



**Department of Sociology,
Gender and Social Work**

Postgraduate Symposium

Programme

&

Abstracts



Friday, 4 August 2017

PROGRAMME

- 09:30 **OPENING**
Dr Marcelle Dawson
(Postgraduate Coordinator, Department of Sociology,
Gender and Social Work)
- 09:40 **WELCOME**
Assoc. Prof. Lachy Paterson
(Associate Dean, Graduate Studies)
- 09:50 **INAUGURAL ADDRESS:**
Assoc. Prof. Ruth Barcan: 'Thesis journeys: Finding
commonalities among the challenges'
(Department of Gender & Cultural Studies, University of
Sydney)

3-MINUTE THESIS PRESENTATIONS

- Chair:* *Assoc. Prof. Annabel Cooper*
- 10:10 **Liam Glading** (BA Hons., Sociology): 'Dank Memes: Just
humorous or sociologically important?'
- 10:15 **Harriet McGowan** (BA Hons., Gender Studies): "'Rape
culture": An exploration of a contested theoretical
concept'
- 10:20 **Briar Renwick** (BA Hons., Gender Studies): 'Sexual
violence support/prevention programmes at the
University of Otago'
- 10:30** **MORNING TEA**

PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Annabel Cooper

11:00 **Laura Hill** (PhD, Theology): 'Nature of presentation: Research proposal'

11:20 **Helen Bollinger** (MA, Gender Studies): 'Film families: Generations and gender in a NZ project-based industry'

11:40 **Louisa Choe** (PhD, Sociology): 'Do the poor pay more?'

12:00 **Hannah Herchenbach** (PhD, Gender Studies): 'South Island rock music culture, 1978–2018'

12:20-13:20

LUNCH BREAK

Chair: Dr Melanie Beres

13:20 **Kerri Cleaver** (PhD, Children's Issues): 'Telling stories with pictures'

13:40 **Kayla Stewart** (PhD, Sociology): 'The prevalence and context of sexual violence at the University of Otago'

14:00 **Simon Clay** (PhD, Gender Studies): 'Towards queer health'

14:20 **Joanna Chin** (PhD, Sociology): 'The invisibility of poverty in Singapore'

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Chair: Dr Marcelle Dawson

14:50 **Karly Burch** (PhD, Sociology): 'Not defined by the numbers: Distinction, dissent and democratic possibilities in debating the data following Tokyo Electric Power Company's nuclear disaster'

15:20 **Mahfuz Rahman** (PhD, Sociology): 'The causes of mid-transitional fertility stalls in the regions of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan'

15:50 AFTERNOON TEA

Chair: Dr Marcelle Dawson

16:20 **Gina Tompkins** (MA, Human Services): 'The section 18A amendment to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 and the implications for child protection practice and law'

16:50 **Penelope Kinney** (PhD, Sociology): 'Being, becoming and belonging: Transitioning to the community within a regional forensic psychiatric service?'

17:20 **CLOSING AND THANKS**

ABSTRACTS

(in the order of the programme)

Dank Memes: Just humorous or sociologically important?

Liam Glading

The term *meme* was coined by Dawkins to describe units of culture that transmit from person to person, inspiring the field of memetics. Memes were described to behave like genes, the stronger evolving over time and influencing society as the 'weaker' may die off. Social conation theory has been described as the other side of the 'memetic coin', looking at the phenomenon of ideas or concepts behaving like viruses, passing from person to person upon contact causing social shifts and trends among groups. Modern literature examining Internet memes and their impacts, however, while scarce, has been increasing over the last 5-year period with notable contributors such as Milner and Shifman leading the scholarly charge. The emergent phenomenon of online memetic communication and the socio-cultural and political implications associated with it are so far largely uncharted territory. Researching further into the Internet meme phenomenon and establishing a robust method of meme analysis may help the pursuit of further understanding the sociological implications of Internet meme culture.



'Rape culture': An exploration of a contested theoretical concept

Harriet McGowan

Rape culture is a significant issue that affects countless individuals, both directly and indirectly. This study aims to investigate the differing understandings of rape culture that are held by female university students, and the justification behind why they hold the certain views they do. The research project will make an important contribution to existing literature on sexual assault and rape culture, especially in the university context. The study first maps out the existing literature on rape culture, and situates the concept historically, before analysing aspects and attitudes towards rape culture that may have influenced the perceptions and understandings held by current university students. The study utilises the exciting and interactive methodology of photovoice, a technique that allows participants to document their perspectives through photographs, before discussing the

photographs in one-on-one interviews. As far as I am aware, this is the first project of its kind that has been conducted in New Zealand, and I believe it has the potential to have a real impact.



