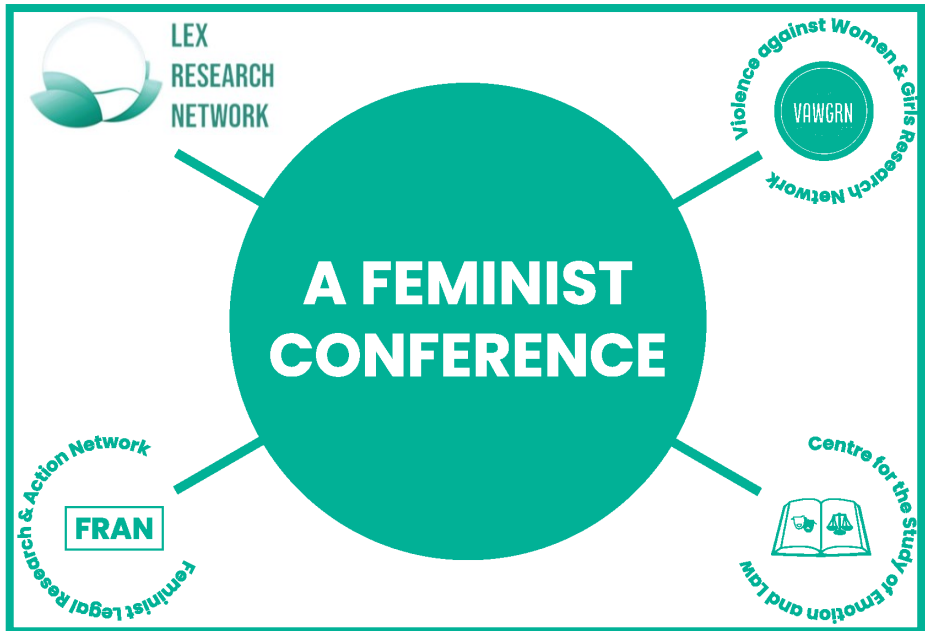




Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures: Remembering the Past to Reimagine the Future

LEX, VAWGRN, FRAN, and CSEL Joint Conference

The University of Liverpool, 7-8 November 2024



Welcome!

Welcome to our third 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. This year we were absolutely overwhelmed with abstracts (a wonderful thing to have too much of!) and reading them all was a joy. Choosing between them was much more difficult, which is why we chose to include them all and create a poster session! We look forward to seeing all of the presentations over the course of the conference.

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 – 13:50: Early Career Researcher

Working Lunch

13:50 – 14:15: Welcome to the

Conference

14:15 – 15:45: Panel Sessions 1 & 2

15:45 – 16:45 Poster Session

16:45–17:00 Break

17:00 – 19:00: Keynote Roundtable

19:00 – 20:00: Drinks Reception

Day Two

09:30 – 10:00 Tea and coffee

10:00 – 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: Conference Close

Keynote Papers

Tort Law and Feminist
Strategy: Lessons from Social
Movement and Community
Lawyering
Nikki Godden-Rasul



Gender as Essential
without Essence
Suki Finn

Abolition Feminist
Pedagogy and the
Neoliberal Institution
**Molly Wilson & Rachel
Vogler**



Feminist Legal Futures;
Challenging the
Epistemology of the Ever-
Present
Mitchell Travis

Gender and Activism in
India: A historical
exploration of legal reforms
in relation to sexual
violence, and access to
Justice

Ravinder Barn

With discussant Miranda Horvath



Thursday

13:00-13:50	Arrival, Networking Lunch	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
13:50-14:15	Welcome	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
14:15-15:45	Panel Session 1: Support Services <i>Lecture Theatre 1, Rendall Building</i> Chair: Grace Carter	Althea Cribb	Exploring the concept of 'service user engagement' in specialist domestic abuse services, and how its use impacts service users and service delivery
		Antje Joel	Should We Abolish Women's Shelters?
		Ilaria Michelis	Caring with Power: Equality, Self-determination and Intersectionality in Feminist Services for Survivors of VAWG
		Laura Hammond	Sharing Experience, Expertise and Knowledge to Influence Policy and Practice in Relation to Domestic Abuse
	Panel Session 2: Manosphere <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Sharron FitzGerald	Catherine Baker, Megan Kelly	Sexlessness, misogyny and gender essentialism: unpacking the myth of the sexless man in the manosphere
		Jana Schäfer	Creating violence through the intersectional manosphere - Readings of sexualized violence as (inter) subjection
		David S. Smith	Unveiling 'ex-Incels': Identity Dynamics and Juxtaposed Hegemonic Masculinity
		Joshua Thorburn	Reformulating aggrieved entitlement: Considering the role of (gendered) humiliation in responses to singleness and involuntary celibacy

Thursday

15:45-16:45	Poster Session	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space Foyer</i>	
17:00-19:00	Keynote Papers <i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Discussant: Miranda Horvath	Nikki Godden-Rasul	Tort Law and Feminist Strategy: Lessons from Social Movement and Community Lawyering
		Molly Wilson, Rachel Vogler	Abolition Feminist Pedagogy and the Neoliberal Institution
		Ravinder Barn	Gender and Activism in India: A historical exploration of legal reforms in relation to sexual violence, and access to Justice
		Mitchell Travis	Feminist Legal Futures; Challenging the Epistemology of the Ever-Present
		Suki Finn	Gender as Essential without Essence
19:00-20:00	Drinks Reception	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	

Friday

09:30-10:00	Tea and Coffee	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	
10:00-11:30	Panel Session 3: Domestic Violence and Abuse <i>School of Law and Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Jill Marshall	Ellen Reeves	Internalising, challenging and resisting 'public stories' of domestic abuse
		Rebecca Haycock	Exploring agency and voice with young people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse
		Lisa Ward, Alison Stillman	Creative responses exploring coercive control centring the voices of those with lived experience
	Panel Session 4: Wellbeing Lecture Theatre 2, Rendall Building Chair: Miranda Horvath	Sarah West	Values in Action: Implementing a trauma-responsive ethical framework in co-creation of the first digital intervention for UK supporters
		Tina Skinner	Coping with emotionally challenging research: What might a Researcher Wellbeing Plan look like?
		Tina Skinner, Miranda Horvath	Putting into practice our Researcher Wellbeing Plans
11:30-12:00	Break		

Friday

12:00-13:30	Panel Session 5: Sexual Violence and Harassment	Lorraine Hendrie	An exploration on the perceptions of safety by females in the night time economy
	<i>Lecture Theatre 2, Rendall Building</i>	Sarah Warbis	Would you intervene? Using virtual reality to understand bystanders witnessing a sexual assault
		Sarah Kelleher	Minimising the impact of rape myths on victim evaluations and juror decisions: An intervention study
	Panel Session 6: Reconstructions of rights and Justice	Alex Nevins	'Sexual Orientation or Sexual Assumption? The Equality Act's Oversight of Asexual-Spectrum Identities'.
	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	Debra Haak	Sex in the Age of Gender: Conceptual Clarity as a Foundation for Reconciling the Interests, Rights, and Experiences of Women, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People in Canada
		Jill Marshall	Feminist Legal Theories, the Human Rights for Women and Earth Jurisprudence
13:30-14:30	Lunch	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	



