

## **Abstracts**

Abstracts are listed alphabetically by first author's last name

### **Everyday Resistance in Palestine: An exploration of the digital culture of contention among Palestinian youth in the West Bank**

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Session 5

University of Otago

Everyday Resistance

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Palestinian youth in the West Bank have been born into a conflict zone where they experience isolation, lack of freedom and political repression. In this context, youth in the occupied territories are increasingly utilising virtual space as a way to escape their lived realities of oppression. Palestinian youth's use of the internet is unique and full of tensions and contradictions worthy of further exploration. This paper revolves around one central, guiding question: To what extent does the everyday use of digital spaces by Palestinian youth in the West Bank constitute a digital culture of contention? This thesis will examine features of this culture by illuminating the relatively mundane uses of digital spaces practiced by Palestinian youth in the West Bank. Analysing these practices that are daily, personal and apolitical contributes to understanding whether the Palestinian youth' use of digital spaces constitutes a political space of daily resistance and survival, which Asef Bayat (2013) described as 'quite encroachment of the ordinary'. A qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews, including among them, activists, journalists, scholars and students, will shed light on this digital culture of contention among Palestinian youth and its intricate meanings. The study addresses whether a digital culture of contention exists and, if so, explores the ways in which this culture reconstructs youth's reality and social change.

## **'Foreigners' are not the problem: The roots of the New Zealand housing crisis**

Ian Anderson

Session 5

Food, Housing and Resistance

New Zealand's housing boom, with ballooning prices driving growing housing inequality, continues apace. To appropriately challenge this crisis, political actors need an understanding of its basis. This paper argues that a centre-left emphasis on nationality (typified in extreme form by Labour MP Phil Twyford's 'Chinese surnames' gaffe) has obscured the roots of the housing crisis. A content analysis of Labour Party press releases in the 2011 & 2014 General Elections indicates that this emphasis on the nationality of buyers not an isolated incident. An economic analysis suggests that the crisis is better explained by a contradiction between use value and exchange value which sits at the heart of capitalist markets.

## **Empowering spaces? Women's perspectives on sport, gender-inequality and violence**

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Session 2

Gender, Bodies, Empowerment

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The relationship between sport and violence against women has been explored in several studies, with a focus on male athletes as perpetrators (Messner, 2007). Such research, in tandem with media coverage of high profile cases, may position sport contexts as potentially disempowering and threatening for women. However, in recent years several international organisations have attempted to reframe the connection between sport and violence against women, emphasising the potential for sport to empower women, to help dismantle gender inequality, and ultimately improve women's safety. However, very few studies have explored these assumptions in-depth, nor considered these issues from women's perspectives. In this paper I critically discuss this reframing of sport as a tool for empowerment and protection and consider how individual sport cultures may empower women, or conversely foster sexism and hostile attitudes, drawing on the lived experiences of 20 New Zealand women who participate in sport on a regular basis.

## **Migrants and the Catalunya<sup>1</sup> to be**

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Session 4

Migrants and Refugees

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2017 people in Catalonia came out to vote in an illegal referendum over the future of the(ir) region. The results showed that a vast majority of the votes favored independence. The referendum however only allowed Spanish citizens to vote thus excluding non-Spanish residents who make up a significant portion of the population within the region from political participation. This paper looks at expressions of critiques and solidarity by migrant groups, in particular undocumented street vendors to the referendum and the idea of Catalan independence. By analyzing the responses offered by these migrant groups I demonstrate who they challenge both the Spanish colonial state but also reveal the internal contradictions of the supposed cosmopolitanism of an independent Catalonia.

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1 Catalan spelling

## **Care and democracy and resistance**

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Session 5

Practices of Resistance

Tronto (2013) argues that democracy and social justice require the ongoing care and participation of all citizens. Similarly, “the need for a generally acceptable way to allocate caring responsibilities” must be fostered “in a way that democratic citizens think best achieves the goals of freedom, equality, and justice” (Tronto, 2013: 141). Though it is easy to conclude that the conditions do not exist for these goals, this paper explores resistance practices among social workers and other care workers who struggle for the right to care for care recipients more fully while simultaneously fighting for decent conditions for themselves and each other and, often, policy change. This paper argues in Gramscian form that perhaps, some of the democratic care and social justice changes we seek, are already happening.

## **Re-imagining social work: A critical conversation**

Neil Ballantyne, Ian Hyslop and Emily Keddell

Session 5

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Practices of Resistance

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This paper will be in the form of a live conversation between three members of the Re-imagining Social Work Collective (RSW). The RSW are a collective of social work academics who publish a blog on critical and progressive social work, raising awareness about the threats to humane social work services in New Zealand and promoting discussion, debate and deliberation about progressive alternatives. Since its inception, in April 2015, (following the announcement of government intentions to reform Child Youth and Family services) the RSW blog has published 121 blog posts and had over 38,000 visitors (mostly from New Zealand). This live discussion between members of the RSW will highlight some of the issues from the blog including reflections on: social work and the state; data linkage and algorithmic governance; gender, social reproduction and the surplus population; and the prospects for an emancipatory social work practice.

## **The resilience of Hobson's Pledge**

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Session 2

Social Theory

In 2016, Don Brash and Casey Cosstellio formed the lobby group *Hobson's Pledge*. Their vision is for New Zealand to be a "society in which all citizens have the same rights, irrespective of when we or our ancestors arrived" (Hobson's Pledge, 2017, para. 1). Accordingly, the Treaty of Waitangi claims as they stand should be upheld, however, they argue that Māori should not be entitled to "special treatments", but rather, should accept the gift of civilization. In this presentation I use Žižek's (2008) analysis of a demand for tolerance, involving a 'coincidence of opposed features', as an exemplar for describing the desires of Hobson's Pledge. In this way, the Other (Māori) is alright as long as they are deprived of their Otherness ("special treatments"). I examine the ideological contradictions that Hobson's Pledge endorse, how the ideological contradictions are managed, and where they are headed in future.

## **Time to shift the focus of early intervention policy from parenting to poverty**

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Session 4  
Child Protection

The direction of social policy aimed at child abuse and neglect has led to an unbalanced emphasis on early intervention in parenting. This has been accompanied by increasing reliance on cherry-picked 'evidence' from neuroscience and more recently epigenetics, which biologises social problems. Our argument is that this trend has been accompanied by draconian responsabilisation of those who endure multigenerational poverty and structural inequality with differential impact according to oppressions experienced. With a growing evidence-base of the prevalence of child protection intervention in the lives of the poorest communities, we are morally bound to address persistent economic disadvantage in the same way as we are bound to address climate change, as a societal necessity in which one generation calls time on oppressive child welfare interventions and a shift to genuine family economic and social support. This reimagination of policy calls for new efforts to stem the pervasive multigenerational impact of pervasive inequality.



## **The shifty – and shifting – subjectivity of the Crown**

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Session 5

Colonialism

In modern western political systems, we generally understand there to be no connection between the embodied sovereign and the sovereignty of the state – despite the semantic connections. The sovereign is the symbolic head of state, while sovereignty resides in the myriad institutions of parliament and government. However, a residual subjectivity continues within the sovereignty of the modern state. In this paper, centring on relationships between the Crown and iwi/hapū, we will sketch some of the times and places in which the Crown appears as an embodied subject and some in which it disappears. We argue that the embodied presence of the Crown is important in relationships with Maori and enables ethical and affective encounters that can shift and interrupt the normal flow of power and make other relationships possible.

## **Online sexual networking: Gender and sexuality at play on the internet**

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Session 5

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Social Media

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Recent transformations in technology and social life are playing out at the most intimate of levels: more and more New Zealanders are going online to seek out others for sex. I have spoken to 40 users of sexual networks and sex contact websites, enquiring about their motivations and experiences, and the meanings they made of their experiences. As I contemplate their accounts, the clash of old and new norms – between traditional and liberatory regimes of gender and sexuality – clamours for attention. The analytic focus of my research is on what it means to be a female sexual subject in this shifting terrain. In this presentation I will explore some of the dilemmas my participants identify and the discursive practices and resources they draw on to make sense of the self, the other and contemporary gendered sexuality.

