. I use the concept of legal consciousness to investigate the role of law in the everyday life of asylum seeker, how they invoke the law (or not) and how they construct an understanding of legality. I argue that asylum seekers attempt to become knowledgeable agents in this bureaucratic process. This is often difficult to achieve as the law is experienced as being powerful and the exercise of legal regulations seems to differ case dependent. Some asylum seekers believe in the promises made by the law, namely guaranteeing a fair process to evaluate their claim. Others however, perceive the organisation of the asylum sector as a certain kind of politics, which aim is to deter applicants from wanting to stay in Switzerland.



6th Session: Sociology in the Age of Global Policy-making

The researchers on this panel share the relevance of international governance in understanding their objects of inquiry. As an example, Jennifer explores sustainability directions in soy production that are shaped by local, national and international actors. Alternatively, my research focuses on organisational logics in higher education that are increasingly shaped by supranational policies. We also share the acknowledgement of contextual factors such as the shift from public governance to private governance or multi-governance. The research methods are diverse, therefore qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods inquiries are all suitable.

Roxana-Diana Baltaru - Beyond Financial Autonomy: a Sociological Investigation of the Isomorphic Development of the European Higher Education Systems

The research investigates the prioritising of financial autonomy by European higher education systems (HEs) and its implications on the organization of higher education (HE). The paper argues that the process of financial autonomisation involves several dimensions (cultural, administrative and institutional) associated with particular organizational logics which

converge in reflecting neo-liberal normative models of change. The analysis provides empirical support by confirming the hypothesized associations between the dimensions of financial autonomy and the organizational logics taking into account the differences in student percentage, age demographics and public expenditure across European HEs. Finally, it is argued that the success of the normative model guiding such change can be understood with regards to the degree to which it complies with world-wide cultural trends.

Jennifer Gresham: Foxes Guarding the Hen House? The Environmental Governance of Soy Production in Brazil.

Brazil is one of the world's largest producers of soybeans, a staple agricultural crop important for international food security. Brazilian soybeans have become controversial as large parts of the Amazon rainforest and Cerrado savannahs, regions of unparalleled significance for global biodiversity, have been cut down for their production, resulting in large-scale environmental damage and increased climate change.

In response to vocal protests from environmental organizations and consumers, the transnational food companies at the centre of soy production have worked to create new forums for global environmental governance. They have partnered with NGOs, the Brazilian government and the United Nations to halt the destruction and produce soybeans more sustainably.

Based on interviews with key actors, my research focuses on the drivers of these new developments in international environmental governance. I ask if policymaking driven by private interests is adequate for addressing complex global issues, and in particular whether increasing consumer demand for soybeans undermines sustainability efforts.

Ayse Guveli - New Perspectives in International Migration Studies. Pains and Gains of Migration for Women's Employment.

There are extensive discussions on the new perspectives in the international migration studies (Amelina and Faist 2012; Schneider and Crul 2010). Women's employment is an important means to acquire economic resources and increase intrahousehold bargaining power, leading to more empowerment. Regarding migration and employment, migrant women are often compared to natives in the destination countries, showing that migrant women from Muslim countries have lower employment likelihoods, with all consequences for their empowerment (Read 2004). Although this is important in itself, it says little about the impact of migration on women's employment, which can be expected to have increased due to more open labour markets, increased educational opportunities, changing family structures and gender attitudes. From literature on internal migration in the West, however, it can be derived that women often suffer from migration, because they tend to be 'tied-migrants' – women who move because of their husbands' economic motives and leave their own opportunities behind. What the situation is for migrant women from Muslim countries – beyond their lower employment than natives- is largely unclear. This study will be one of the first to fill this gap by focussing on the effect of migration to Europe among Turkish migrant women. The novel 2000 Families data (Guveli et al. 2014) make it possible to compare Turkish non-migrants, internal migrants, and international migrants. After establishing the differences in employment, it will be assessed whether these differences can be explained by higher human capital, differences in family structures, and shifted gender equality attitudes.