Friday

14:30-16:00	Panel Session 7: Digital Harms	Katherine Allen	Beyond the hierarchy of harms: technology-facilitated abuse and the continuum of gendered violence
	<i>Lecture Theatre 2, Rendall Building</i> Chair: Megan Hermolle	Sopio Davituri	Gender, inequality and power: Women-only Facebook Groups in Georgia
		Lorrie Hayman	Shifting Safety: Cyber-located sexual violence in Ireland
		Carolyn Leader	Swipe it Right: An Exploration into Finding Tinder Charming
	Panel Session 8: Feminist Activism	Anna Ratecka	At home with feminism: sex workers' stories of belonging and othering in feminist counterpublics Poland
	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i> Chair: Anna Carline	Ashita Alag	The Road not Taken: Gender-Neutrality in the Indian Rape Law
		Antonia Porter	50 years of Rising Sun: A feminist oral history project
		Donna Peberdy	Ending Gender-Based Sexual Violence in 25 Minutes or Less: Short Film as Activism and Tool for Social Change
16:00-16:15	Conference Close	<i>School of Law and Social Justice Events Space</i>	

Abstracts

Ashita Alag—The Road not Taken: Gender-Neutrality in the Indian Rape Law

This paper studies a unique moment in the Indian feminist movement's history when a gender-neutral rape law was seriously debated by women's and LGBTQ groups. While a gender-neutral rape law was roundly rejected in the 1990s, in the early 2000s, one NGO – PRISM – brought together women's and LGBTQ groups to reconsider this position. Nuanced arguments from the radical to the post-modern feminist understandings of rape were referenced. However, no immediate law reform effort followed these discussions. Yet, in 2013, when gender-neutrality came to be considered as part of the law reform agenda, none of these complex debates were referenced; the radical feminist position of male domination-female subordination won the day. This paper seeks to highlight Indian feminists' response to gender-neutrality in rape law to situate wider debates on gender, sex and sexuality taking place at that time. It also aims to bring to fore ideas underpinning Indian feminists' views on gender-neutrality, highlighting those that won in the past at the cost of others, with an aim to shape future conversations on this issue in India and elsewhere.

Katherine Allen—Beyond the hierarchy of harms: technology-facilitated abuse and the continuum of gendered violence

This paper applies a feminist theoretical lens to victim-survivors' experiences of recognition, disclosure, reporting and help-seeking in relation to technology-facilitated violence and abuse (TFVA). Drawing on their reflexive thematic analysis of interviews with victim-survivors and professionals, authors argue that, while experiences of TFVA, help-seeking and secondary/re-victimisation are undoubtedly conditioned by the distinctive affordances of digital spaces, there are also important – and theoretically generative – parallels with the barriers encountered by victim-survivors of other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). Authors identified powerful resonances between the barriers facing TFVA victim-survivors, and those affecting victim-survivors of other patterns of GBV such as stalking and coercive control; most notably in relation to 'thin' incident- and risk-focused conceptions of harm, and the unacknowledged costs of documenting and reporting abuse. Authors argue that TFVA should be framed/ contextualised as part of a wider 'continuum' (Kelly, 1987) of GBV to promote effective policy and practice.

Abstracts

Kate Babin—Affective publics of the manosphere: empathy, incels and digital self-harm

The blackpill incel (involuntary celibate) community is a subset of the greater manosphere. They subscribe to a biological determinist worldview that requires internalizing the belief that men who do not fit into conventionally masculine definitions of attractiveness are systematically marginalized, othered by society and completely disregarded by women. The online forums they populate circulate violent affective intensities, they are volatile, rife with misogyny, hate speech, self-loathing and threats. Critical feminist media scholarship has been indispensable in terms of understanding the gender-based harm perpetuated by blackpill ideology within networked misogyny. Members of these communities are suffering immensely. They occupy forums where they are both subject to and perpetrators of constant ridicule, hate and incitements to harm themselves and others. By utilizing methodological empathy to think through and with incel forums, this paper applies a feminist affect theory framework in the aim to understand the extent to which participation in these networked publics function as a form of digital self harm.

Catherine Baker—Sexlessness, misogyny and gender essentialism: unpacking the myth of the sexless man in the manosphere

A narrative of male sexlessness as a causal factor for misogynistic attitudes and violence among cisheterosexual men has begun to permeate discussions about misogynist incels. Anchored in mainstream essentialist understandings of gender and male sex drives, this narrative is reproduced in research and media. We conceptualize this narrative as a form of misinformation that dilutes existing critical feminist perspectives on the manosphere, to individualistic and essentialist narratives of gender, centring male victimhood rather than patriarchal structures. Drawing from feminist research on the manosphere, we argue that this narrative being so readily taken up reveals that incels are not exceptional misogynists, but are rather produced and understood through hegemonic patriarchal cultural beliefs that reinforce and naturalize gender inequality. To do this we interrogate how this narrative appears in media and research, and weaponizes empathy to legitimize essentialist narratives that dehumanise men and prevent critical conversations around expansive understandings of masculinities.

Abstracts

Ravinder Barn—Gender and Activism in India: A historical exploration of legal reforms in relation to sexual violence, and access to Justice

By focusing on activism and women's rights in India, this paper seeks to explore one specific area of concern, namely sexual violence against women. In particular, we focus on Indian women's activism to understand legal reforms over the last 50 years. In doing this, we demonstrate how the Indian Criminal Justice System (ICJS) has sought to respond to help achieve gender sensitive justice. Given the dearth of literature into gender activism, sexual violence and access to justice, we explore how procedural justice theory and feminism can help understand the processes of access to justice. Sexual violence against women, the low rates of reporting, and access to justice remain important areas of concern across the globe. Through an analysis of gender activism and the Indian jurisdiction as a case study, this paper seeks to shine a light on the situation of women as victims of crime. We unpack women's agency, autonomy and struggle for equality and recognition to help explicate the historical trajectory through the utilisation of Baxi's (2014:1) understanding of landmark cases as 'laboratories for judicial reform'. A close examination of two high profile cases, namely Mathura (1972), and Jyoti Singh Pandey (2012), helps identify key historical developments including procedural interventions by the legislature; how judiciary has widened its scope, and the ways in which the police as an arm of the CJS has intervened to deal with sexual crimes against women in India. The role of Indian feminism and gender activism in building justice and equality frame the legal reform developments.

Polly Baynes—Women's Work?

This study into gender and social work is based on 40 Charity Organisation files from 1893, a period when first wave feminists increasingly challenged male violence to women and children. It examines how middle class women used philanthropic work to gain access to the public sphere and cross class boundaries, creating the newly emerging profession of social work – a territory in which female knowledge was valued. Workers and mothers alike both deployed and rejected dominant constructions of women as 'angels in the home'. In the case recordings, working women's voices are mediated through the proto-social workers' assumptions of class based superiority but alliances are formed in which the protection of children is secured – something social workers still strive to achieve today. Letters from working class women illustrate how they exerted agency during such encounters, balancing the potential for access to resources with the risks of intrusion into their home.