Sexual violence support/prevention programmes at the University of Otago

Briar Renwick

My research looks at the sexual violence support services and prevention programmes available to students at the University of Otago, how these are accessed and received by students and how these have changed over time. The research will be looking specifically at how these services and programmes cater to students and the social factors which affect them, such as partying, excessive drinking, social norms and the influence of their peers. I will also look at how the services and programmes run at Otago are influenced by developments in programmes and policies from an international context, in particular the U.S where this issue has become increasingly debated and researched. I believe research such as mine is very important as sexual violence is an issue which can be very harmful to a student and their university experience, but also one that can be actively improved through the continued success of effective services and programmes so it is therefore important to analyse these.



Nature of presentation: Research proposal

Laura Hill

This interdisciplinary project brings together practical theology with sociological analysis to examine how Christian couples practise gender egalitarianism. Embracing biblical egalitarianism is considered a counter-narrative for evangelical Christian women and men, since complementarianism—organized by the principles of hierarchy and subordination—is established as a ‘hegemonic, well documented and criticized Christian tradition’ (Gallagher 2004, 218). My research will contribute to wider understanding of egalitarianism within the intimate partnerships of Christians. By drawing from both theological and sociological scholarship, this work will contribute both to scholarship and

to helping Christian egalitarian relationships become more viable, particularly within New Zealand Baptist circles.

My research is situated within practical theology; however, I also draw from the narrower discipline of feminist practical theology and occasionally draw from other specialist theological disciplines (biblical and systematic). I will be analysing gender as a significant social relationship, and will be drawing upon sociological analysis of family life and heterosexual intimate partnerships. My research questions include: How do Christian women and men experience and negotiate egalitarian gender relations in their partnerships? What implications might this relational approach have for women and men? To what extent can Christian hegemonic gender ideals and practices be reconstructed? Qualitative data in this study will come from in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of couples who subscribe to egalitarian relationship ideals and who also identify as, or are closely associated with, the New Zealand Baptist denomination.



Film families: Generations and gender in a NZ project-based industry

Helen Bollinger

This study explores the factors contributing to the phenomenon of multiple generations of families working in the New Zealand freelance screen industry, in the context of the continuities and differences in screen work practice and culture from the filmmaking renaissance of the 1970s to current times. This time frame is significant because it marks the evolution of New Zealand film making from cottage industry to a major cultural and economic player. Many of those interviewed contributed to the establishment of a national cinema and continue to contribute to portraying and shaping our culture. There are now 14,000 freelance screen workers. Apart from industry-based reviews, there have been very few local studies about the film workers behind the scenes. My methodology is primarily semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. My sources of data include a sampling of three generations of film-making families who are asked questions around four main themes which are the evolution of the screen industry in NZ, film as a project-based industry, family career legacies in film and the importance of gender in film work. I am recording interviews on sound and camera, with a view to making a documentary film in addition to this thesis.



Do the poor pay more?

Louisa Choe

In his book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, Matthew Desmond (2016) explained that the poor are often exploited: “If the poor pay more for their housing, food, durable goods, and credit, and if they get smaller returns on their education and mortgages (if they get returns at all), then their incomes are even smaller than they appear. This is fundamentally unfair”. The fundamental inequality faced by households in poverty is reflected in their life choices and life chances. The cycle witnessed by Desmond is replicated in the housing situation of New Zealand. As rents increase, families seek more affordable accommodation, and therefore move more frequently each year from temporary housing to other temporary housing. However, moving house frequently interferes not only with a child’s learning but also their overall social development. The aim of this project is to provide insights as to how children and young people experience housing movements in Dunedin.



