



Thinking Theory, Research & Practice: The Feminist Politics of Social Justice

LEX, VAWGRN, FRAN, and CSEL
Joint Conference

The University of Liverpool, 9–10 November



Welcome!

Welcome to our second joint international annual conference. We are a collective of feminist academics, scholars, and researchers who come together to promote collaboration and growth in gender-based violence research. Our aim this year is to showcase work which is feminist and transdisciplinary, offering innovations in theory, research and practice relative to global social justice issues.

Who we are

Law, Gender, and Sexuality (LEX)

The LEX Network takes its name from the Latin for law. It is a platform for academics and researchers interested in developing and supporting international and transdisciplinary scholarship on law, gender and sexuality. The LEX Network is intended as a resource for sharing research, fostering collaboration and nurturing dialogue on a range of issues that relate to and shape feminist research on the intersections of law, gender and sexuality globally. To get in touch, please see <https://www.lexnetwork.org/>.

Violence Against Women and Girls Research Network (VAWGRN)

The VAWG Research Network aims to bring together researchers and provide opportunities to meet regularly, share ongoing, completed and planned research in a supportive environment. Over time we hope researchers from the network will work together to apply for funding, share data and develop new research. To get in touch email vawg-rn@uos.ac.uk, or see our social media page at www.twitter.com/VAWGRN.

Welcome!

Feminist Legal Research and Action Network (FRAN)

The Feminist Legal Research and Action Network (FRAN) is based at the School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool. Founded in 2022, FRAN Invites members from all disciplines and at all career stages. FRAN takes an intersectional approach to feminist research, teaching and scholarship, exploring how law may be reconceived to promote equality and justice, and aims to advance research as well as influencing law and policy. To join our mailing list or to find upcoming events please see <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/law/research/fran/> or email Sarah.Singh@Liverpool.ac.uk.

Centre for the Study of Emotion and Law (CSEL)

The aim of CSEL is to bring together scholars from a variety of disciplines, as well as practitioners in social care, law, psychology and charities to reconsider the role of emotion within law and practice. The areas of focus covered by the Centre include tackling violence against women and girls, the treatment of witnesses and their role in evidence-gathering and courtrooms; the role emotion plays in professional decision making, including in social care settings; the use of law as a form of control and power. To find out more about the centre's work, please see www.csel.psychologyresearch.co.uk.

Agenda

Day One

13:00 – 14:00: Arrival, Lunch, Registration & Networking Opportunity for All

13:00 – 14:00: Early Career Researcher Working Lunch

14:00 – 14.15: Welcome to the Conference

14:15 – 16:30: Panel Sessions 1 & 2

16:30 – 17:00: Teas & Coffee

17:00 – 18:30: Keynote Address – Professor Jill Marshall in conversation with Dr Sharron FitzGerald

18:30 – 19:30: Drinks Reception

Day Two

09:15 – 09:45: Welcome with tea and coffee

09:45 – 11:30: Panel Sessions 3 & 4

11:30 – 12:00: Break

12:00 – 13:30: Panel Sessions 5 & 6

13:30 – 14:30: Lunch

14:30 – 16:00: Panel Sessions 7 & 8

16:00 – 16:30: Roundtable (Concluding Thoughts)

Keynote

Human Rights of Women in the Future

9th November, 17:00-18:30

Jill Marshall, Professor of Law, Royal Holloway University of London



Discussant: Dr. Sharron FitzGerald, Founder and Director of LEX

Human rights law seeks to protect each and every person by virtue of being human. Its universal and global reach has potential to transform lives. However, this area of law has been subjected to critiques from progressives, including many feminists, for being too white, male, individualistic, upholding existing power structures. Meanwhile, traditionalists, amongst others, complain about human rights' liberal views on life and a so-called 'radical' agenda. Despite human rights law's faults, many feminists are reluctant to throw out 'rights talk' (Glendon) especially when achieving such rights was a hard fought-for battle and can still be 'deliciously empowering' (Williams).

In this talk, Law Professor and lawyer Jill Marshall explores what the human rights of women might be like in the future. We are living through times of existential threats from artificial intelligence and climate change, of ever-expanding technological online, virtual, and augmented reality developments, animal and nature rights and other social justice movements and protests. The historical lack of rights, and the gaining of rights, for women, often focused on the injustices to women as a group with 'women-only' or 'women-centric' approaches. But these are times of gender categorisation questioning and shifting. Professor Marshall will examine what impact these issues may, or could, have on the human rights of women in the future.