Abstracts

Rebecca Brunk—Can't just talk the talk: the institutional climate as a barrier to bystander intervention

Research on bystander intervention training has demonstrated its efficacy within workplace settings. Building upon this research, this paper examines the intricate dynamics of bystander psychology within the ecosystem of universities. Grounded in the socio-ecological model, we investigated the influence of institutional climate on bystanders' attitudes in ambiguous scenarios of boundary pushing from university staff onto students. By adapting Burn's (2009) scale for barriers to intervention for sexual assault, we introduce a novel survey scale for examining the barriers to sexual harassment intervention. Our results indicate a correlation between participants' perceptions of their institutional climate and their willingness to intervene. Specifically, a prevalent perception of tolerance for sexual harassment within the institution significantly diminishes individuals' perceived personal responsibility for intervention while amplifying audience inhibition. These findings underscore the influence of institutional climate in shaping bystander behaviour, and highlight the need for targeted interventions to foster institutional courage for effective bystander action.

Althea Cribb—Exploring the concept of 'service user engagement' in specialist domestic abuse services, and how its use impacts service users and service delivery'

I present my PhD findings on the concept of service user engagement within domestic abuse research and specialist services in England (funded by UCLan and SafeLives/Women's Aid Federation England Roadmap for System Change Project). My qualitative study involved interviews with women accessing specialist services and workers at those services.

Specialist services aim to be client-led and empowering; but, influenced by commissioners and national frameworks, they must define whether a woman's contact constitutes engagement, and consequently, whether they receive support. Despite their feminist history many domestic abuse services don't campaign for gender equality or to change societal perspectives on domestic abuse; and have no power to change abusers' behaviours. Services now focus on individual women, and whether they are ready to 'engage' in their own journey towards recovery. Yet specialist services are essential to women, providing necessary support that women rarely if ever receive from other services or their immediate networks.

Abstracts

Yanxi Dai—Sentencing Disparities in Domestic Violence Related Homicides in China: An Analysis of Intimate Partner Filicide Cases

This study analyzed ... cases of domestic violence related homicide in China, considering current Chinese laws on self-defense and criminal responsibility. Cases included intimate partner homicides and filicide resulting in convictions of intentional homicide, intentional injury causing death, and negligent manslaughter. Sentencing data examined for disparities based on gender and familial roles of defendants/victims. Regression modeling compared sentencing outcomes including length and mitigating factors like self-defense claims and surrendering, receiving conciliations. Results showed more lenient sentencing when the victim was a female partner versus a child. Fathers convicted of filicide received same sentences as mothers. Provocation defenses related to infidelity garnered greater sentencing reductions. Intimate partner homicides caused by family disputes also resulted in more lenient sentencing than other circumstances. These findings illuminate apparent biases in the application of Chinese domestic homicide laws around self-defense claims and criminal responsibility, especially regarding gender and familial relations. This study addresses a gap in China-based research and highlights needed reforms in sentencing and legal protections for women and children.

Sopio Davituri—Gender, inequality and power: Women-only Facebook Groups in Georgia

Women in Georgia face gender inequality in many aspects of their lives. However, they discuss these topics mainly among friends and closed women-only Facebook groups. This paper is based on my PhD thesis, which examines how women experience and respond to gender inequality in their everyday lives in Georgia. The paper critically engages with theories about space, place, and gender, exploring how women are oppressed or liberated in and through digital spaces.

This paper draws on the qualitative data (interviews with 42 women and participant observation) I collected for the thesis. The data demonstrate that there are various ways in which women respond to everyday manifestations of gender inequality using digital spaces (namely, women-only Facebook groups) in Georgia. Moreover, these strategies often have the potential to destabilise gendered power relations.

Abstracts

Suki Finn (*Keynote*) - Gender as Essential without Essence

In this paper I describe and defend a metaphysically realist position of gender where gender is taken to be essential for our fights for justice without being defined as having an essence. I apply a Quinean indispensability argument as such: for as long as there is gender-based oppression such as misogyny then we have an indispensable need for gender-based concepts such as 'woman' in order to understand (and ultimately eliminate) such oppression, and if gender is indispensable, albeit contingently, then we should take gender to be real. Given that reality includes our social reality, where gendered experiences are an irreducible aspect of that social reality, attempts to eliminate gender are futile. In the spirit of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's strategic essentialism applied at the meta-level, gender is essential for strategic purposes, even if genders are not essentially defined. I call this position (2nd order) gender essentialism without (1st order) gender essencealism.

Nikki Godden-Rasul (*Keynote*) - Tort Law and Feminist Strategy: Lessons from Social Movement and Community Lawyering

Widely publicised tort compensation claims for sexual violence brought against high-profile wealthy individuals (for example, Donald Trump, Harvey Weinstein and Prince Andrew) have played a role in the #MeToo movement. However, tort law is predicated on a market-based insurance system and incremental reforms, monetising and (re)producing hierarchies of harms along the lines of gender, race, class, sexuality and ability. As such, it can be considered antithetical to radical politics for social, political and economic change, and its use could forestall alternative more transformative possibilities for feminist futures. So understood, this paper questions the use of tort law to address sexual violence as part of wider feminist movements for gender and social justice. Drawing on law and social movement scholarship and abolitionist conceptions of non-reformist reforms, I set out a framework to inform decision-making as to when and in what ways it is useful to mobilise tort law for intersectional feminist struggles.

Abstracts

Julia Guy—Changing the Tracks: Investigating Sexual Harassment on Public Transport in the North-East of England.

The recent high-profile sexual assault case in the North-East of ex-footballer Paul Gascoigne, raised local and national debates about the safety of women on public transport (Westmarland, 2019). Yet there is limited research taking place about sexual harassment on public transport in many parts of the world, specifically the UK (Lewis et al, 2020), even though public transport has been described as a 'breeding-ground' for gender-based violence (Bastomski and Smith, 2016).

Using an innovative feminist sequential mixed methodology consisting of an online survey and 'Educational Empowerment Workshops' (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019), this paper explores the range and impact of sexual harassment on public transport in the North-East. This paper offers a discussion on survey findings (feelings of safety, bystander intervention), followed by an exploration into using Education Empowerment Workshops in sexual violence research. All whilst identifying context-specific actions to reduce perpetration and impact.

Debra Haak—Sex in the Age of Gender: Conceptual Clarity as a Foundation for Reconciling the Interests, Rights, and Experiences of Women, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People in Canada

Women's rights were forged using the word sex. To extend human rights protections to transgender and gender nonconforming people in Canada, human rights legislation was amended to include as a prohibited ground of discrimination "gender identity or expression." Since the introduction of the word gender into the human rights legislative landscape, how the words sex and gender are defined and used by governmental departments and agencies has been variable and inconsistent. Scholarship about the respective material, social, and legal relevance of sex and gender is similarly inconclusive. This paper discusses how the word sex has been defined and used by courts, tribunals, and governmental departments in Canada, focussing on conceptual and definitional shifts and how the word gender has been defined, connected to, and implicated in sex-based rights protections. This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Council and the Canadian Bar Association Law for the Future Fund.

Abstracts

Laura Hammond–Sharing Experience, Expertise and Knowledge to Influence Policy and Practice in Relation to Domestic Abuse

SEEKERS (Sharing Experience, and Expertise and Knowledge for Effective Responses and Support) is a collaborative partnership between victim-survivors of domestic abuse, advocates, third sector parties and organisations, police and academics.