## **Neoliberal restructuring: A response to class struggle?**

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Session 8

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Neoliberalism and Class and Resistance

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Many, if not most, accounts of the origins and nature of neoliberalism in Aotearoa are state-centric and idealistic. They portray neoliberalism as an idea or a policy regime that began in 1984 when the Labour Government came power. This paper argues, in contrast, that capital's restructuring of the economy in Aotearoa began in the mid to late 1970s. Most claim this restructuring was a response to global economic crises and competitive pressures. Yet it was also a response to class struggle which had restricted profitability and production in many industries. Indeed, the period from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s witnessed the most widespread, lengthy and costly series of strikes in Aotearoa's history so far. While this paper mostly concentrates on the example of capital's reaction to workers' dissent in the meat industry, it is acknowledged capitalist 'destructuring' also occurred in many industries without strong traditions of overt workers' resistance, such as the clothing industry.

## **Softly dissident**

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Session 1

Arts & Activism 1

This paper reflects on *Say It With Stitch* - a cross-disciplinary workshop offering participants an opportunity to use stitch and thread as a means of mark-marking, as well as social commentary. Rather than a nostalgic recreation of lost practices, this process works to use thread to perform the task of expressing ideas - i.e. critical craft or 'craftivism'. Physical stitched outcomes serve as a vehicle for adding, subverting or generating meaning to connect with a wider audience. These outcomes are broad; drawing from experience in fashion design, interior design, communication design and culinary arts, and consider issues and ideologies explored by each participant. Exercising their "inner monologue" creates rich dialogue between individual and audience and gives voice to unspoken fears, conundrums and provocative ideas.

## **The juxtaposition of homeless ideologies: Ramifications for political engagement and the contradiction of time**

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Session 8

Homelessness

Recognised as having the highest levels of homelessness within the OECD (2017), New Zealand's homelessness crisis is a deeply politicised issue calling for urgent action. In a small undergraduate research project, public perceptions of this indefensible crisis were explored using a survey methodology. This aimed to uncover the types of homeless ideologies conveyed among the public, the likelihood of people's political engagement on the matter, and what possible forms of activism might transpire. Findings revealed competing ideologies: an underlying tone de-humanising the homeless, and a juxtaposing counter-narrative portraying empathy as a wave reinstating dignity for the homeless. Although these ideologies influenced the likelihood of political engagement, the contradiction of time in our seemingly fast paced society appears to be an idea underlying a general reluctance to engage. In navigating this contradiction, could 'clicktivism' be a means of generating political engagement by merging awareness of social issues into public consciousness?

## **Introducing queer objects**

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Session 3

Queer Objects

Queer lives, like all lives, involve a range of objects: the things we fill our houses with, the traces of the past we throw out or treasure, the books and images we share with our friends, the commodities we consume in our work and leisure spaces, the clothes we wear, and the technologies we use to communicate with one another. This paper introduces the forthcoming book collection *Queer Objects* (Otago University Press, 2019), edited by Chris Brickell and Judith Collard, which asks: what makes an object queer? While some everyday objects tell of queer lives – household bric-a-brac, cameras and diaries – other objects reflect modes of social control (the powder puff found in a court file, for instance), and others are generated by movements for queer activism generate objects of social change: the badge, the banner and the newsletter. This paper outlines the book project while looking at the role of objects and the ways they take their place in queer networks, whether individually or as part of wider assemblages.

**Not Defined by the Numbers: Distinction, dissent and democratic possibilities in debating the data**

Karly Burch, Katharine Legun, and Hugh Campbell

Session 1

University of Otago

Governance, Power & Environmental Justice

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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. Taking an assemblage approach to state defined safe radiation levels in Japan, this paper discusses the ways that numbers are actively engaged with to create and vocalize a more emancipatory political subjectivity through the assemblage of deliberative publics.

## **Looking for suburban habitus: a photographic comparison of two middle-upper Melbourne streetscapes**

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Session 8  
Urban Sociology

The notion of suburban habitus applies Bourdieu's key concept to study two Melbourne neighbourhoods, looking for characteristic behavioural and presentation practices indicating collective dispositions. This consistency of being or identity, interestingly, intuitively expresses metropolitan social class distinctions in classic Bourdieusian ways. We reject 'black-box' critiques of habitus by Jenkins and others, while acknowledging powerful 'structuring structures' evident in these suburbs—seeing forms of action and agency that are neither voluntaristic nor determined. The photo-ethnographic material presented here echoes an important part of Bourdieu's research oeuvre, using photography to approach the modern city streetscapes of two middle-upper class suburbs to see what physical and spatial dispositions each of these localities reveal about their inhabitants. Does visual engagement with these streetscapes help discern and discriminate similarities and different habituses between these two neighbourhoods?



## **Occupational status backgrounds of All Black and Wallaby rugby captains, 1899-1995**

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Session 6

Class

In the century of rugby union sport in Australia and New Zealand there has been approximately seventy captains for each of the All Blacks and the Wallaby national IVs. While obviously outstanding athletes, are these individuals typical Australians and New Zealanders in terms of socio-economic backgrounds? In the case of New Zealand, there is a strong national discourse around rugby as the national game for everybody, played by all social ranks, from doctor to abattoir worker. Can this be empirically confirmed, or is it better understood as part of nationalistic sporting ideology? Examining the full national player cohort is a project for another time. In the present study, gathering occupational rankings of All Black captains is a first step addressing this research question. A comparative dimension for the study is achieved contrasting occupational rankings of All Black captains with those of Wallaby captains. What rank differences can be seen in the data between these two sets of national rugby captains?

## **Post-disaster creative idea activation: who's ready?**

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Session 3

Art and Activism 3

After disasters and shock events, along with emergency responders, artists and other creative individuals often enact initiatives and spontaneous projects. Traumatizing situations which tend to leave many ordinary people feeling powerless affect creative people differently. They provide the catalyst and opportunities for the less conventional to shine. Whether they live overtly so, or otherwise, fringe dwellers and 'outsiders' appear to be pre-adapted to unstable settings. As demonstrated, after a disaster those in authority take advantage of the talents of those able to transgress traditional boundaries that have become suddenly unclear. Adaptive and creative approaches to meeting community needs are welcomed and necessary; for a time, at least. Our research uses interview data collected from 45 individuals who enacted creative ideas in post-quake Christchurch. We are interested in how the post-disaster setting affected creativity, and how the opportunities presented can be prolonged and preserved beyond a return to 'normal'.

## **Faking Friendship? A pilot study of working class girls' residential instability**

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Session 4  
Young People

The author considers friendship in the context of her ethnographic research project “Do the poor pay more?”, which examines the lived experience of housing instability among young people. The pilot study involved researching individuals whom the student-researcher met through a youth group while volunteering, many whom the student-researcher formulated a friendship with. Via forms of confessional tales (Van Maneen, 1988), the author explores some of the challenges encountered when attempting to negotiate the demands of the dual researcher-friend role, particularly during fieldwork and interviews. In particular, four sets of tales are examined: (1) “Are we friends now?”, when researcher become friends with participants and questions the authenticity of these friendships, (2) Interactional “game play”: a struggle for power during interviews; (3) “Rescuing” participants; and (4) the need for researcher self-care when “things get too much”. In analysing the tales, the author draws upon insights derived from Goffman’s (1961) theoretical frameworks on symbolic interaction, particularly on micro-relations of power and Hochschild’s (1979) “emotion work”. Lastly, the author explores friendship as a methodological approach (Fine, 1994; Tillmann-Healy, 2003), given its philosophical foundations, which aim toward actively challenging, disrupting and sometimes undermining what can be a considerable power imbalance between researcher and participant.

## **The digital carnival**

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Session 5

Social Media

In my PhD research, I explore how the utopian narratives of present in digital technology emerge as a carnivalesque response within contemporary society. I argue that digital technology and, as an extension, digital society, is a response to modern technology and modernity, and I use Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of carnival to interpret this response. Bakhtin emphasised the temporary inversion of the everyday life that occurs within periods of carnival; I suggest that digital society is positioned as an eternal carnival and, as such, it is problematic as it is difficult for it to fulfil carnival's original purpose: a temporary reprieve from traditional rule, where agency is given to all people to help them cope with the struggles of everyday life.