Thursday

13:00–14:15	Registration, networking lunch	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
14:15–14:30	Break	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
14:30–16:30	Panel Session 1: Social Justice and Citizenship <i>School of the Arts Library</i> Chair: Grace Carter	Dr. Janet Bowstead	IDPs in the Global North: Women's journeys to escape domestic violence
		Dr. Christos Marneros	Beyond the Law and the Outlaws: Anarcha-Feminism ethos in Rote Zora
	Panel Session 2: Methodologies <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Sarah Singh	Dr. Alice King	Hi! I'm the problem, it's me: Being a 'feminist killjoy' and doing research on sexual violence at elite UK universities.
		Gabriella R. Mwedzi	Using Black Feminist Epistemologies for researching Intimate Partner Abuse experienced by Black Migrant Christian women
		Prof. Caroline Bradbury-Jones, Lisa Ward	The realities of undertaking and managing a co-research project: A new framework for qualitative, participative research practice.
16:30–17:30	Break	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
17:30–18:30	Keynote <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	Prof. Jill Marshall & Dr. Sharron FitzGerald	Human Rights of Women in the Future
18:30–20:00	Drinks Reception	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	

Friday

09:15–09:30	Registration, tea and coffee	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
09:30–11:30	Panel Session 3: Services <i>Lecture Theatre 2, Rendall</i> Chair: Anna Carline	Dr Bianca Fileborn	Understanding LGBTQ+ people's experiences of sexual violence across the life course: Implications for service provision and support
		Kate Codd	In conversation with health visitors and women: Talking about domestic abuse. Analysing experience through a feminist lens
		Alison McDonald	Women's Lived-Experiences of the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme in Northern Ireland
		Ülkü Baturöğlü-Bacı	The impact of rurality on victims-survivors' experiences of accessing support in rural communities in Scotland
	Panel Session 4: Trauma <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Megan Hermolle	Rhiannon Maniatt	'I don't have anything else to give': Domestic Abuse Advocates' Experiences of Vicarious Trauma and Vicarious Resilience
		Dr Nikki Godden-Rasul & Dr Clare Wiper	Trauma-informed Lawyering in the Context of Civil Claims for Sexual Violence'
		Dr Tina Skinner	Researcher wellbeing and secondary trauma: A theoretical framework and protocol to improve practice
		Prof Yvette Tinsley	"I feel like I'll never be able to be just a normal person": Women lawyers and the psychological impact of working in sexual offending trials
11:30–12:00	Break	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	

Friday

12:00–13:30	Panel Session 5: Spaces	Prof. Catherine Durose and Prof. Vivien Lowndes	Gendering discretion: why street level bureaucracy needs a gendered lens
	<i>Lecture Theatre 2, Rendall</i>	Dr Helen Rizzo	Public Sexual Violence and the Right to the City: The Case of Cairo
	Chair: Sarah Singh	Dr. Mischa Dekker	The Criminalization of Street Harassment in France: A Case of Carceral Feminism?
	Panel Session 6: Reproductive Justice	Isabella Da Re	Understanding A,B,C v Ireland through the lens of "Suffering of Women's Bodies"
	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	Dr Anna Pathe-Smith	When pregnant women and persons (reasonably) disagree: A clash of perspectives in decision making."
	Chair: Jill Marshall	Rebecca Haycock	Exploring concepts of secrecy and agency through the mother-child relationship where there has been domestic violence and coercive control: Challenging discourses of mother blaming.
13:30–14:30	Lunch	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	



Friday

14:30 – 16:00	Panel Session 7: Gender- Based Violence and Empowerment <i>Rendall, SR6</i> Chair: Miranda Horvath	Dr Anna Bull	Whose problem is it anyway? Sexual harassment in the film and television industry
		Dr Rebecca Brunk (lead)	What's the problem? A feminist discourse analysis of power and impact in UK university sexual harassment policies
		Dr Emma Joyes	"You want them pretty, but not too intelligent!" Exploring Gender Based Violence within the sexual offending rehabilitative context.
	Panel Session 8: Institutions <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Sharron FitzGerald	Caoimhe Kiernan	Affect Theory, the Perceived Impact of Judicial Diversity, and the Gender Pay Gap in the Irish Legal Profession
		Prof Vanessa Munro, Dr Alice King and Lotte Young Andrade	Prosecutorial Innovation in Rape Cases Under Operation Soteria: Creating the Foundations for Transformative Change in England and Wales, or Just Business As Usual?
		Dr. Jenny Korkodeilou	'Stalking Lies in the Eye of the Beholder': Problematizing the nature of stalking as a patriarchal and thus political crime
16:00 – 16:45	Roundtable (Concluding thoughts)	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	



Abstracts

Ülkü Baturoğlu-Balcı–The impact of rurality on victims-survivors' experiences of accessing support in rural communities in Scotland

The literature on gender-based violence is mainly urban-centred, and rural areas have been neglected over the years. Despite a gradual increase over the last three decades in the international literature on gender-based violence in rural areas, little is known about gender-based violence in rural communities in Scotland and the UK. Drawing upon in-depth interviews with victims-survivors of gender-based violence and support service providers in rural communities, this paper examines victims/survivors' help-seeking experiences and practices in support service provision in rural communities in Scotland. It argues that rurality exacerbates survivors' experiences of gender-based violence and poses additional barriers to help-seeking, and while it presents some difficulties in providing support, it also provides some opportunities and innovations.