Through the partnership, we create knowledge-sharing, co-learning and development opportunities which incorporate and utilise different forms of lived experience, alongside specialist insights and expertise, with the aim of better understanding issues and challenges associated with the criminal justice processing of domestic abuse cases, and how best to support victims as they navigate these processes.

In this presentation we will outline the innovative collaborative co-production approach that we have been taking to help inform and drive change in criminal justice and support systems to ensure that they better meet the needs of diverse domestic abuse victim groups, and that they provide equitable access to justice for all, including those from minoritized or excluded communities.

Rebecca Haycock–Exploring agency and voice with young people who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.

Research has traditionally focused on the adverse effects of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) from an adult perspective meaning that the unique ways in which children and young people (CYP) make sense of their experience and take action can be overlooked (Callaghan et al. 2017; Houghton 2015, 2018; Katz, 2015). Research that has explored the perspectives of young survivors has identified agency as an important theme but there has been little attention given to what this means and how CYP can be consulted and empowered to voice their experience (Arai et al, 2021). My research works with young people alongside a specialist DVA service in Wales to explore how agency (having power and voice) is revealed through their narratives. A pilot study has explored participation and how young people are able to create a reflective space for discussion. Focus groups were run with three parties (the researcher, the service and the young people). A strong focus on member-checking sought to limit the mediation of young people's voice. Participation in research and policy making can be a means for social justice and my findings to date have identified important conditions for participation and offered three-way learning with and for the

Abstracts

Lorrie Hayman—Shifting Safety: Cyber-located sexual violence in Ireland

Finding the right language to use when naming and defining emergent Gender-based Violence, including Violence Against Women (VAW) facilitated by technologies, presents a challenge. In this presentation, drawing on my feminist research practice, I will stretch the concept of sexual VAW to include non-physical behaviours/actions occurring online and via Internet-connected devices, rejecting the dichotomous binary thinking advocating an offline/online, real/not-real duality. I draw on findings from a quantitative multiple-choice questionnaire that N=397 women in Ireland responded to, which revealed that they unequivocally understand various non-physical cyber-located behaviours/actions as sexual violence. I introduce the term Cyber-located Sexual Violence (CLSV) to better capture these numerous image-based and comment-based behaviours/actions existing on the Continuum of Sexual Violence (Kelly 1988). I reflect on the concept of sexual violence and offer an insight into the lived experiences of women in Ireland and the shifting parameters of how we understand safety and (sexual) violence.

Lorraine Hendrie—An exploration on the perceptions of safety by females in the night time economy

An exploration of perceptions of safety by females in the night time economy is the question for the purposes of this research. Using thematic analysis of secondary data taken with a feminist perspective, exploration will be made to examine factors that affect women and girl's feelings and perceptions of safety in the night time economy, whilst examining what makes spaces feel unsafe and demographics within. Analysis of the violence against women and girls (VAWG) data landscape will be made to understand the true risk to females in society. A review of the police, government and worldwide response to VAWG will be conducted, whilst exploring potential contributing societal factors and theories that may advance perceived gendered roles and VAWG offending, or compromise women's safety. Key themes are highlighted, including, why women are hesitant to report instances of violence against women and girls to police and communication barriers within and recommendations made.

Abstracts

Antje Joel—Should We Abolish Women's Shelters?

Shelters offer protection and often save women's and children's lives. In the absence of effective measures for prevention, this has made them indispensable. Yet, they are also an expression and have become the epitome of our understanding of how "real" women should behave on all societal levels: They shall retreat.

Our perception of the genders shapes our understanding of violence. It determines which responses to intimate partner violence we deem "reasonable", "right" and "just". Our choice of actions is also an indicator of how firmly anchored we are in these ideas.

The single most important thing for a woman to break free from a violent partner is autonomy. But autonomy remains absent from many women's lives. This is even more poignantly felt by women who flee abuse and are locked up "for protection". Instead of promoting women's autonomy and strength, shelters reinforce the collective belief in their weakness and vulnerability.

Miranda Horvath & Kari Davies—'You need to take accountability for inviting strangers into your home': Understanding rape myth acceptance in individual scenarios

Rape myth acceptance (RMA) is a well-researched phenomenon which denotes the degree to which people agree with erroneous statements relating to how and why rape is committed. RMA is associated with creating a culture of victim blame. Scant research has used qualitative methods or captured people's acceptance of rape myths in specific scenarios. Four individual scenarios containing different rape myths to assess people's acceptance of these myths through their designation of responsibility for the offence to the victim, perpetrator, and scenario were used. Mixed methods analyses were employed, statistically analysing participants' ratings of responsibility, and qualitatively analysing their explanations for the ratings given. While participants' ratings broadly suggested participants blamed the perpetrator and not the victim, assignment of situation blame was more nuanced. Identified themes included a lack of understanding of consent, a confusion of responsibility with explanation of offending, victim responsibility for safety, and bystander responsibility.

Abstracts

Emily Kearon-Warrilow—The Violence of Ascribing Age: ‘Discovering’ and silencing in the criminal courts of colonial India

Age-based notions of capacity have long been regarded as natural. As such, research has only recently begun to critically interrogate chronological modes of ageing. This paper invites us to consider age as an intersectional characteristic: specifically, how the idea of age-based capacity has worked to enable other forms of marginalisation. Drawing on historical records of a legal case from colonial India, this paper explores how age was deployed by the colonial judiciary to suppress the testimony of an Indian female. Further, as this paper will show, the act of ascribing age was far from benign: it was, particularly in the colonial context, inherently violent. Contributing to the emerging field of Childism, this paper critically interrogates chronological age to expose it as a European construction. Further, it reveals how age, far from a natural marker of capacity, has been deployed as a tool of oppression along gendered and racial lines.

Carolyn Leader—Swipe it Right: An Exploration into Finding Tinder Charming.

The 21st century is witnessing a digital revolution towards sex, dating and romance. Unlike previous generations, singletons increasingly use digital technological algorithms to search for love, sex and/or relationships. This research aimed to explore the life cycle and experiences of eighteen Tinder users to understand if traditional gender scripts are being performed online, building on the work of Hardey’s (2008) research into the ‘wooters’ and ‘players’ of dating. Online and in-person interviewing methods were utilised and completed with a diverse range of participants, reflecting the diversity of Tinder users. The research shed light on the ethics, politics, and challenges within my position as a female researcher of online dating discourses. The results allude to the possibilities of new interpretations of the performativity of gender and sexuality in online spaces exclusively relating to Tinder, with a growing trend and normalisation of online abuse located within a missing discourse of consent between users.

Abstracts

Sarah Kelleher—Minimising the impact of rape myths on victim evaluations and juror decisions: An intervention study

The widescale acceptance of rape myths has been consistently shown to affect jury decision-making, with academic and legal experts repeatedly advocating for jury education to be implemented in rape trials. Thus, this research aimed to examine the effectiveness of a newly-developed educational intervention at minimising the negative impact of rape myths on complainant evaluations and verdict decisions. A total of 394 jury-eligible participants were recruited and randomly allocated to watch the intervention or control video prior to evaluating a fictitious trial transcript. Controlling for participants' rape myth acceptance, results found that the intervention group provided more guilty verdicts and higher ratings of complainant credibility and empathy, plus lower ratings of complainant responsibility, compared to the control group. Moderated-mediation analyses also showed the intervention successfully moderated the relationship between the "She Lies" rape myth factor and credibility ratings, suggesting important implications for the focus of future research and jury education programs.