## **Sex, drugs and disease: Queer health in the gay community**

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Session 6

Queer Sexualities

It has long been established that the health and wellbeing of the gay community is in distinct need of improvement. Depression, anxiety, and suicide is rife within this group, alongside commonplace drug and alcohol issues, and steadily increasing rates of STI/HIV transmissions. The statistics paint a grim picture, yet are gay men really this miserable and diseased? Since the inception of AIDS, international efforts have been made to improve the health of this community, but it is clear that something is amiss. This study seeks to address this, and suggests that a new paradigm of health and wellbeing must be established if the lives of suffering gay men are to be improved. Drawing from various fringe social theories and cultural studies, a model of health that is transgressive, heterogeneous, fluid, and fundamentally queer is put forward as a somewhat radical alternative to the problematic current ideals.

## **The queer smartphone**

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Session 3

Queer Objects

The smartphone offers internet access – the world in the owner’s pocket – and its texting capability and readily installable dating/hook-up apps have transformed elements of queer sociability. This chapter considers how the affordances of apps like Tinder and Grindr present an inherent queering quality for users, and transform the immediate environment into a landscape of intimate and erotic potential. Through aspects of gamification, spacio-sexual re-orientation, and identity play, these apps render the smartphone a landmark object in queer history.

## **Is Australia Islamophobic? An uncertain national score vs. lived suburban reality**

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Session 8

Urban Sociology

This paper is based on the data collected in the course of a large state-funded empirical project exploring the link between religious visibility, Islamophobia and social capital in two Melbourne suburbs that can be described as 'Muslim concentrations'. In 2016-17, the project collected quantitative and qualitative data through a survey of 300 residents and over 50 semi-structured interviews with key informants and local residents. This paper first reports on the levels of Islamophobia recorded in two localities through survey responses to the 'Islamophobia scale' and provides an analysis of Islamophobia's correlates and predictors. We then broaden the investigation onto a more abstract plane by looking for the existing data on national-level Islamophobia. These data are extremely varied and discrepant, thus precluding any confident answer about the national levels of Islamophobia. The paper discusses the relationship between the perception of the nation's Islamophobia created by media reports and public debates, and lived reality of people, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who live in ethnically and religiously highly diverse suburbs and share everyday spaces and activities.

## **Into the unknown: Reading sexuality through Dunedin's A. Lois White painting**

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Session 3

Queer Objects

A. Lois White's *Persephone Returns to Demeter* (1933) is a painting about a mother and daughter, and about the promise of Spring and new life. The scene is also quite homoerotic. The theme of the 'new woman', and the ambiguously erotic nature of art deco design also reflected the growing confidence of women artists. This work, found in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, fits readily into this trend, White herself is less easy to categorise. Single, she presents an almost asexual persona to the viewer, and her sexuality is merely the stuff of rumour. This ambiguity of identity and the imposition of meaning is explored here.



## **Pākehā bliss of cruelty: Understanding social power in Aotearoa**

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Session 5

Colonialism

Beginning with a statement made by Rorty discussing what is revealed in the writing of Nabakov: that 'the private pursuit of aesthetic bliss produces cruelty' I explore White Settler identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I navigate from my particular educated position, ethnicity, class, gender, age and sexual identity, the White English/Irish/Welsh descendant of immigrants to Aotearoa in the era of Queen Victoria and the British Empire. I challenge claims of ethnicity and indigeneity within the use of the word Pākehā and discuss how implicit we are in cruelties that marginalise Māori in their own land. Largely ignorant of 800 years of social history in Aotearoa and the 170 years since our earliest ancestors arrived, we have not upheld responsibilities stated in the founding document of New Zealand that is the bicultural covenant, Te Tiriti. Using the ideas of 'a literacy of Aotearoa' and 'Pākehā permission', I critically critique our participation in the social of Aotearoa; what it means to be a meaningful bicultural partner with Tangata Whenua (ngā iwi Māori) with social responsibilities that also relate to environmental responsibilities. I explore the white privilege and the particular hegemony *lying* within White Settler identity as I develop a theory of Pākehā bliss of cruelty that shapes our response to the local and the global.

## **The political nature of food banks**

Katharine Cresswell Riol  
University of Otago

Session 5  
Food, Housing and Resistance

Neoliberal policies can be seen to have had a negative effect on how food insecurity is addressed within New Zealand, i.e., in the charitable shape of food banks. Through the institution of these organisations, hunger has been depoliticised: its deliberation has moved from the public to private arena. However, not only is hunger political, but so are food banks: as well as hunger, they deal with numerous social, political and economic concerns. Food bank users are also political components, although, within research, their transformatory potential is often overlooked. Placing social justice at the forefront, the purpose of this research is twofold: to investigate food banks as (de)politicised spaces, taking into consideration their policies and focusing specifically on the political, neoliberal components present, and to examine food bank users as potential political agents of their own emancipation and ascertain the barriers that hinder class consciousness raising and the use of human rights.

## **Middle-class Aucklanders talk about their lives**

Bruce Curtis

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Session 6

Class

Internationally the middle class is variously labelled 'shrinking' (Davey, 2012; Blanchard and Willmann 2016), 'no longer coping' (Reich, 2008), 'vanishing' (Warren, 2014), 'under pressure' (Emmons and Noeth, 2014), and 'endangered' (Dallinger, 2013). Further, Picketty (2013) argues that growing inequalities, including the squeezed middle class, undermine the democratic order. This presentation will report back on 52 interviews conducted with self-identified members of 'the middle' from across Auckland. The interviews demonstrate angst among a formerly buffered social stratum, and that the impact of precarity maybe becoming generalised. The research was funded by the University of Auckland 'FRDF fund'.

## **Using Marx's circuit of money-capital to think about neo-colonialism**

Bruce Curtis

Session 1

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Social Theory

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I have argued recently that a turn to social science and sociology would be beneficial for Marxists (Curtis, 2017). This sociology might be thought of as focusing on the socio-political, legalised processes of rents, uneven exchange and primitive accumulation. It might seek to illuminate to what extent  $M - C \dots P \dots C' - M'$  captures all the forms of revenue creation and distribution in general, and the creation and distribution of surplus value in particular. Exploring this element of Marxist methodology, in the New Zealand context at least, opens up an understanding of neo-colonialism as the contemporary manifestation of the search for super-profits under late capitalism.

## **Word power: Enhancing well-being socio-poetically in the face of managerialist hegemony**

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Session 1  
Arts & Activism 1

In view of the hegemonic management model under which teachers and their leaders work, and the rates of attrition, illness, depression, suicide and other effects of stress and burnout – appropriate practices are needed to counter the erosion of their self-identity. This paper from a recent doctoral study, outlines a socio-poetic practice, the Mindfulness of Seminaria (TMoS). Used daily for three weeks by six classroom teachers and educational leaders employed from early years to higher education in State and private settings, NZ and UK, it evidences how this creative practice became socially engaging, raised awareness and drew attention to critical issues. Data analysis using OECD wellbeing Guidelines (2013) found high levels of self-realisation and meaningfulness, whether for personal-professional direction, emotional mastery, and/or cognitive enrichment. TMoS – a simple, app-like, poetic device, found to be energising and purposeful, was used for insight and solutions when stressful feelings mitigated against calm, concentration and creativity.

## **Rethinking the welfare/policing dichotomy: reflections from England**

Lauren Devine and Stephen Parker

University of the West of England

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Session 6

Neoliberalism, Social Service Provision

In England, the State's role in child protection social work practice is paternalistic and rights focussed. A neo-liberal ideology is evident via policies promoting 'innovation'. The UK government devolves powers enabling each local authority to use private, profit making providers within the statutory framework. The providers deliver 'interventions'. This developed from the early intervention agenda and is intended to reduce cases travelling through the system. Longitudinal data shows that this approach has failed to provide the expected panacea: delivery of early intervention and innovation in the neo-liberal market relies on a steady stream of service users. Service users are increasingly detected via mechanistic systems reliant on profit making Artificial Intelligence 'solutions', creating conflict between social work as an individualised support service, and the powerful agendas of state control and unregulated profit making. We argue the resultant 'welfare/policing dichotomy' creates 'clients' for 'products' but does little to address serious child protection issues. England now finds itself with a consistent trend of increased cost and reducing efficiency. We suggest an ideological rethink.