Dr Bianca Fileborn–Understanding LGBTQ+ people's experiences of sexual violence across the life course: implications for service provision and support

A growing body of research illustrates that gender and sexuality diverse people experience disproportionately high rates of sexual and other gender-based violence. However, overall, our knowledge of LGBTQ+ people's experiences of sexual violence remains limited, with research and practice in this field still operating through a largely heteronormative lens. This presentation draws on findings from a collaborative project between ACON (a NSW-based LGBTQ+ health organisation), and researchers from the University of Tasmania and Melbourne. Drawing on data from an online, mixed methods survey with 330 LGBTQ+ survivors in NSW, I will examine the nature of participants' experiences of sexual violence across their lives, experiences of and barriers to seeking support, and insights into how we can best provide support to LGBTQ+ survivors, with an emphasis on community-based responses to sexual violence.

Abstracts

Dr Janet C Bowstead—IDPs in the Global North: Women's journeys to escape domestic violence

Tens of thousands of women and children in the UK are displaced due to the human rights violation of violence against women, but they are not recognised or responded to as IDPs. Their individual and hidden journeys to escape violence cause support needs, and a loss of rights, but state and service responses are often fragmented and inadequate; and focused on narrow definitions of risk and eligibility. What does that say about social justice and women's citizenship in countries of the Global North? And would using the lens of internal displacement focus minds and actions on more just, effective, and rights-based responses? This presentation draws on mixed methods research using administrative data from services to map and quantify the processes of women's forced relocation in the UK, as well as accounts and insights from interviews and participatory photography with women on the move due to violence and abuse.

Prof. Caroline Bradbury-Jones & Lisa Ward—The realities of undertaking and managing a co-research project: A new framework for qualitative, participative research practice.

Co-research is gaining prominence across research disciplines, seeking to embed the voices and experiences of those with lived experience in academic knowledge. It recognises that the "perspective from the lives of the less powerful can provide a more objective view" (Harding, 1991: 270). "Co-producing research... requires...that efforts are made to redress power differentials" (NIHR). Nevertheless, there are still power differentials that exist particularly in the sphere of sexual violence research. These include: choices for Co-Investigators who may also have lived experience, about whether to disclose; the impact of Co-research on an individual's healing journey; the need to ensure safety without paternalising Co-researchers; and issues of intersectionality and representation. This paper draws on the experiences of the PROSPER study (a co-research study with survivors of sexual violence), outlining a framework which might enable Co-research to further explore the ethical considerations for Co-research within sexual violence projects.

Abstracts

Dr Rebecca Brunk, McKay, S., Bayley, J., & Colston, B.—What’s the problem? A feminist discourse analysis of power and impact in UK university sexual harassment policies

How is the problem of sexual harassment represented in the policies of UK institutions of higher education? This conference presentation shares a feminist discourse analysis of sexual harassment policies from 30 English universities, specifically focusing on how descriptions of power and impact are positioned within policy. The research found dominant discourses regarding sexual harassment as workplace aggression and harassment against a protected characteristic with limited discussion on the role of power in harassment, and an alternative discourse as gender-based violence which identifies power as a critical risk. This discourse analysis also revealed that policies largely focus on the negative impacts direct sexual harassment has to individual’s psychological and work-related wellbeing in the framing of the problem of sexual harassment, with limited consideration of the negative impact reporting can have on the individual when allegations are mishandled or the negative impact on the wider community when an environment is sexually hostile.

Dr Anna Bull—Whose problem is it anyway? Sexual harassment in the film and television industry

In recent years, and particularly since the MeToo movement, increasing attention has been paid to institutions other than the criminal justice system such as workplaces or education institutions to address gender-based violence. The television and film industry was ground zero for MeToo, but to what extent has the industry made the shifts that were demanded of it? This paper draws on interviews carried out in 2023 with 18 people working in the UK film and television industry who had experienced or reported sexual harassment at work since January 2018, in order to explore whether and how institutions beyond the criminal justice system are starting to take responsibility for gender-based violence. Findings will outline workplace responses to reports and disclosures of sexual harassment; to what extent initiatives were in place in workplaces to tackle this issue; and what difference interviewees perceive MeToo to have made to tackling sexual harassment in this industry.