Jill Marshall—Feminist Legal Theories, the Human Rights for Women and Earth Jurisprudence

Feminist legal theories highlight how legal social and political structures create inequalities and enable them to thrive. Yet, feminist legal scholars have shown how existing legal concepts and laws, including international human rights law (IHRL) can be used and interpreted to transform lives to construct a better place and way to live. These issues are critically re-examined in this paper which revisits the connections between feminist legal theories and the human rights of women for the twenty-first century. Often liberal and radical feminist legal theories are seen as most in tune with IHRL and the paper examines this issue, then turns to explore connections between feminist legal theory, IHRL, and earth jurisprudence, with the latter's focus on rights of nature and holistic conceptions of earth governance.

Abstracts

Kasandra Matthews—“She Liked It”™: Investigating the impact of attributional predictors on mock juror guilty verdict rates in cases of murder when defendants invoke the ‘rough sex’ defence

Two correlational mock juror decision-making studies examined responsibility attributions and guilty verdicts within homicide cases calling upon the ‘rough sex’ defence. Participants were recruited (70.9% female, mean age = 48.19) from 56 countries for Study 1 (N = 643) and Study 2 (N = 1,200). Study one’s vignette design sought to explore the strongest verdict predictors, drawing upon domestic violence and rape myth acceptance and attitudinal measures of intergroup hierarchies, sexism and stereotypical gender norms. Furthering the results, study two analysed attitudes toward feminine and masculine beliefs and norms, and acceptance of four main rape myths and two domestic violence myth factors. Interestingly, 58% of participants returned a ‘not guilty’ verdict for study one and study two is currently undergoing analysis with results presented on the day. Considering the possibility of vignette-specific effects, future research is encouraged to utilise a mock jury paradigm for further investigation into this defence.

Ilaria Michelis—Caring with Power: Equality, Self-determination and Intersectionality in Feminist Services for Survivors of VAWG

Principles of equality and self-determination lie at the core of feminist support strategies for survivors of violence. Yet, such strategies contend with systems of domination that shape societies where violence, and support services, take place. An intersectional sensibility challenges feminist principles of survivors’ care by revealing their fragility at multiple levels: in relationships between staff and service users, organisational structures, and feminist politics oriented towards singular pathways of emancipation. This paper, based on a multi-method qualitative study with two feminist organisations working with migrant and refugee survivors of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and trafficking in Italy and Serbia, examines the challenges of respecting principles of survivor-centred care in the face of significant intersectional power imbalances. The aim is not to discard feminist anti-violence principles, but to expose their fragility as a quality (Ahmed 2017) which allows them to adapt and evolve. Intersectionality serves as the framework to update feminist principles to reflect contemporary feminist struggles and subjects.

Abstracts

Alex Nevins—‘Sexual Orientation or Sexual Assumption? The Equality Act’s Oversight of Asexual-Spectrum Identities’

In this paper, I will examine the Equality Act’s understanding of ‘sexual orientation’ and assess the extent to which the Equality Act may be inclusive of asexual-spectrum (ace-spec) identities.

The paper explores the impact of legal, social, and regulatory frameworks on ace-spec identities, analysing how these spaces may variously privilege allonormativity and heteronormativity, thus reinforcing notions of compulsory sexuality. Consequently, the paper will also evaluate whether these frameworks can ultimately create space for ace-spec identities.

The project adopts an avowedly anti-essentialist approach to sexual identity and, in concert with Rubin, challenges “...the idea that sex is a natural force that exists prior to social life”. Specifically, a social constructivist epistemology will be maintained in conversation with queer theory to explore the value of fluid and unfixed understandings of sexuality in relation to ace-spec identities. The analysis critically examines how allonormativity and heteronormativity foster overly restrictive and ultimately regressive spaces to read ace-spec identities, queerness and constitute identity recognition.

Donna Peberdy—Ending Gender-Based Sexual Violence in 25 Minutes or Less: Short Film as Activism and Tool for Social Change

This paper shares findings from the British Academy-funded project ‘Screening Sexual Violence’ that analyses screen representations of sexual violence in the #MeToo era. The project involves textual and thematic analysis of 1400 short films submitted to 16Days16Films, a film initiative established in 2018 that invites female-identifying filmmakers from the UK, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Australia, Mexico and the US to submit films that ‘explore, emote, or educate’ on a form of gender-based-violence. Viewing film and television as cultural artefacts that contribute to our understanding of the world around us that are part of larger cultural struggles for meaning and understanding, this paper explores short film and the short film festival as tools for activism and social change. I also reflect on the process of collaborating with educators to create an online resource to support the delivery of sex education in secondary schools and training for employers managing disclosures of domestic abuse.

Abstracts

Angie Pantzardzidi–Feminist perspectives of consent and autonomy in medical care: towards reconstructing the meaning of “lege artis”

Medicine historically treats the human body as a battlefield, reshaping the concepts of illness and health through biopolitical measures that pathologize non-harmful conditions as diseases that require “cure”, whilst mostly targeting marginalised bodies. The way the aforementioned abstract concepts are understood necessitates deeper analysis, especially in cases of medical negligence, where the law must determine if treatment decisions were correct (“lege artis”). By opting for an interpretation of “harm”, “benefit” and “well-being”, the law can then either reinforce biopolitical discriminations or work towards their deconstruction. This paper is motivated by the case of 14-year-old G., who died in June 2021 in Greece following complications from a gastric band operation. By exploring the concept of “lege artis” in this case through feminist theories essential to medical care, such as vulnerability and relational autonomy, the paper ultimately aims to propose a feminist interpretation of patient autonomy and informed consent.

Antonia Porter–50 years of Rising Sun: A feminist oral history project

If freedom is understood as non-domination (Einspahr, 2010) then in the 1970s and 80s, Canterbury’s ‘Rising Sun’ domestic abuse refuge embodied the requisite collective agency and participatory processes. Where consciousness-raising was understood as being inadequate to address women’s oppression, where working for or in the best interests of women rang hollow, genuine collaborative togetherness infused the social construction and rule-making of the refuge. Drawing from interviews with the founders, volunteers and employees, this project’s methods build on scholarly interventions that aim to recover women’s lost history (Rackley and Auchmuty, 2019; Thompson, 2022) and its feminist empirical methodologies aim to resonate with that of the refuge community, understanding such work as a ‘continuous process of becoming’ (Whittingdale, 2021). The paper traces the accomplishments of the refuge’s non-hierarchical ways of working, whilst it expertly danced the fine line of the ‘tyranny of structurelessness’ (Freeman, 1972).