## **The reemergence of radical politics and resistance in Aotearoa New Zealand: Class politics and identity politics in this interregnum**

Bryce Edwards and John Moore

Session 8

Victoria University

Neoliberalism and Class and Resistance

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The Aotearoa New Zealand political left is in an extremely interesting position – buoyed by an increase in radicalism, but without a clear path forward. Divisions and differences over the place of class politics and identity politics are a key dynamic in the current movements. Aotearoa New Zealand’s political left is represented by a diverse range of social and political trends and is very much in a state of ideological flux. The reemergence of progressive politics here has been influenced by new social movements internationally and a renewed interest in feminism, Marxism and other emancipatory theoretical frameworks including intersectionality. Underlying tensions exist within Aotearoa New Zealand’s left, especially over questions to do with class versus identity politics, universalism versus particularism, and materialist versus post-materialist concerns. In this paper, Bryce Edwards and John Moore elaborate on these issues and attempt to navigate how such tensions can be resolved.

## **Utopia as Method**

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Session 3

Utopia and Contestation

In this paper, I critically examine work that has sought to develop a utopia-oriented social scientific optic – most importantly, Ernst Bloch, Karl Mannheim, Fredric Jameson, Ruth Levitas, and Tom Moylan. Drawing on this work, I will suggest a synthetic utopian methodology, and I will explore efforts at the utopian analysis of late fascism.



## **Never the twain shall meet? Marxism and the politics of childbirth**

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Session 7

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Reproduction

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Critical responses to the dominant biopolitical structuring of childbirth are often inspired by feminism, ethical/legal concerns and the work of Michel Foucault. Marxist analysis is notably absent from the field. In this respect little appears to have changed since 1979 when the Welsh marxist Raymond Williams noted that 'across the whole gamut of Marxism, the material-physical importance of the human reproductive process has been generally overlooked'. Given the magnitude and apparent intractability of controversies that currently haunt the terrain of pregnancy and childbearing, I suggest that there is an urgent need for marxist analysis in the field. If such critical marxist responses are to avoid replicating some of the biopolitical contradictions and imperatives through which human reproduction is currently constituted, they need to be grounded in feminist and postcolonial struggle, and to take seriously theoretical and political tensions within the marxist canon itself.

## **Epidemic, panic, contamination: A content analysis of the New Zealand news media's coverage of methamphetamine**

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Session 2

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Sociology of Health

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In 2016, Housing New Zealand spent \$52 million on “decontaminating” state houses of methamphetamine. This represents a massive increase over a few years prior, despite the fact that methamphetamine use and manufacture (the causes of contamination) have been relatively stable and there is no firm evidence that the vast majority of homes pose any threat to human health. This paper will utilise a moral panic framework to examine the rise of the meth-contamination industry. Results from a content analysis of New Zealand's major newspaper's will be used to show that methamphetamine has been the subject of a lengthy period of misleading and negative coverage. It will be argued that this has resulted in public and government agencies being susceptible to exploitation by the meth-testing industry.

## **Securitising diversity: Governing extremism with fundamental British values**

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Session 4

Policy

Beyond simply bringing extremism to an end, what counter-extremism actually entails is rarely defined at a governmental or strategic level. This paper critically examines the UK's counter-extremism strategy. It explores how extremism is depicted within academic literature, and how these depictions manifest in counter-extremism strategy. In particular, it notes how both non-hegemonic values and violence are emphasised in definitions of extremism. The paper notes how this has led to a conflation of a diversity of values with the threat of violence, securitising diversity within counter-extremism strategy. Through exploring both the UK's promotion of 'fundamental British values', and the deployment of the 'Prevent duty' to transform education and health workers into agents of surveillance (having the legal responsibility to report if they suspect anyone of being at risk of radicalisation), this paper explores the very real dangers for those deemed outside of the hegemonic norm: the non-British or the extreme.

## **Socialization of gender identity: Cross-cultural analysis**

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Session 4

Young People

Using a sociological approach, this paper presents research-based evidence to explain the dimensions and differentials associated with the construction of gender identity. The discussion is based on the results of studies conducted in two countries which are substantially varying in terms of socio-cultural and demographic backgrounds: New Zealand and Iran. This cross-cultural analysis provides the opportunity to explain whether and to what extent the construction of gender identity through the educational system is associated with varying socio-cultural and demographic backgrounds. This paper is based on socialization theory in which educational system, particularly school education resources, is recognized as the first official and the most powerful engine of socialization process. Using the method of content analysis, this paper highlights the main patterns and differentials associated with the representation of gender characteristics through school education resources of these two varying socio-cultural and demographic settings.

## **Methodological debate on migrants' ethno-religious identity: Australasia perspective**

Yaghoob Foroutan

Session 5

Mazandaran University & Waikato University      Becoming & Being a Migrant

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Focusing on the data of migrants' ethnicity and religion, this paper examines whether and to what extent such data could be reliable. The examination is based on population census that also provides unique nation-wide data sources in social and demographic analysis. It particularly focuses on a group of migrants in the multiethnic and multicultural context of Australasia who share the same religious affiliation (that is, Muslim migrants) from a comparative perspective. The findings of this study show that while this particular group of migrants are affiliated to the same religion, they contribute overwhelmingly varying socio-demographic and economic characteristics on the basis of their ethnic backgrounds. According to the findings of the present analysis, this paper argues that if migrants belonging to the same category of religious affiliation are studied as a single group without considering their ethnic origins, this will lead to insufficient, incomplete, and misleading knowledge in our sociological and demographic analysis.

## **Researching politically sensitive topics on same-sex parents: Pedestalling, protecting the idyllic, and guilt in an era of LGBTI social change**

Luke Gahan

Session 8

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Reproduction and Parenting

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This paper discusses the research experience, as well as the findings, of qualitative research with separated same-sex parents in Australia. The embarrassment of being a separated same-sex parent within LGBTI communities was a common theme. Several participants in the study felt that their previous relationship had been perceived to be a model for LGBTI communities and they believed that their families had been on display to the world as examples of why same-sex couples should have equal rights. Whether participants had in fact been seen in this regard is not relevant. The feelings that they experienced of being placed on pedestal created expectations and pressures which were very real to them. This often caused anxieties for participants and led to difficulties in recruitment – in particular recruiting male participants. This paper will discuss the difficulties of researching these sensitive topics and suggest how LGBTI communities can address the wider stigmatization of separation.

## **Resistance as a methodology: A counterhegemonic movement for liberatory education**

Jennifer Gale de Saxe

Session 1

Victoria University

The University as Counterhegemonic State

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*Resistance* has become a buzzword found within many liberatory and democratic education circles. There are movements within progressive education communities that focus on the many ways in which we need to resist policies, reforms, and practices that are oppressive and dehumanizing for students, educators, and families. Throughout this paper, I aim to contextualize the term *resistance* as a methodological tool and framework, arguing that it has the potential to drive and substantiate authentic transformation. I will offer a nuanced and multi-faceted discussion in which to reconceptualize resistance through a critical feminist perspective, as well discuss various oppositional methodologies and theories, and pedagogies, as I consider a reframing of resistance within education and society. Ultimately, I hope to situate resistance as something that is contextually and conceptually unique, while also thinking about it as a deliberate and promising methodology within both academia and society writ large.

## **Examining the barriers for women who inject drugs accessing needle exchange services in New Zealand**

Kirsten Gibson

Session 6  
Gender and Justice

Stigma is a pervasive factor in the lives of women who inject drugs (WWID). Women who inject drugs experience marginalisation more than men due to violating society's norms around substance use and also violating society's norms of femininity through their injecting drug use.

The Needle Exchange (NE) programme in New Zealand aims to provide people who inject drugs with sterile injecting equipment. Literature suggests that women's experiences of accessing NE services differs to men's.

Within a New Zealand context, the research examined the experiences of women who have injected drugs and their access of NE services. Key questions focused on gendered barriers affecting participants' access of needle exchange services. Grounded within a feminist framework, thematic analysis identified themes from semi-structured interviews. The three key themes were; Stigma and its effects; other Barriers; and Gendered experiences. The results highlighted the pervasiveness of stigma for WWID, but also challenged stereotypical notions of women as passive victims.



## **Seeds of Justice: transformative justice as a communal response to sexual harm**

Kyra Gillies, Luca Elder and Niall Campbell

Session 4

University of Otago

Alternative Approaches to Justice

Three gender studies students will share their group project designing a sexual violence intervention grounded in principles of prison abolition and transformative justice. The theoretical basis of this intervention of transformative justice, via communal conferencing, centres around concerns about the inadequacy and harm of the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC). Their design is informed by the work of People Against Prisons Aotearoa, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, Ruth Morris, Generation 5 and Critical Resistance. This paper will outline the intervention's potential makeup and content, the theoretical background and reflection on the design of the intervention. This sexual violence intervention was designed within the parameters of being within Colonised Aotearoa (New Zealand) and is informed by the three students' experiences of living in Otepoti/Dunedin and focuses specifically on intimate partner sexual violence which occurred between young people.