Abstracts

Kate Codd—In conversation with health visitors and women: Talking about domestic abuse. Analysing experience through a feminist lens

The statutory obligation of health visitors to identify and prevent domestic abuse, as well as seeking to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities, it comes as no surprise that most health visitors will have experience of working with families who have experienced domestic abuse. The only way of knowing a socially constructed world, is knowing it from within. Yet those who don't know, can achieve an epistemic insight through collaboration. This study explores the standpoint of health visitors and women who have experienced domestic abuse within the service provision: utilising a feminist methodology, semi-structured interviews provide perspective regarding support, intervention, and outcome. The data has been examined using reflexive thematic analysis. Key themes demonstrate the focus of practice on the woman/child AND safety, rather than the man AND violence. Degendered policy does not reflect the wider societal experiences and perspective.

Isabella Da Re—Understanding A,B,C v Ireland through the lens of “Suffering of Women’s Bodies”

The androcentricity of the Prohibition of Torture has historically excluded the lived realities of women's suffering which do not occur in masculinised public environments, such as in cases of abortions. In A,B,C v Ireland (2010), the applicants claimed to have suffered from inhuman or degrading treatment, inter alia, health complications, anxiety and humiliation, following Ireland's strict abortion laws. Yet, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) dismissed claims under Article 3- the Prohibition of Torture, deeming them ill-founded and not reaching the minimum severity threshold. Differently, in Bouyid v Belgium (2015), the ECtHR considered a slap by a police officer to a detainee to be degrading treatment, violating Article 3. Consequently, given these juxtaposing judgments, this paper seeks to firstly explore the lens of “Suffering of Women's Bodies”, to subsequently analyse to which extent women's experiences of suffering, caused by the criminalisation of abortions, are acknowledged within the Prohibition's framework.

Abstracts

Dr. Mischa Dekker–The Criminalization of Street Harassment in France: A Case of Carceral Feminism?

Since the mid-2010s, activists and politicians in various countries plead for the criminalization of street harassment. This paper analyses the political process leading to the introduction of one of the first national laws on street harassment, namely the 2018 "outrage sexiste" article in France. Here, street harassment was put on the agenda by state feminists and feminist activists, who presented it as part of a "continuum of violence against women." These agenda-setters mostly opposed the criminalization of street harassment, which they argued could result in disproportional criminalization of racialized men. When center-right parties started advocating a national law, they similarly framed street harassment as part of a continuum of violence but adapted the meaning of this concept: from a theory about male dominance to one about escalation. I contribute to research on carceral feminism by showing how lawmakers used this framing to reject worries about disproportional criminalization of racialized men.

Prof. Catherine Durose & Prof. Vivien Lowndes–Gendering discretion: why street level bureaucracy needs a gendered lens

Street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) shape policy through using discretion in their interactions with citizens and service users in delivering public services. Discretion allows SLBs to bridge between public policy and the complex, individual, human situations they encounter. Drawing on insights from feminist institutionalism, this article establishes gender as a relevant analytical category in understanding discretion. We set out three analytical propositions: SLBs work in gendered institutional contexts that shape their discretion; SLBs are gendered actors, whose discretion is shaped by their own gendered perspectives, identities and experiences; and SLBs' discretion has gendered effects. We investigate these propositions through a case study of the early implementation of the classification of misogyny as a hate crime among police forces in England and Wales. In addressing the intersection between street-level bureaucracy and feminist institutionalism, we bring a gendered perspective to street level bureaucracy, and a focus on how rules are interpreted to feminist institutionalism.

Abstracts

Prof Martha Albertson Fineman—One Feminist Perspective on Social Justice

This essay will consider the concept of “social justice,” beginning with an exploration of the very meaning of the term. Social justice is key phrase, used in many progressive circles, forming the basis for new programs, conferences and publications. It also has multiple possible meanings and interestingly, the term is rarely defined. In this essay I first ask: what -- if anything -- does the concept “social” add to our idea of “justice?” As it is currently used, I think the answer must be: “not much. Over the course of the 20th century, justice increasingly became understood in terms of the relationship between the individual and the economic – and this is true across the political spectrum. The term social justice, therefore, is fragmented, at best an umbrella under which are collected injustices of exclusion, primarily understood in economic, racial, gendered, and other terms. Can feminist theory, understood as articulating a political or ethical system of universal applicability, reinvigorate the concept of the social, reaching beyond the particular and incorporating multiple interests, identities, and perspectives. Can it encompass not only the particular, but also incorporate the interests of society as a whole? This essay will present one feminist vision of an inclusive social justice project. It will argue that what is needed for the 21st century is both a fundamental feminist ethics of care and a robust sense of collective responsibility.