Abstracts

Yue Qin—Chinese Feminism on the Short Video Platform: Perspectives from Users' Self-Presentation and Discourse

In Chinese society, feminism and its gender ideological landscape remain controversial and fragmented on social media despite progress. While social media provides space for Chinese women's voices, collective feminist movements are suppressed or banned. However, Douyin has revitalized women's discursive space, with over 300 million female users by 2023, highlighting its importance for women's expression. This study examines how female Douyin creators use discursive strategies to spread feminist issues and how they use these issues to reshape Chinese women's gender identity. Data were gathered by observing around 200 feminist-themed videos from 20 female creators. A multimodal discourse framework was developed to systematically analyze the various types of discourse, aiming to uncover the nuanced meanings in feminism-related content. This research illuminates the complexities of Chinese feminism and women's gender identities on Douyin and similar platforms. It also contributes to a broader understanding of digital-age feminism, offering insights with international relevance.

Anna Ratecka - At home with feminism: sex workers' stories of belonging and othering in feminist counterpublics Poland

In this presentation I will problematise what it means to be at home with feminism from the perspective of sex workers' rights activists in Poland. I will reflect on Nira Yuval-Davies' reflections on practices of belonging and othering within feminism and discuss what it means to be at home with feminism in times of democratic backsliding in Poland in the years 2015–2023. Drawing on the experiences of sex workers' rights activists in participating in debates within feminist counterpublics, the emotions and affects that this entails, I will show how attempts to be at home with feminism can both generate positive feelings of belonging as well as feelings of anger, disappointment or exhaustion.

Abstracts

Ellen Reeves—Internalising, challenging and resisting ‘public stories’ of domestic abuse: The accounts of queer victim-survivors in Australia

Queer victim-survivors of domestic abuse face a range of unique barriers to seeking formal help. Donovan and Barnes (2010) have suggested that many of these barriers can be understood through the lens of the ‘public story’ of domestic abuse. This public story refers to mainstream understandings of domestic abuse as acts of physical violence committed by men against women. Not only does this dominant narrative fail to capture the nuances of domestic abuse, but it has also invisibilised queer victim-survivors and perpetrators. This paper explores the accounts of queer victim-survivors who have sought protection via the family violence intervention order system in Melbourne, Australia. It examines the ways in which their narratives of abuse and help-seeking simultaneously internalise, challenge, and resist ‘public stories’ of domestic abuse. As such, participants tapped into larger debates playing out in the Australian landscape regarding what space has been made for queer folk in formal responses to ‘violence against women’.

Rachele Scardamaglia—Gender Violence and Intersectionality: The experience of Migrant women in Italy

In recent decades, studies on international migration and its feminization have significantly increased. It is well established that the migratory experience affects men and women differently, positioning gender as a crucial element in understanding this phenomenon (Piper, 2008). The feminization of migration has attracted attention from intersectional studies. Kimberlé Crenshaw highlighted the experience of refugee women as a paradigmatic example where gender subordination intersects with ethnic or national origins and class conditions (Crenshaw, 2014). This paper explores the intersection of gender and migratory status, proposing intersectionality as a heuristic tool to reconsider existing knowledge on violence against migrant women in Italy. Adopting a legal-philosophical and sociolegal perspective, it highlights the inadequacy of a monocategorical approach to understand phenomena involving intersecting identity categories. The analysis focuses on how structural intersectionality and the “position of vulnerability” influence migrant women’s experiences of violence, illustrating how intersectional critique can reveal the limits of gender incorporation in legislation.

Abstracts

Jana Schäfer—Creating violence through the intersectional manosphere - Readings of sexualized violence as (inter)subjection

This article employs a post-structuralist, queer-feminist and intersectional lens to situate sexualized violence as a social practice of socially abilitized (inter)subjection, aiming to reveal underlying historical processes and practices that situate subjects as both interpellated (not determined) by society but choosing (without being voluntaristic). The research question is How do discourse, social structure and body/ embodiment interact to produce sexualized violence as a normalized social practice – offline and online? The question is amended by the question normalized for whom in what ways, pointing towards intersectional theory as a way to understand both differences and similarities in all involved subjects. The article presents a heuristic lens on (inter)subjection, and how it manifests orders of vulnerabilization and abilization, specifically in the actions of prominent figures of the manosphere like Andrew Tate.

Tina Skinner & Kristine Brance—Coping with emotionally challenging research: What might a Researcher Wellbeing Plan look like?

The Researcher Wellbeing Project, funded by the UKRI Research England Research Culture Fund, included a highly detailed cross-disciplinary, mixed-methods study. Our team's analysis demonstrated that symptoms linked to secondary and vicarious trauma were common across topics and disciplines. The data suggest that academics employed various coping mechanisms. Most of these were informal. At the individual level, they included physical exercise and other hobbies. In terms of interactions with others, support came from two primary sources: outside of work (family and friends) and within work (colleagues/networks/peers). Some academics with prior training or experience in other professions used formal support mechanisms, such as 'self-care' plans, clinical supervision, and counselling. From this data, and existing recommendations in the literature, we developed the Researcher Wellbeing Plan Guidance and the Researcher Wellbeing Plan Template. In this session Tina (the project lead) will discuss what is in her own plan, and how you might use the guidance and template to develop your own plan that reflects your own needs.

Abstracts

Tina Skinner & Miranda Horvath—A walking workshop: putting into practice our Researcher Wellbeing Plans

There are lots of different things that might be contained in our Researcher Wellbeing Plans, but it is not always easy to remember them or to find the time to do them. Building them into our daily routines, as part of our work, is one way to help us do this. For example, taking tutorials outside, playing music and dancing at the start of a lecture to get the stress out of our bodies (yes Tina does do this, and the students love it), and getting students and yourself to stretch and move every 20 minutes or so. One of the things in our (Tina and Miranda's) wellbeing plans is to go for walks, another is to talk about our wellbeing and how we manage it with friends, family and colleagues. So, in this workshop we are going to 'practice what we preach' and invite you to walk with us around the University of Liverpool campus and beyond, while we all share our tips on how to look after ourselves a little more than, perhaps, we currently do. We are not promising miracles! We both have to reset our plans from time to time as we forget to prioritise our wellbeing, but with support and time we are (most of the time) getting better at doing this. This session is not just relevant to researchers doing emotionally challenging research. Lots of people find it tricky to remember that we need to look after ourselves while we work. If, like us, you sometimes need some help with this, you are welcome to come on this walk with us!

David S. Smith—"Just imagine Elon Musk rubbing one out at home. You really think he does that?": Neoliberal subjecthood and the sexual marketplace in nofap/reboot communities

Through a deterministic evolutionary psychology framework, the manosphere conceptualises an inflexible sexual market that positions men as entrepreneurs competing for a limited resource: women's interest. In recent years, researchers have explored the crossover between this network and nofap/reboot communities; digital spaces where (mostly) men chart their progress abstaining from pornography and/or masturbation. In contrast to incels, who see themselves as unable to compete, these communities position members as prospective marketplace winners who will benefit sexually and economically from discipline and self-mastery. I detail how their discourses often promote red pill tenets, including valorising booters' internal struggles as defiance against an external feminist agent threatening authentic masculinity. This logic of reconnecting with "real" manhood through sexual labour positions booters as neoliberal subjects, instrumentalizing encounters with women to qualify their position in a natural hierarchy. I also discuss the potential for

Abstracts

David S. Smith—Unveiling ‘ex-Incels’: Identity Dynamics and Juxtaposed Hegemonic Masculinity

This study examines the experiences of former involuntary celibates (ex-incels); men who frequented incel communities but no longer identify with the label. We introduce a framework of Juxtaposed Hegemonic Masculinity to interrogate participants' self-perceptions of time spent within these communities and reflections post-exit, conceptualising the impacts of engagement as identity construction/reconstruction. While some ex-incels embrace forms of masculinity more flexible than the 'stoic' ideals they previously felt subordinated by, others struggle with ingrained prescriptive norms propagated across the manosphere. Juxtaposed notions of masculinities intertwine throughout narratives, giving rise to blended juxtaposed identities in which they reject an archetype they still hold themselves to. We contribute to understanding factors behind engagement with incel communities, delving into manosphere taxonomies of masculinity and situating them within the wider existential angst experienced by members. We highlight the interplay between inceldom and multiple-masculinities construction, offering insights into complex identity transitions longitudinally influenced by community engagements.