## **From Decriminalisation to Professionalisation: The Limits of Legal Frameworks in Understanding Worker Rights**

Fairleigh Gilmour

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Session 1

Sex Work

A noisy discursive space is often created around sex work and its regulation, with competing arguments around public health, morality, victimization and criminality taking centre-stage. In contrast, there is an increasing body of work exploring sex work as a form of labour and a smaller body exploring sex work as career. While my work generally fits into the latter category, in this paper, I will explore the limits of a professionalization discourse. Can sex work also be conceptualized as 'anti-work'? And what can this tell us about the limits of 'work'?

## **Who owns conflict? The role of the state in restorative justice and community justice within New Zealand**

Grace Gordon

Session 4

University of Auckland

Alternative Approaches to Justice

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From a critical perspective, this presentation explores the role of the state in restorative justice and community justice within New Zealand. To do so, it will discuss New Zealand and international literature, as well as draw on key findings from qualitative interviews with academics and restorative and community justice facilitators. These interviews were conducted for a Master's thesis that aimed to identify issues around community and conflict ownership in restorative and community justice practices within New Zealand. This presentation will argue that New Zealand's restorative and community justice practices are wedded to the state's requirements which results in a significant amount of state ownership and control. To conclude, I will present opportunities to progress forward by offering a 'senior and junior' partnership within informal justice practices between the community and state respectively.

## **Gender in police reform: Equity or equality?**

Hannah Gordon

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Session 6

Gender and Justice

In recent years, the international community has recognised the importance of strengthening the ability of police to recognise and respond to the diverse security needs of people from all gender groups. The concern that the police should be a 'representative' organisation is emphasised throughout literature and programming. Subsequently, 'gender mainstreaming' has become a common strategy in many police reform programmes. However, a large number of those who initially supported the strategy feel disillusioned with its implementation thus far, and are beginning to feel that it is inadequate as a vehicle for equality. This presentation considers one of the issues at the heart of the mainstreaming debate – the confusion between the related concepts of gender equality itself, and gender equity.

Using data gathered from a case study of the Tongan Police from 2009 – 2017, this presentation will explore the relationship between equity and equality. Various policies and programmes representing the two will be discussed, and the way in which they have been received by the women and men of the Tongan Police will be considered. In this context, policies of gender equity have been suitable as a 'kick-start', but, ultimately, have been insufficient. This presentation argues that, in order to break down systematic barriers and impediments for women in the Tongan Police, the relationship between policies of equity and equality needs to be addressed and improved.

## **A crying shame: Affect, emotion and welfare receipt in New Zealand**

Claire Gray

Session 3

University of Canterbury

Gender and Social Policy

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Welfare mothers have long been framed by discourses that constitute them as a “social problem”. Drawing from recent writing concerned with theorising “affect”, I present findings from focus group interviews conducted for my doctoral research in 2014 with 64 New Zealand lone mothers receiving welfare. I argue that participants’ experiences of welfare receipt were dominated by the negative affect inherent in welfare discourse, and that this had a disciplinary function in the welfare environment. While a discussion of negative affect frames this paper, I focus on the way that that emotion offered a response to the difficulties encountered as participants negotiated their welfare entitlements. My interest is in the way that emotion was reconfigured in participants’ narratives of their experiences of welfare receipt. I argue that attending to affect and emotion can offer a way of understanding its role in the maintenance of dominant welfare discourses, but also offers a means of exploring possible sites for transformation.

## **Diaspora of disaffection: Gender role reproduction among global Indian middle class female trailing spouses**

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Session 6

Migration and Marriage

Rapid globalisation has resulted in large scale migration from India, over the last decade. While there is literature on the relationship between poverty and migration in India, there is far less understanding of the relationship between affluence and the Indian migrant. Conradson (2005) defined the term 'middling migrants' as a diverse category of migrants who are skilled immigrants in a higher income category. The gendered dimension to the phenomenon is less explored and the women in this process of migration remain largely invisible (Raj, 2000).

Accompanying female spouses trailing spouses, experience a form of 're-privatization' of gender roles as a homemaker creating a strong undercurrent of disaffection, with negative implications for their wellbeing. These 'trailing spouses' occupy a contradictory gendered positioning within the Indian diaspora. Their fragmented construction can be analysed via a critical feminist epistemological framework.

## **Co-operative or unco-operative co-operatives?: Digging into the process of co-operation in food and agriculture co-operatives**

James Hale

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Session 5

Everyday Resistance

Co-operative organizing around food and agriculture is nothing new. However, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in the co-operative legal form in the United States. This research has followed this rebirth in a region in the Western U.S. where rural producers and urban consumers, gentrifying communities of color, and environmentally minded communities strive to improve their communities and food futures. As part of these efforts, it can be easy to assume co-operation within a legal status. Yet, as this research examines, co-operatives can be quite unco-operative in practice. Through extensive field work, I found that food and agriculture co-operative struggle to make decision-making inclusive, reproduce inequities through leadership performance, and unevenly distribute the emotional work necessary to co-operation. It is suggested that co-operatives must work to improve both organizational *and* interactional forms of co-operation.

## **Sex work decriminalisation and knowledge production in New Zealand**

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Session 1

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Sex Work

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Critique of academic research as an instrument of domination has had lasting impacts on research culture in New Zealand because of Maori struggles over knowledge production and the 1980s scandal over an 'unfortunate experiment' on unwitting women cancer patients at Auckland's National Women's Hospital. By the late twentieth century New Zealand research ethics committees insisted on consultative research with vulnerable and marginalised populations. I argue that this research environment had important implications for the 2003 decriminalisation of sex work in New Zealand. Sex work researchers adopted consultative and collaborative methodologies in which the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC) became a partner. Consequently, the NZPC gained epistemological privilege in knowledge production and policy making about sex work in New Zealand.



## **Racialised power or freedom of speech? Teachers' responses to cultural appropriation in global popular culture**

Catherine Hartung and Claire Charles

Session 7

University of Otago

Schools, Teaching & Culture

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Global popular culture is a powerful mediating force for engaging with contemporary issues surrounding cultural diversity. Yet recognition of this mediating force is absent from critical scholarship on teachers' understandings of race and culture, at a time when there is increasing emphasis on teachers' intercultural capabilities. This paper draws on data from focus groups with Australian teachers and their responses to pop singer Katy Perry dressing as a Japanese geisha for a performance. Teachers' responses to this scenario indicated a tension between a desire to recognise freedom of speech and intentionality, and the need to attend to historicised colonial power structures. The responses also intersected with gendered discourses of female beauty and empowerment. Analysing these discursive tensions and intersections, we argue that global popular culture is an important tool for identifying the barriers to building intercultural understanding and responding to a world in flux.

## **What is practical theology and why is this useful for sociologists?**

Laura Hill

Session 2

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Interdisciplinary Approaches

My interdisciplinary PhD research brings together practical theology with sociological analysis and qualitative research methods to examine how Christian couples in New Zealand practise gender egalitarianism. In most cases, practical theologians collaboratively dialogue with other disciplines including other theological disciplines and the social sciences. Practical theology focuses on the practice of the church as it interacts with the practice of society, seeking to gain wisdom from multiples disciplines and sources to transform Christian practices. Whilst researchers acknowledge that sociology and theology have historically been cautious of each other, practical theology dynamically brings these disciplines together in a mutual, constructive process where each discipline is open to critical assessment by the other. In this presentation I will outline two examples of practical theological projects which draw from sociology in a robust way, then discuss my own project and what I seek to contribute. Overall, I address: what can sociology offer practical theology, and what can practical theology offer sociology?

## **Weak thought in New Zealand**

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Session 2

Politics and Society

My PhD research explores how the theory of Weak Thought can be applied in New Zealand. Weak thought is a process of understanding truth that was developed by Gianni Vattimo; it challenges metaphysical claims of truth, seeing them as violent due to the claims of being absolute and objective. Weak thought instead sees truth as a cultural co-construction which comes out of dialogue in which society, and groups within society, settle upon the most agreeable collective understanding. In order for this dialogue to take place, a rupturing of metaphysical claims of truth is done by asking 'so what?' of the foundations of the metaphysical claim. This allows for an external view to be positioned in dialogue with that which is claimed as truth, and so co-construction of cultural truth becomes possible. Within my own research, I use this understanding of truth to challenge the social structures present within New Zealand.