Prof Heather Flowe—A Critical Analysis of Gender-Based Violence Reporting and Evidence Building Apps (GBVxTech) that Capture Memory Reports

Gender-based violence (GBV) is often unreported due to the stigma and fear surrounding these crimes. To address this issue, many GBVxTech applications have been developed to help victims document and report incidents. A critical analysis of 37 such applications found that only 11 met the study criteria and were available for download. These applications were evaluated based on how the interviews were conducted, the types of questions asked, and the security features used. While most applications used open-ended questions and sought to elicit information relevant to criminal investigations, many did not establish rapport or ground rules and lacked security features. The findings suggest a need for further development of GBVxTech applications with improved security features and clear instructions for use, informed consent procedures, and data usage information.

Abstracts

Dr Nikki Godden-Rasul & Dr Clare Wiper–Trauma-informed Lawyering in the Context of Civil Claims for Sexual Violence'

Over the last decade there has been an increase in civil claims for sexual violence, with personal injury law firms profiting in this developing sector. Whether or not lawyers working in this area have appropriate knowledge of sexual violence and its varying impacts, and if this informs their practices, is unknown. Given 'trauma-informed' approaches have been called for in responses to sexual violence, this paper draws on interviews with civil lawyers who represent sexual violence survivors to explore the extent to which trauma-informed work is taking place and what trauma-informed practices can look like in this context. However, there are potential drawbacks of a trauma-informed approach as it can, by treating sexual violence as necessarily traumatic, medicalise and individualise what is a social and political problem. As such, this paper also explores whether lawyers can or do trouble the problematic aspects of the trauma frame.

Rebecca Haycock–Exploring concepts of secrecy and agency through the mother-child relationship where there has been domestic violence and coercive control: Challenging discourses of mother blaming.

The identity of motherhood is significantly and purposefully attacked within the context of domestic violence and coercive control. An inability for survivors to prevent this attack can be viewed as a 'failure' in their mother role and one that can be used to further victimise. Understanding the conditions in which mothering happens through listening to and sharing stories provides a less pathologizing lens that can challenge mother blaming discourses. This research focused on the lived experience of four mothers (post-separation) drawing on a phenomenological methodology exploring concepts of secrecy and agency. This allowed for a closer look at the mother-child relationship and the complex ways in which it can be attacked. Stories provided a way of understanding how mothers made sense of their experience of abuse; how they used and understood secrecy with their children and how it had impacted upon their relationship and the opportunities for help-seeking. Mothers' narratives demonstrated degrees of decision making and agency and references to their own children's agency ran throughout mothers' accounts.

Abstracts

Dr Emma Joyes—“You want them pretty, but not too intelligent!”

Exploring Gender Based Violence within the sexual offending rehabilitative context.

Data will be presented from an ethnography conducted within a UK forensic mental health hospital. The forensic setting houses persons with offence convictions who are also in receipt of ongoing mental healthcare, including those with a sexual offending history. Within this paper, it will be argued that cultural norms, including inequalitarian attitudes towards women, infiltrate the exterior walls of these institutions. Evidence of how everyday social interactions reinforce heteronormative gender roles in which men are viewed as dominant and women as submissive will be presented – a noted clinical risk within the context of sexual offending. This paper argues that to focus on those who are convicted of sexual offences ignores the pervasive cultural landscape of violence against women and girls. Consideration is given to appropriate interventions and draws upon other, more promising, approaches linked to holistic models of care.

Caoimhe Kiernan—Affect Theory, the Perceived Impact of Judicial Diversity, and the Gender Pay Gap in the Irish Legal Profession

This paper investigates how affect theory can be used as a framework when examining judicial diversity, and how affect theory can be used to help explore the impact of increasing gender diversity on the Irish bench. This paper will examine the current gender pay gap in the Irish legal profession, the status of women in Ireland throughout the 20th Century, recount the women's movement and discuss the appointment of the first women judges. Affect theory will then be explored, including how affect theory can be applied as a framework when considering women judges, and the gender pay gap in the Irish legal profession. Affect theory examines individual and societal feelings or instincts, and how these influence how we experience and interact with the world. This paper has been included as a chapter in an upcoming edited collection on the Gender Pay Gap (edited by Elisabeth Griffith and Frances Hamilton).