Amina Tekena-Fubara—Achieving gender equality in Nigerian and Cameroonian boardrooms

Global concern for and efforts toward getting more women into boardrooms has increased recently. Consequently, some change has been achieved. In 2022, women made up over 40% of France, Italy and Norway's boardrooms, compared to under 15% in 2004; the result of adopting quota laws requiring minimum boardroom representation. However, this change is not widespread. In Nigeria and Cameroon's boardrooms, women made up just 20% and 9.3% respectively in 2022; a 5% increase since 2012 in Nigeria and a 6.7% decrease from 2016 in Cameroon. Research indicates that these low proportions are due to a stereotype-prejudice-discrimination cycle, underlied by patriarchal customs and religions. Despite this, discourse in both jurisdictions overwhelmingly focuses on the business benefits of representation. My research argues for centering the moral argument i.e., discriminating against women is wrong, examines the problems with discrimination and corporate governance solutions, and considers a quota law approach as an alternative solution.

Abstracts

Joshua Thorburn—Reformulating aggrieved entitlement: Considering the role of (gendered) humiliation in responses to singleness and involuntary celibacy

Aggrieved entitlement is a concept that has been used to broadly analyse how feelings of masculine humiliation can motivate violence, especially in relation to lone offender attacks committed by incels. Yet the original formulation of this concept misses a rather obvious counterpoint in its essentialistic connection of aggrieved entitlement to maleness via masculine humiliation: Do feminine-identifying people not experience humiliation too? Accepting that feminine-identifying individuals can experience humiliation, including in response to romantic rejection, this paper dwells on the gendered, historical and sociological processes which may shape how this humiliation is responded to. Similarly, it considers how and why romantic rejection is perceived as humiliating, if it is at all. Stemming partly from this analysis, an original reformulation of aggrieved entitlement is introduced, alongside an original concept, (aggrieved) desire, to distinguish between aggrieved entitlement and desire itself. Furthermore, I propose that both aggrieved entitlement and desire can be experienced vicariously.

Mitchell Travis (*Keynote*)—Feminist Legal Futures; Challenging the Epistemology of the Ever-Present

A growing body of work in cultural studies has lamented the slow cancellation of the future. This loss of futurity has resulted in the production of an epistemological ever-present characterised by both its freneticism and lack of social change. This paper analyses this phenomenon through a discussion of neoliberalism and its focus on short term economic goals alongside relentless attacks on the humanities. In terms of law and the law school, these attacks have resulted in a focus on the professionalisation of the law degree, employability metrics and short-term impact related goals rather than longer term structural change. In order to challenge this this paper advocates for science fiction as a feminist legal method. In doing so the paper examines the important work that science fiction can do in terms of stimulating new and innovative approaches to justice, to providing alternative conceptions of political and legal structures and to extrapolating the dangers of current social trends. This paper utilises science fiction, therefore, as the method through which to examine law's futures. The humanities must be at the forefront of feminism's fight against the neoliberal ever-present as it presents us with the conceptual tools to think otherwise.

Abstracts

Maria Ttofi—Gaslighting in intimate partner relationships: A global systematic review and meta-synthesis

Using a feminist informed framework, this study presents a systematic review and meta-synthesis of all available studies on gaslighting among intimate partners. Gaslighting is a form of psychological/emotional abuse inflicted upon an intimate partner with the aim of destabilise the victim-survivor (with manipulative tactics such as misdirection, denial of truth, lying, contradiction, etc). This 'subtle' form of abuse remains heavily underexplored (Sweet, 2019)¹. This has serious implications for practice given the strong links with other forms of coercive partner abuse (Romero & Staudenraus, 2024)². Extensive searches were completed across multiple e-databases. Ninety-six manuscripts were identified as relevant for full screening with a total of 44 manuscripts (9 quantitative studies) included in our meta-synthesis. NVivo was used to extract themes from both direct (participant-reported) and indirect (researchers-reported) quotes for the qualitative meta-synthesis. Twenty-five articles point to the detrimental effects of gaslighting: psychological (e.g. anxiety/depression), physical and social (e.g. isolation). Thirty-four articles offer an insight to how the process of gaslighting was instigated based on victim narratives: gradual control, impersonation of victim via social media, alteration of reality, etc. Studies on predictors of gaslighting are also presented. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.

Sarah Warbis—Would you intervene? Using virtual reality to understand bystanders witnessing a sexual assault

Research suggests that bystanders are present in 29% of sexual assaults, but only a minority intervene (Planty, 2002). A key issue in bystander research is how to immerse participants in the emotionally impactful context of witnessing an assault, while maintaining a high degree of control and withdrawal opportunities. This talk will present an innovative solution to this issue, virtual reality (VR), and will demonstrate its utility by presenting key findings from three studies. Study 1 (N=294) was an online text vignette experiment, which was replicated in Study 2, a filmed VR study (N=117), finding differences in victim blaming and psychological distancing predicting bystander intervention intentions. Study 3 (N=67) directly compared the emotional impact of text, filmed VR and animated VR, finding significant differences in emotional arousal by stimuli type and display. Pros and cons of VR as a methodological tool will be discussed, as well as implications for the field.

Abstracts

Lisa Ward & Alison Stillman—Creative responses exploring coercive control centring the voices of those with lived experience.

Coercive control describes a pattern of acts and behaviours aimed at dominating and subjugating others through the systematic erosion of their autonomy and freedom. The tactics can be difficult to identify and can vary across relationships. Its recognition as a distinct form of abuse is relatively recent, requiring further investigation of its prevalence, impacts, and dynamics across populations and contexts. Centring those with lived experience in research is essential when exploring issues of abuse to ensure that research aligns with real world needs, and this work grew out of a survivor led consultation on the research priorities relating to Coercive Control. Building on the Survivors Voices Charter we sought to build creative representations to answer three key questions:

- How do we understand and define Coercive Control?
- What does justice look like for survivors of Coercive Control?
- What barriers exist when seeking justice for survivors of Coercive Control?