## **Unplanned Pregnancies and Women's Health**

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Session 7

Reproduction

Unplanned pregnancies have implications for women's reproductive health, including contraception, abortion, and antenatal care. I have estimated that 54% of pregnancies in New Zealand are unplanned. Pregnancy planning needs to be understood in context, and in this presentation I will use lifecourse theory to understand pregnancy timing. I will also discuss how unplanned pregnancies may pose unique challenges to women with long-term conditions such as diabetes and depression.

## **Student-Parents at New Zealand Universities**

Bryndl Hohmann-Marriott, Louisa Choe and Laura Hill

Session 8

University of Otago

Reproduction and Parenting

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Students who have children are a growing part of universities around the world and in New Zealand. Whilst student parents face challenges in their pursuit of a higher education, students with children also demonstrate resilience. The theoretical framework of cultural capital can refocus the narrative of student-parents from disadvantaged, 'non-traditional' persons who lack capital to students who gain capital in other rewarding, meaningful ways. The formation of a gendered identity as a student-mother or student-father can also be a key part of this process. To help student-parents thrive despite - or because of - their unique difficulties and rewards, those reaching out to include and support students need to understand their characteristics and experiences. This research uses the New Zealand Graduate Longitudinal Study to answer the questions: What are the characteristics of student parents at New Zealand universities? What are the greatest supports and challenges identified by these student parents?

## **Gender neutral 'parenting' in policy?: The invisible sexism in New Zealand's recent child protection changes**

Eileen Joy and Liz Beddoe

Session 7

University of Auckland

Policy, Leadership & Practice Frameworks

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Recent policy changes in child protection in New Zealand have been, in part, aimed at improving 'parenting' practices through recourse to evidence-based parenting programs, specifically those that refer to 'brain development' or derivatives thereof. Both the policy and the evidence from which the policy is derived, refer to 'parenting' as if this were somehow gender neutral and thus impacts on all genders equally. This invisibilising of the differing impacts of parenting on different genders runs concurrently with a societal 'back to basics' approach of mothering that re-essentialises women and places the blame for today's ills, ostensibly on 'parents', but ultimately on women. Thus, anyone not male, is rendered responsible whilst the specific oppressions that they undergo due to their gender are not recognised. The evidence that this approach relies on is bolstered by neuroscience with appeals to the importance of 'the first three years' being foundational accepted without careful consideration given to the ramifications. We argue therefore, that whilst the policy appears to be gender neutral, it is anything but, with more demands being placed on women specifically, to produce the best possible 'brains' or else risk being found negligent.

## **ANT and/for Aotearoa NZ?**

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Session 1

Social Theory

As an approach to exploring and conceptualizing the social, actor-network theory (ANT) has, over recent decades, been taken up in diverse disciplinary fields that move beyond its genesis in the 'hard' sciences. However, research that works with actor-network theory and other approaches within the realm of material semiotics continues to be framed from within a EuroAmerican theoretical framework (Law and Lin 2015). While the increasing body of research conducted within these approaches is global in its reach (and while simplistic demarcations of the western/eastern or northern/southern kind are problematic), there is an emerging line of argument that while empirical work is global, this work continues to be theorized within established Western theoretical frameworks.

Law and Lin note that the principle of symmetry argues that 'true' and 'false' knowledge claims are treated – traced – in the same terms, as are humans and nonhumans in any exploration of 'the social'. They argue for a third addition to the principle of symmetry – between EuroAmerican, and other, versions of the ANT. This presentation considers this provocation and seeks to progress the idea of ANT and/for Aotearoa and the possibility of opening the 'black box' of social policy to its scrutiny.

**“It’s not like I use the money to go out and live the café lifestyle”: Pacific mothers talk about appropriate uses of child support money**

Moeata Keil

Session 3

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Gender and Social Policy

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What is considered “appropriate” uses of child support is an individually contested issue as well as an ongoing policy concern across Western developed countries. Much of the literature on the issues experienced by mothers over how child support is used, engages with normative Western understandings of family structures and the enactment of gender relations within that structure. Drawing on interviews with nine Pacific mothers, this paper highlights the way that ethnicity and gender interact in these women’s lives to shape the way that child support is used. The mothers’ discussions emphasised child-focused spending practices and priorities in ways that at times challenged their identities as good Pacific women, but reaffirmed their gendered identities as ‘good’ mothers. The paper concludes by arguing that how Pacific mothers’ use child support involves a complex system of negotiation and reconciliation of Pacific cultural values, with mainstream normative gender practices commonly associated with ‘good’ mothering.



## **What prepares social work practitioners for engaging with diversity in neoliberal practice contexts**

Stephanie Kelly and Susan Beaumont

Session 3

Weltec, Wellington

Neoliberal Infrastructures

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This paper comes out of Masters research by a Social Work educator, and her Supervisor (a sociologist), in the new suite of postgraduate programmes in Professional Practice in Health and Social Services, Weltec/Whitireia. The research draws on indepth qualitative interviews with experienced social work practitioners to explore what prepares practitioners for engaging with diversity. The findings show that experienced practitioners critically engage with the term, and consider it in 'suspicious' ways. They see the term as 'getting in the way' of real practice and real outcomes. Practitioners have real concerns about the political context of the introduction and use of the term, and the expectations it brings to a profession and practice that is informed historically by social justice values.

## **A sociological tool for crafting leadership for social work practice**

Stephanie Kelly and Ashleigh Price

Session 7

Weltec, Wellington

Policy, Leadership & Practice Frameworks

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Health and social service practitioners need a straightforward ‘nuts and bolts’ method that can easily be drawn on to guide critical theorising, explore societal and personal value tensions, and the impact of these on practice, identity, and leadership. This paper presents a tool co developed by one of the authors (Stanley & Kelly, 2008; 2010), and applied in teaching in the new Weltec/Whitireia suite of postgraduate qualifications in Professional Practice in Health and Social Services. The authors (teacher and student) in the programme, a sociologist and a social work practitioner, respectively, present the tool, how it is used in teaching and taken up in practice to better equip practitioners to resist the neoliberal agenda, and ultimately ‘reimagine more progressive ways of organizing services’ for real practice gains.

## **Meaningful practice leadership: Extending the borders of practice frameworks**

Stephanie Kelly and Tony Stanley

Session 7

Weltec, Wellington

Policy, Leadership & Practice Frameworks

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In New Zealand and the United Kingdom (UK), political and managerial influence dominates the activities and agenda of social work practice leadership. The neo-liberal reshaping of welfare has significantly affected how we understand leadership and what the core activities tend to be. Traditional approaches to leadership are proving increasingly difficult as competing demands on the activities that constitute leadership are oft at odds with the moral and intellectual focus needed to advance social work practice.

To help offset this growing divide, teaching partnerships have been funded between local government and universities in the UK to provide a closer relationship between social work teaching and research, and the workplace. This presentation introduces one of these, the West Midlands teaching practice partnership, and a leadership framework, developed by the authors (both New Zealand sociologists, and teachers in social work). We introduce this framework, its context; and finish by considering its application for the Aotearoa New Zealand context.

## **Let me fix that for you**

Stella Lange

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Session 2

Art & Activism 2

As an activist practice contemporary Craft appears to challenge how things are made and produced. Craft practice seems to run counter to dominant practices of consumerism. Many visible practices of popular craft activity are clearly the result of commercial consumerism - global, national and local producers supply materials, tools and even the information or instructions used by crafters. Design Activism, contesting in part how things are made (Fuad-Luke, 2009) intersects with Craft resulting in Craftivism, where the intent is 'some type of social change' (Garber, 2013). This work looks at repair as a quiet and authentic form of Craft Activism or Craftivism. Repair is one site of craft activism that challenges not only consumerism - in a refusal to "fetish newness, and also ' makes public what is usually a personal activity. The potential for Craftivism to signal resistance to consumerism, and so question not only how things are made but also how things are maintained is explored in contemporary global, and more local, textile repair practices.