Abstracts

Dr Alice King—Hi! I’m the problem, it’s me: Being a ‘feminist killjoy’ and doing research on sexual violence at elite UK universities.

Within feminist scholarship, reflexivity is considered important, if not crucial (Hesse-Biber & Pitatelli, 2012). With this in mind, this paper reflects upon the challenges I faced over the course of my PhD between 2018–2022. The research itself was concerned with understanding student attitudes towards sexual violence in elite institutions. In this paper, I consider my position as a young female researcher working within an elite university on a topic that was perhaps inevitably going to raise sensitivities within the institution. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s work around what it means to live a feminist life and be a feminist working on social justice within the Higher Education space, I explore the extent to which I became the problem when attempting to work alongside institutions both in order to complete the fieldwork and then share my findings. I conclude by considering the extent to which this experience has left me substantially less optimistic about the prospect of bringing about substantial behavioural change in this context.

Dr. Jenny Korkodeilou—‘Stalking Lies in the Eye of the Beholder’: Problematizing the nature of stalking as a patriarchal and thus political crime

Stalking can be understood as a form of interpersonal violence on its own right but also as a manifestation of gender-based violence within the continuum of violence against women. It is the latter that lacks theoretical consideration. This may be due to the fact that there is not a commonly accepted definition of stalking and/or because of its ambiguous, idiosyncratic and often covert nature. Stalking myths further hinder the recognition and investigation of stalking as a symptom of patriarchy. In this paper I will discuss the extent to which conceptualising stalking as a patriarchal crime can help us decipher its complex (mostly non-physical) nature and what does this mean in terms of feminist informed remedies. The aim is to make the connections between the personal and the political by framing stalking as a behaviour that has a cause, an impact and a cure that are shaped by and occur within a specific socio-cultural context.

Abstracts

Rhiannon Maniatt—‘I don’t have anything else to give’: Domestic Abuse Advocates’ Experiences of Vicarious Trauma and Vicarious Resilience

This paper draws on findings from research into the effects of providing support work as Domestic Abuse Advocates (e.g. refuge workers), conceptualising effects through the lenses of vicarious trauma and vicarious resilience. This study drew on creative methods through a Participatory Action Research approach in order to explore these experiences, enabling participants to lead conversations and share their subjective understandings of vicarious trauma and resilience. It will discuss the participants’ descriptions of the effects of being Domestic Abuse Advocates. Negative effects included changes in worldview and relationships, such as seeing the world as a more dangerous place and ‘seeing DV everywhere’, while positive effects included feeling more compassionate and confident, finding the job rewarding and feeling hopeful for change. All participants shared negative effects and positive effects, with some discussing how these are interlinked, from bearing witness to the ‘worst of humanity but also see[ing] the very best of it’.

Dr Christos Marneros—Beyond the Law and the Outlaws: Anarcha-Feminism ethos in *Rote Zora*.

The radical feminist, urban guerrilla group Rote Zora (Red Zora) operated in West Germany between 1974–1995, being responsible for 45 bombings and arsons aimed against those the group considered as ideological enemies – these ‘enemies’ were targeted because they were promoting and engaging in sexist practices and reactionary politics in order to maintain and extend the hegemony of the capitalist, imperialist and patriarchal society of the West. In this paper, I argue that Rote Zora’s militant feminist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist politics are compatible with an ethos which is (or should be) prevalent in anarcha-feminist thinking and politics. To that extent, through an examination of Rote Zora’s interviews, communiqués and actions, I want to highlight the importance that these texts may have in advancing and enriching an anarcha-feminist theory and practice that can fight any form of oppression coming both from the apparent enemies (the law, patriarchy the state, capitalism, the police) and from the enemy within (any tendencies of domination and/or the neglect of certain groups and sensitivities within radical groups themselves).

Abstracts

Prof Vanessa Munro, Dr Alice King and Lotte Young Andrade—Prosecutorial Innovation in Rape Cases Under Operation Soteria: Creating the Foundations for Transformative Change in England and Wales, or Just Business As Usual?

In response to criticisms and recommendations set out in the Government's End to End Rape Review, 'Operation Soteria' was initiated across policing and the Crown Prosecution Service in England and Wales to design, pilot, evaluate and implement systemic change to the ways in which rape complaints, and adult rape complainants in particular, are responded to. Having been commissioned by the CPS to undertake independent academic research across its five Soteria 'pathfinder' areas in 2022/23, this paper will present our key findings – drawn from over 125 stakeholder interviews, a series of fieldwork observations and sample of rape case files – regarding the successes and challenges encountered to date. More broadly, reflecting on those findings, we will also critically consider the extent to which enduring, sustainable and holistic change is achievable within the parameters of Soteria; or whether, notwithstanding improvements that might be generated by Soteria initiatives, radical transformation requires a more ambitious and extensive programme of reconstruction.