South Island rock music culture, 1978–2018

Hannah Herchenbach

Rock music practices on the South Island have become mythologised and historicised since the emergence of the record label Flying Nun in 1981. To date, there has not yet been an academic analysis of the historical context surrounding the practices of the South Island music communities since World War II. In the tradition of popular music studies, this research will utilise a variety of methodologies to answer the following questions: What cultural, economic, geographic and social forces have affected the everyday practices and routines of Christchurch and Dunedin folk and rock musicians between 1978 and 2018? How has the circulation of social, economic and cultural capital within the South Island music communities influenced how these communities ‘work’? What are the intersections, continuities and discontinuities between local, regional, national and international mythologies surrounding the creation of this music? In order to address these questions sufficiently, my research is primarily using qualitative historical, sociological, anthropological and geographic methods, namely:

oral histories, interviews, ethnographic practices, and deep mapping techniques, respectively.



Telling stories with pictures

Kerri Cleaver

An overview of my PhD methodology in collecting the stories surrounding a group of women Kāi Tahu care leavers and their experiences relating to their identities. I set out to discuss the overlapping needs of the research project, which aims to create space in which the women's voices are free to speak and be heard through both the use of photos and words. This research utilises the core research methods of Kaupapa Māori Research and Photo voice. I also draw on both Kāi Tahu culture and history and that of an indigenous women's perspective. Both these positions support the research in its purpose to give voice to Kāi Tahu women post-care.



The prevalence and context of sexual violence at the University of Otago

Kayla Stewart

International research suggests that university students are an at-risk group for sexual victimisation. While there has been much research internationally measuring the prevalence of campus sexual violence, little attention has been given to the issue in the New Zealand Aotearoa context. Much of the existing research has been conducted from a premise of male perpetration and female victimisation. This gendered victimisation and perpetration paradigm has been the subject of critique, specifically how it leaves little room for experiences of male victimisation or more colloquially, it is met with a response of – “it happens to men too”. However, while limited, research that has considered both female and male victimisation has consistently showed the prevalence of sexual victimisation to be higher for women. Additionally, some research has suggested that sexual victimisation is a gendered experience; that is the contexts and effects differ for males and females. To borrow the idiom ‘comparing apples with oranges’ then, it may be that comparing male and female experiences of sexual victimisation is inappropriate.

This project will employ a feminist lens to examine survey data and interviews to determine the prevalence, context and effects of sexual victimisation and perpetration amongst students from the University of Otago and how experiences of victimisation may be gendered in a New Zealand Aotearoa university population. Interviewing survey participants will allow the answers provided in the survey to be contextualised and furthermore allow for a better understanding of what university women and men mean when they report sexual violence in surveys. I evaluate the success and limitations of the research design in achieving these goals.



Towards queer health

Simon Clay

The portrait of health within the gay community has long been viewed as critically deficient and deviant, ranging from defining homosexuality as a chronic mental illness, to the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, to the current high rates of suicide, substance abuse, and widespread STI transmissions. Internationally, strong efforts have been made to address these issues yet the increasing rates of all these problems demonstrates that something is lacking. My study seeks to address this and proposes that a radical shift needs to occur around how health and wellbeing are conceptualised if these issues are to be addressed. Through critically evaluating public health and sociological literature around high-risk practices such as drug use and unprotected sex, and borrowing from fields of anti-psychiatry, social theory of disability, and queer theory, a new conceptual framework of health is put forward.



The invisibility of poverty in Singapore

Joanna Chin

The discourse of poverty in Singapore follows a trajectory between the visibility and invisibility of unmet needs in Singapore. The interrogation between what is visible and invisible is one marker of the rapid shift from absolute to relative poverty as Singapore transitioned from being a developing to a developed country. In the 1970s, poverty was evident

through visual images of poor living and unsanitary conditions in slums and fishing villages. In the 21st century, the presence in visual evidence of an affluent urban landscape not only renders the poorest living in Singapore invisible but also contributes to an absence of a shared understanding of what poverty means, and the common belief that poverty does not exist in Singapore. Contrary to this belief, researchers have found the recent emergence of a class of 'working' poor and the 'non-working' (elderly) poor. Hence, while contemporary poverty in Singapore no longer refers to living in squalid conditions and homelessness, unmet needs now take the form of social deprivation and social exclusion.