## **A 'rightful' state? Perceptions of the state's role in rights fulfilment shared before and after a general election**

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Session 2

Politics and Society

How do members of the public of Aotearoa New Zealand perceive the state's fulfilment of its human rights obligations? This paper discusses perceptions of the state's responsibilities toward rights overall and of the resources and services positioned at the point which the fulfilment of rights is sought, or some may argue expected. New Zealanders shared these perceptions in two surveys. The first survey ran during the lead-up to the 2017 general election and the second in the weeks following. The resulting findings explore the impact of election campaign rhetoric on perceptions of rights and seek to advance understanding of the public's observations of the role of law and of the state in rights fulfilment occurring in a form that is free from discriminatory barriers.

## **Perceptions of incarceration rates in Aotearoa New Zealand: A social justice issue?**

Adele N. Norris and Kalym Lipsey

Session 5

Massey University

Crime, Social Justice & Inequality

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Incarceration rates in Aotearoa New Zealand are a growing concern with many scholars and activists considering the over-representation of imprisoned Māori and other cohorts as an important social justice issue. Combating the mass incarceration problem requires an understanding of the complexity of criminalisation within the broader framework of colonisation. Thus, an important first step is for social actors to be engaged in productive discussions about the relationship between racism and the justice system. Two recent surveys, each with over 5000 New Zealanders responding, found the majority of respondents did not consider incarceration to be a major issue even to a level where mass incarceration was seen as a societal norm. A major theme emerging from this research is an aversion to implicating racism/racist practices, which in turn impedes an understanding of the grossly disproportionate racial disparities among the prison population.

## **Māori sexual and reproductive health rights: Insights from an under-researched area**

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Session 7

Reproduction

Abortion is an under-researched, sensitive and politicised topic, but in the New Zealand context, there is a conspicuous dearth of exploratory research on Indigenous (Māori) perspectives on abortion, despite some indication that Māori seek abortion services. International research that attends to the socio-cultural context of abortion evidences a fascinating variability of perspectives and attitudes about abortion, with some commonalities and patterns of resistance. In this presentation I draw from an Indigenous feminist (Mana Wāhine) interview study with 43 participants (26 women, 17 men), to describe patterning and variability of Māori perspectives on abortion across three themes - “protection of a new life”, “woman’s individual choice”, and “extended family investment and support”. Strategies for supporting Māori women through the intersections of western and Māori knowledge bases are described, along with implications for Indigenous feminist research.

## **Sexuality as simulacra: Offering an alternative to the 'I am vs we want' debate in leftist communities**

Karl Leisky

Session 2

University of Otago

Interdisciplinary Approaches

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This paper looks at the issue of sexuality and identity, contextualized within the debates in leftist communities between individualism and identification vs radical change. The first concern this paper examines is de-radicalisation; in which potentially radical politics are assimilated into neoliberalism or otherwise stripped of their potential for radical change. De-radicalisation is often enacted through individualism and thus identification. However, those who fall outside the hierarchised and maintained norm often rely on this identification for survival. These two 'sides' are examined in relation to each other to highlight the assumptions and dangers implicit in each; with the explicit goal of figuring out a way to talk about sexuality without locating it *within* the self, yet takes into account those already othered. Deleuze's concept of the simulacra is introduced, using his model to map the possibility of looking at specific instances of sexualities without constructing a wider notion of sexuality.



## **The infrastructural turn: What is it and why is it happening now?**

Steve Matthewman

Session 3

University of Auckland

Neoliberal Infrastructures

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Not so long ago infrastructures were referred to as the “unremarked basis of modernity itself” (Edwards, 2003). Now we are witnessing a “turn to infrastructure” (Amin, 2014) in scholarship across a range of disciplinary domains. Radical scholars see infrastructure-building projects as the means to secure a world in common, while political elites see them as the means to make their countries great again. This presentation surveys emergent literatures to see how they make sense of infrastructures: What are they and what do they do? And why the sudden spike in interest in them now? The talk will also outline the beginnings of a three year research project which focuses on one energy infrastructure in one of New Zealand’s cities: electrical power in post-disaster Ōtautahi (Christchurch). Will it mean power to the people or business as usual?

## **Teaching the teachers: A bottom-up approach to building cultural engagement in higher education**

David Mayeda

Session 7

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Schools, Teaching and Culture

In Auckland, New Zealand, indigenous Māori represent 10.7% of the city's population (14.9% for the country); a diverse range of Pacific people represent 14.6% of the Auckland population (7.4% for the country). At the University of Auckland, Māori and Pacific students comprise 7.0% and 8.9% of the student body respectively, with proportions dropping as education level rises. The University has responded to the under-representation of Māori and Pacific students by implementing a range of important equity measures that assist under-represented groups in admissions processes and through bolstered academic support following admission. Unfortunately, University-wide efforts aiming to train academic staff pedagogically in ways that enhance engagement with under-represented students are less prevalent. This presentation will outline an effort made by academic and professional staff to develop and advocate for training modules focused on cultural engagement for academic staff. Six modules were conceptualized, addressing (1) te ao Māori (the Māori world), (2) Pacific student engagement, (3) Auckland's increasing diversity, (4) the University's existing equity measures, (5) incorporation of equity principles into teaching curricula, and (6) incorporation of equity principles into research. The presentation will also cover how these modules were proposed to leadership within the University, demonstrating a bottom-up push for equity-based responsibility. Presentation attendees should be able to identify ways they may begin similar campaigns in their respective institutions.

## **What to resist, neoliberalism or capitalism?**

Naoise McDonagh

Session 8

University of Auckland

Neoliberalism and Class and Resistance

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In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, the biggest economic crisis since 1929, there was surprisingly little debate about the viability of capitalism. Instead, a major debate emerged on the end of neoliberalism, an institutional form of capitalism. Many participants in this debate reject neoliberalism but not capitalism itself, and imagined a new, more human form of the latter ought to follow. This paper argues that such a position is premised on a flawed understanding of neoliberalism's relationship to capitalism. Neoliberalism is not just another institutional form of capitalism, one that can be discarded and replaced when it fails. Neoliberalism is *the* institutional form of capitalism. In seeking political-economic governance through the extension of market relationships, neoliberalism is a socio-political movement mirroring capital's socio-economic task of the very same nature. Consequently, resistance to neoliberalism cannot sit alongside acceptance of capitalism.

## **Social policy and social reproduction in 1980s and 1990s New Zealand**

Anna McMartin

Session 3

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Gender and Social Policy

New Zealand's reforms in the 1980s and 1980s brought sweeping social and economic changes. These changes impacted on social reproduction, particularly the material and other resources available for families raising children. The neoliberal state relegated childrearing to the private domain of the family, but at the same time, paradoxically took a more authoritarian interest in the social reproduction of 'dysfunctional' families. The paper discusses this unresolved tension in New Zealand social policy.

## **International migration and mobility of migrant workers into global cities: a case of Gauteng province in South Africa**

Khumalo Mthandazo

Session 5

School of Public Policy and Management

Becoming and Being a Migrant

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Migration has become a global phenomenon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century dispensation. This research study aims at examining the migration and mobility of migrant workers to major global cities of Africa. The huge influx of migrants' workers to Gauteng province in South Africa has motivated me to conduct a study of this nature. This research study focuses on how migrant workers migrate, the channels which they use to migrate and also jobs and activities they engage in, in these global cities. This study also aims at unravelling the constraints that migrants' workers face from the onset; they decide to migrate to these global cities. Reasons that force the migrant workers to move to these global cities will also be amalgamated into the research. Social network theory and transnationalism are used for data analysis. As part of the qualitative approach, secondary data as well as interviews are utilised as data collection tools.

## **From 'Sufrajitsu' to Wāhine Toa: a herstory of feminist self-defence in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

Bell Murphy

Session 2

University of Otago

Gender, Bodies, Empowerment

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This paper traces a herstory of feminist self-defence in Aotearoa/New Zealand. From the Florence “Flossie” Le Mar, a ‘sufrajitsu’ pioneer and the first person to teach women’s self-defence in New Zealand in 1911, to the resurgence and proliferation of self-defence programmes run by and for women in the 1970’s and 1980’s (such as Sue Lytollis, Positive Action, Whakamaru Tinana and the Women’s Self Defence Network — Wāhine Toa—which is still going strong in 2017). The paper also considers more recent initiatives emerging from the queer community such as Trans Fight Club and Lip Smackers in Wellington. Based on interviews with feminist self-defence teachers as well as extant literature I explore what informs a feminist/mana wāhine, approach to self-defence teaching in Aotearoa/New Zealand today.