Gabriella R Mwedzi—Using Black Feminist Epistemologies for researching Intimate Partner Abuse experienced by Black Migrant Christian women in the UK

Intimate Partner Abuse continues to be at the centre of discussions on gender-based violence in the UK. Yet, little concerted effort has been placed into investigating the specific experience of Black migrant Christian women using Black feminist epistemologies. Global Black feminist works have discussed at length how traditional academic conventions limit Black knowledge creation. Echoing the words of Audre Lorde – "The master's tools will never destroy the master's house" – this paper draws upon the epistemology embraced within my PhD. It is important now more than ever that research that centres on Black women uses efficient methodological tools as Black women living in the UK are actively being targeted by distressing migration policies and institutionalised racism. How can effective resolutions be created if the fullness of their lived experience is not accurately captured?

Abstracts

Dr Anna Pathe-Smith—When pregnant women and persons (reasonably) disagree: a clash of perspectives in decision making.”

In law, the principle that 'reasonable people disagree' is often cited as a key feature of a system which places importance upon individuals making decisions to create their own life stories, reflective of personal values and choices. However, this paper argues that, in law, reasonableness in pregnancy is narrowly construed. There are several explanations for this. The structural impact of a common law system of precedence; power dynamics between healthcare professionals and patients; social and moral views which pregnancy inspires; and narratives of what it is to be a 'good mother' confine what 'reasonable' means when a woman or person is pregnant, to a narrower field than might otherwise be suggested in legal discourse. Instead, reasonableness is frequently unduly simplified in this area. This paper therefore questions the space for reasonable disagreement and decision making in the pregnancy context, arguing for a more holistic account 'reasonableness' while pregnant.

Dr Helen Rizzo—Public Sexual Violence and the Right to the City: The Case of Cairo

The “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968; Harvey 2008) has inspired urban social movements across the globe. Feminists and women’s rights groups in the Global South have also been influenced by the right to the city discourse (Phadke 2007). In the last 20 years, local and international civil society groups in Cairo have taken on the issue of sexual violence in public spaces as a barrier to women’s access to the city and gender equality. However, in discussions over who is to blame for sexual harassment, some scholars fear that discourses used by various elite actors in Egypt demonize young, working class men as hypersexual and violent, thus responsible for public sexual violence which justifies excluding them from the city. Thus, the focus of this research is to examine how the role of public sexual violence has gendered and class implications for who has the “right” to the city.

Abstracts

Dr Tina Skinner, Bloomfield-Utting, J, Geoghegan-Fittall, S., Roberts (ne Ballantyne), N., Smith, O., Sweetland, S. & Taylor, H.—Researcher wellbeing and secondary trauma: A theoretical framework and protocol to improve practice

Research ethics procedures have substantially improved over the last three decades, but, despite this, researchers' wellbeing is often overlooked. This is particularly concerning when researching topics that may cause secondary trauma for the researcher. The British Psychological Society (2020) state that the symptoms of secondary trauma are alike to the symptoms of posttraumatic stress 'disorder' felt by a victim-survivor of a direct traumatic event. Secondary trauma can be experienced at any time in a research project, including interviews, coding quantitative/qualitative data, reviewing the literature or during policy campaigning. Symptoms of secondary trauma include distressing thoughts, avoidance, limited concentration/sleep, and alterations in mood. This paper draws on decades of experience (see Skinner et al, forthcoming), and a review of existent literature, to adapt Bronfenbrenner's (1994, 2005) ecological model to aid understanding of how secondary trauma in research can be addressed and to develop a protocol to help individuals/managers/institutions reduce risk and enhance wellbeing.

Prof Yvette Tinsley, Dr Nichola Tyler—"I feel like I'll never be able to be just a normal person": women lawyers and the psychological impact of working in sexual offending trials

Relatively little attention has been paid to the impacts of emotional labour and trauma exposure on legal professionals working in the criminal justice process. This paper will draw on results from an Aotearoa New Zealand study that qualitatively explores the lived experiences of prosecutors and defence counsel working in criminal trials. Working with sexual trauma was found to exacerbate the existing difficulties and consequences of working with traumatic material more broadly. The study illustrates that women lawyers working on cases involving sexual trauma can experience additional psychological impacts due to role-specific occupational stressors and exposure to traumatic material. The paper will include reflections on what changes might be required in workplaces to alleviate the impacts of working with sexual trauma and promote wellbeing, particularly for women lawyers.