Eddie Wei & Alexandra Scrivener—An Analysis of Cultural Attitudes Towards Female Athletes' Bodies on TikTok: Examining the Reproduction of Sexist or Empowering Narratives

This research investigates cultural attitudes toward the bodies of trans and cisgender female athletes on TikTok, a platform that has become a key site for the performance, negotiation, and regulation of gendered identities in the digital age. By thematically coding TikTok's algorithmic content distribution and analysing online commentary, we were able to dissect how digital infrastructures and user interactions shape public perceptions of female athletes' bodies. Our findings highlight the defeminisation of female athletes' muscular bodies in online discourse, particularly in relation to cisgender female athletes. Muscularity, a characteristic often celebrated in male athletes, is perceived as a deviation from traditional femininity when embodied by women, leading to a stigmatisation of muscular female bodies. Furthermore, the perception of 'transgressive' female bodies is heavily mediated by both race and biological gender. This dynamic reflects and reinforces the framework of a 'White Cis-Gender Patriarchy', where white, cisgender, and normatively feminine bodies are privileged while bodies that deviate from these standards are marginalised or objectified. However, alongside this marginalisation, our study also reveals a counter-narrative emerging in digital spaces. Increasingly, female athletes' bodies are being celebrated as symbols of empowerment, particularly in the context of body positivity and fitness culture. Many online communities and users praise the strength, discipline, and athletic prowess of these athletes, contributing to an evolving narrative where muscular, athletic female bodies are embraced as both feminine and inspiring. Ultimately, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural narratives that shape the online representation of women's bodies, particularly in the context of sports and athleticism.

Abstracts

Sarah West—Values in Action: Implementing a trauma-responsive ethical framework in co-creation of the first digital intervention for UK supporters.

Survivors of sexual violence and abuse often rely on friends, family, and partners for emotional and practical assistance. However, these informal supporters can be deeply affected by their supporting experience. Despite the ripple effect on supporters' health and well-being, which may undermine their efforts to assist survivors' healing and recovery, few evidence-based resources for supporters exist. This paper explores the intersection of trauma-responsivity and critical participatory action research in a doctoral study co-creating the first digital intervention tailored to the needs of UK supporters. The study employs an ethical framework responsive to primary, secondary, and vicarious trauma to address the needs of all involved while navigating iterative praxis. This paper explores the intersection of trauma-responsivity and critical participatory action research in a doctoral study co-creating the first digital intervention tailored to the needs of UK supporters. The study employs an ethical framework responsive to primary, secondary, and vicarious trauma to address the needs of all involved while navigating iterative praxis.

Molly Wilson & Rachel Vogler (*Keynote*)—Abolition Feminist Pedagogy and the Neoliberal Institution

There is an important distinction between feminist teaching, and teaching feminism. One being the subject matter, the other being a pedagogical ethos of inclusivity, care, compassion, and above all, feeling. Ideally the two come hand in hand, which is to say that to meaningfully 'teach' feminism, we would adopt a feminist teaching practice. But how is this possible when a feminist pedagogy is at odds with the increasingly capitalist, neo-liberal agenda of the higher education sector? As co-convenors of the Feminist Theory, Performance and Practice unit for undergraduate students at our institution, we grapple with this challenge daily. In this paper, we reflect on our own teaching practices from unit design, to delivery, and explore an abolition feminist approach to disrupting the neoliberal institution whilst working within its confines. We ask, what might a feminist future in higher education look like? How might feminist pedagogy travel beyond 'teaching feminism'? And how do we continue to work within a system that we would rather abolish?



The LEX Network's new journal, *Gender and Justice*, is now open for submissions! *Gender and Justice* is an international and transdisciplinary journal dedicated to advancing critical feminist scholarship on justice in the social sciences, and from different methodological perspectives.



Scan here for link to *Gender and Justice*!

Notes

Notes

Notes

Social Media

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

@ResearchLex

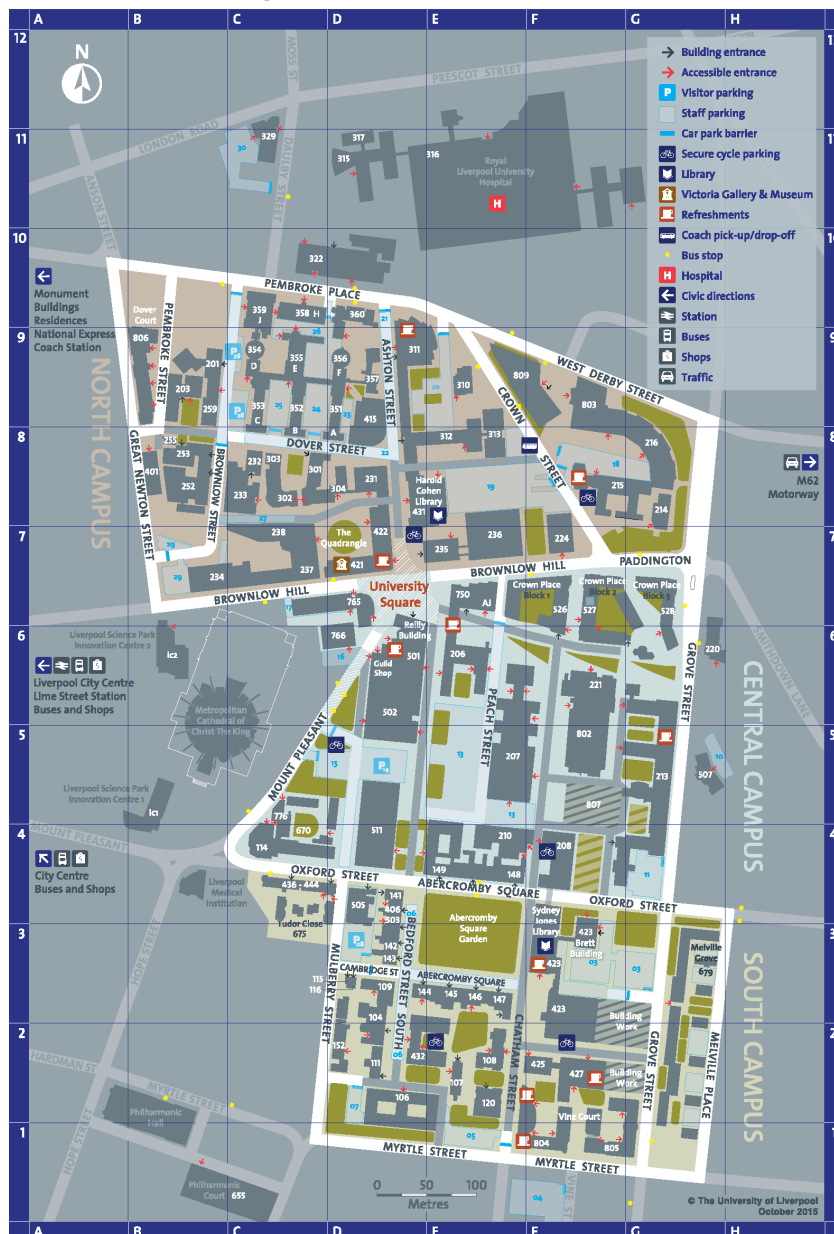
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Please use the hashtag #FeministLiverpool2024 in your posts so we can find and promote them.

Map of the University



School of Law and Social Justice – 108
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.

For more places to eat, go to

<https://independent-liverpool.co.uk/profiles/>

Things to do

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

Liverpool Maritime Museum—great for social history.

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

The Baltic Triangle—for quirky 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.