Not defined by the numbers: Distinction, dissent and democratic possibilities in debating the data following Tokyo Electric Power Company's nuclear disaster

Karly Burch

This paper considers how metrics and standards deployed by states to govern food systems are negotiated and challenged by citizens. In conditions of risk and uncertainty, measures are intended to guide the activities of producers and consumers, categorizing practices and substances as safe or unsafe, good or harmful, and ensuring the maintenance of a stable and predictable pattern of life. In post-2011 Japan, government efforts to establish safe levels of radiation in food can be seen to participate in this stabilization, which both reproduces the existing economy and the political system in the face of a radical participant: the radionuclide. Yet, people are not passive participants in their governance, and have established their own ways of navigating food safety in opposition to government standards. In this chapter, we suggest that those who must live by the numbers may also negotiate their relationship with, and define themselves against, these values. In this way, numbers can be seen to instigate dissent, distinction and deliberation, as participants strive to establish their authenticity outside reductionist parameters. Taking an assemblage approach to state defined safe radiation levels in Japan, this chapter discusses the ways that numbers are actively engaged with to create and vocalize a more emancipatory political subjectivity through the assemblage of deliberative publics.



The causes of mid-transitional fertility stalls in the regions of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan

Mahfuz Rahman

Among the ten most populous countries in the world, three are in South Asia, these are Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Rapid reduction in fertility has become the major goal in these countries to control their rapid population growth. Fertility stalls in the mid-transitional regions in these countries has become the main barrier in lowering their fertility rapidly. A region is said to be mid-transitional if its fertility was between 3 and 5 births per woman at the beginning of the study period. Achievement of national fertility goals may best be served by focussing on the mid-transitional regions with stalled fertility decline. This study explored the reasons of mid-transitional fertility stalls in the regions of those three countries. The main sources of data used here are the surveys conducted by the Demographic and Health Survey Program. The data showed that 4 out of 15 mid-transitional regions of those countries experienced fertility stall. In general, fertility stalls in these regions were associated with the stalled progress in reproductive preferences and programmatic factors, which were reflected in the stalls in unintended births and unmet need for family planning. Stalls in modern contraceptive use and desired family size were the additional drivers in Bangladeshi and Pakistani fertility stalling regions. Trends in socio-economic factors did not show any consistent link with the fertility stalls in mid-transition.



The section 18A amendment to the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 and the implications for child protection practice and law

Gina Tompkins

Section 18A took force on 1 July 2016. Its purpose is to prevent the potential risk of serious child maltreatment to a new class of statutory client called a 'subsequent child' by their parents who have either had a previous permanent removal of a child in their care or been convicted of the death of a child in their care. This approach is unprecedented in contemporary child protection law in New Zealand. Given its innovative approach, a research gap addressing the outcomes for vulnerable families who are targeted by such mechanisms such as section 18A exists. This research develops a conceptual framework within which legal mechanism

such as section 18A can be situated. This conceptual framework compares the neglect and protection statutes that were enacted during the colonisation of Australia and New Zealand to draw parallels between Australian Aboriginal parents, illegitimate mothers in New Zealand, and the two populations of parents identified under 18B(1)(a) and section 18B(1)(b). Through the application of the framework, immediate challenges are identified relating to the drafting of the mechanism, its interpretation and the potential constitutional and human rights issues associated with section 18A's enactment.



**Being, becoming and belonging: Transitioning to the community
within a regional forensic psychiatric service?**

Penelope Kinney

Transition is regarded as the psychological adaptation process undergone in response to a significant event. Moving to the community after significant periods of time in forensic psychiatric hospitals is a transition undergone by clients within the service. Those in forensic psychiatric services would count their time in hospital in years rather than weeks or months. Leaving the support and structure of a ward, managing budgets, adapting to new accommodation, forming social connections and finding meaningful occupations to engage in are just a few of the challenges those leaving hospital have to negotiate. Those being discharged must often also navigate communities that may prove unwelcoming. The purpose of this Constructivist Grounded Theory study was to explore how clients moving out of one New Zealand forensic psychiatric hospital adapt to living in the community. Both clients and staff were invited into the project. Six client participants were interviewed a total of three times each in a mixture of walking and face-to-face interviews. The walking interviews enabled insights into the connections the client participants were developing with the communities they were now living in. Eight staff participants were interviewed once using face-to-face interviews only. The results of this study provide insights into the multiple factors that influence a person's adaption to life in the community after significant time in hospital. Being well, becoming an ex and belonging in the community were found to be important interrelated dimensions for successful adaptation to the community.



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