Social Media

Please post about the conference on Twitter (and any other social media you use!)

@ResearchLex

@VAWGRN

@CSEL_UK

@feminist_legal

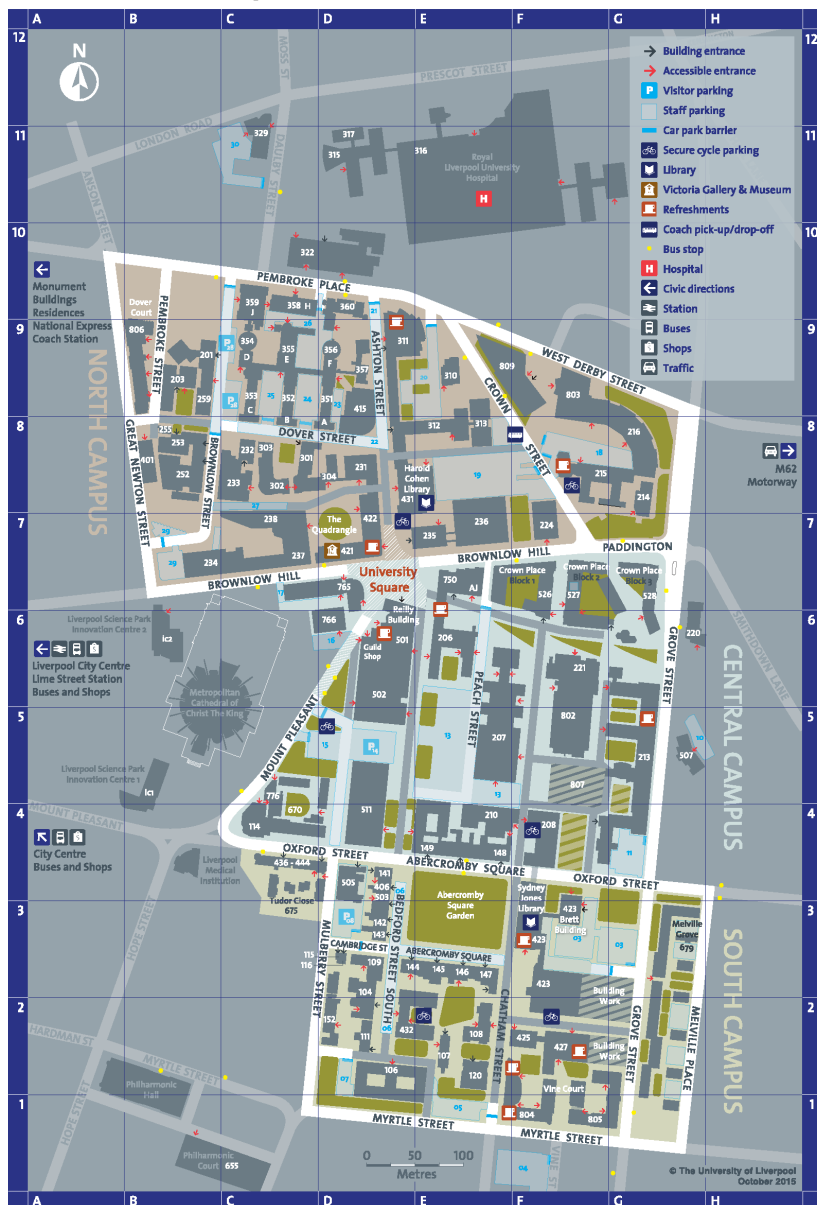
Please use the hashtag [#FeministLiverpool2023](#) in your posts so we can find and promote them.

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Map of the University



School of Law and Social Justice – 108

School of The Arts – 148, 149

Rendall – 432



Out and About in Liverpool

Places to eat

There are plenty of great restaurants in Liverpool City Centre.

Just off Hope Street is The Quarter, an Italian restaurant. It's recommended to book as it does get busy!

On Bold Street is Fat Hippo, a burger chain with vegan, gluten free, and dairy free options.

There are also lots of great coffee and tea shops, including Bold Street Coffee, Moose Coffee on Hope Street, TSUJIRI Matcha House, a Japanese tea house.

Things to do

If you plan to sightsee while in Liverpool, here are some recommendations:

Liverpool Cathedral—The tower tour is highly recommended, as you can see the whole city from the top!

The Museum of Liverpool—recommended for those who enjoy social history.

The Baltic Triangle—for 'off the beaten track' shopping in a creative district, a 20 minute walk away from the University.

News From Nowhere—A feminist bookshop on Bold Street, run by a women worker's co-operative.

For more ideas on what to do in Liverpool, go to www.visitliverpool.com/things-to-do.