## **The True Believer: Understanding resistance to community water fluoridation (CWF) through the lens of Eric Hoffer**

Luke Oldfield

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Session 2

Social Theory

Hoffer said that individuals who believe that their view of a particular concept is correct, no matter what evidence exists to the contrary, can be classified as 'True Believers'. Examples of True Believers in dentistry include those that support the belief that dental amalgam restorations and fluoride pose a major health threat to dental patients. Who is responsible for the emergence of True Believers? Scientific realists place the blame squarely at the feet of Postmodern thinkers, however, such criticisms ignore the fact that opposition to community water fluoridation existed long before their rise to prominence. So what other aspects of contemporary society have emboldened so many to rally against what is otherwise a fairly innocuous, safe and effective public health measure?

## **Super decentralise me: Can correctional facilities in Aotearoa / New Zealand be managed under the auspices of local communities?**

Luke Oldfield

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Session 4

Alternative Approaches to Justice

Former New Zealand Finance Minister Bill English stated that prisons represented the ‘moral and fiscal failure’ of society. Despite such comments, the 5th National Government has subsequently needed to outlay considerable expenditure as a means to increase capacity among the country’s network of prisons. ‘Better Public Services’ with its focus on ‘reducing reoffending’ was the most recent neoliberal iteration of state sector performance measurement, but since its inception New Zealand’s rates of incarceration have climbed to some of the highest levels in the developed world. With the current system failing to meet its rehabilitation targets, and costs ballooning, is it time the country reexamined the centralisation of prison management in a bid make local communities more accountable?



## **Après Nous Le Déluge: The convergence of capitalism, climate change, and water among inuit and Pasifika communities**

Chris Owens

Session 1

University of Auckland

Governance, Power & Environmental Justice

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Climate change is having a disproportionate effect on marginalised groups. Although Inuit and Pasifika communities are among the least responsible for climate change, they are enduring the worst effects of the crisis, primarily due to the existential nature of the threat posed upon them. While water is crucial in sustaining their respective communities, it paradoxically threatens their lives through the manifestation of sea level rise, melting ice, and a host of other water-related phenomena. This paper examines the legacy of capitalism, colonialism and climate change as it is centred upon Canadian Inuit and Pasifika experiences with particular attention focused on the role of water. Drawing on policy statements from stakeholder groups and indigenous philosophy, the aim of this paper is to explore solutions to the emergent crisis by calling for an ontological shift in respect to the relationship between humanity and nature.

## **Leisure as benefits and barriers in later life: A qualitative study in residential care centres**

Myunik Panthi

Session 1

University of Otago

Sociology of Health

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Engagement in leisure activities is important as older adults lose social and family ties after moving into care facilities. This increases the risk of loneliness, boredom and depression. This research aims to explore the benefits of and barriers to leisure participation from both residents' and staff perspective through a qualitative approach. The data collection methods included face-to-face interview with 24 residents and 10 professionals as key informants in different care facilities. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This presentation outlines the best practices by highlighting the benefits of and barriers to participation. Furthermore, it also emphasizes the importance of families, social ties and companionship as more important than the scheduled leisure activities in the facility. This research will provide new insights to policy makers, staff and managers of residential care facilities in developing residents' friendly leisure opportunities to increase their participation.

## **Murky Waters**

Charlotte Parallel and Aroha Novak and Tao Wells  
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Session 3  
Art & Activism 3

In a casual conversation about the influence of main stream media on our recent election and the techno-industrial system that abstracts the living world as a resource, we joked that we all have to be activists! With this in mind we have organised *Murky Waters*, an on-site installation on Saturday 9 December 2017 between 12 and 4 pm and invited artists who work in politically engaged multi-disciplinary fields to respond to our *karanga* presenting works at empty lot, 175 Rattray Street, Ōtepoti Dunedin, beside the now concealed underground Toitū stream. Artists involved are: Ruth Evans, Fantasising, Fresh and Fruity, L\$D Fundraiser, Rosie Overell, Tigermurdoch, and Tao Wells. For *Art and Activism*, Wells talks about his upcoming mega publication due this December, published by the Govett-Brewster Len Lye Contemporary Art Gallery. Wells will also update with notes from his latest PR campaign, around University public visibility and democratic transparency; "as great as his 2010 Beneficiary's office;, which critiqued the idea of work, - says Tao.

*Murky Waters* is an extension of AWA HQ, a collaborative project directed by the history, condition and relationships of the Toitū stream.

## **"If you sleep with the devil you become like him": the collision of state logics and practice logics in service provision for COPMIA**

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Session 6

Neoliberalism, Social Service Provision

The adage “if you sleep with the devil you become like him” may be applied to the organisational hybridisation of the third sector in Aotearoa New Zealand due to partnering with the state for funding. In this presentation, it is argued that as organisational hybridity deepens, NGOs increasingly move away from community values which meet diverse client needs and support social work ‘best practice’ towards state values which meet the needs of whichever government is in power.

The presentation presents findings from a research project that examined service user perspectives of an NGO in Christchurch, New Zealand. The Caroline Reid Family Support Service (CRFSS) is a consumer-initiated service for children, adolescents and their families adversely impacted by parental mental illness. Data was gathered via ten child/youth interviews, four age-differentiated child/youth focus groups, and 32 mixed method adult surveys.

Congruency was found between participant preference for socio-ecologically informed, resilience-focused practice and the literature for this client group. However, state logics governing secure contracting arrangements for this type of service were found to resist and prevent this. Utilising the Walker and Shannon ‘Strategic Model’ (Walker & Shannon, 2011), strategies are suggested for resisting the state and creating more even power relationships to better meet client needs and support social work ‘best practice’.

## Font error – A discussion of graphic design and resistance

Leigh Paterson

Session 1

Otago Polytechnic

Arts & Activism 1

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Subvertising is a graphic strategy used to create unauthorised adaptations of corporate advertising to comment on social, political and economic conditions. Activist Saul Alinsky proposes that part of the function of such forms of resistance allows “utilizing one part of the power structure against another part...”<sup>2</sup> The graphic design of subvertising and culture jamming at large as forms of activism will be critically explored – particularly the graphic adaptation and experimentation relative to the practise of communication design that is outside of commercial control. Notable examples such as Fonterror, Kraps and McShit will be used to consider the nature and intent of the borrowing and adaptation of visual culture which challenges copyright and conflates alternative nodes of agency as acts of conscious raising and graphic confusion.



**Figure 1: Paterson, L. “Kraps”, Digital Vectors, 2015**

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<sup>2</sup> Alinsky, Saul David. *Rules for radicals: a practical primer for realistic radicals*. New York, Vintage Books, 1972.

## **Affirming the sexual and reproductive health needs of our trans and gender diverse communities**

Louise Pearman-Beres

Session 4

Family Planning

Gender and Research

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This paper will outline the preliminary findings of the Trans Responsiveness Project, currently underway at Family Planning. The initial research for the project interviewed 20 trans and gender diverse people about their experiences of sexual and reproductive health; including sexuality education, clinical visits, access to affirming information about sexual and reproductive health. This research informed the Trans Responsiveness Project where Family Planning actively upskilled all staff in sexual and reproductive health care for trans and gender diverse clients. The aim of this paper is to illustrate how research can make change organisationally and support the rights of our trans and gender diverse communities.

## **Trouble in paradise? Conflicts and contradictions of platform capitalism in regional tourist-towns in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Stella Pennell

Session 1

Massey University

Social Theory

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Platform capitalism represents a new iteration of capitalism effected through digital platforms. Typical of the ventures associated with platform capitalism is the accommodation service, Airbnb, in which residents commodify their private spaces as short-term tourist accommodation. The commodification of people and of private spaces results in shifts of subjectivity in which individuals become both merchandise and marketing agents in spaces previously reserved for social reproduction. Since its inception in 2008, Airbnb has become the largest accommodation provider in the world with over three million listings. In New Zealand Airbnb has surpassed 20,000 listings in a two year period. In this paper I explore the phenomenon of Airbnb and its impacts on individuals and communities across four tourist towns in New Zealand (Picton, Wanaka, Paihia and Whitianga). This paper considers how the current contradictions of capital manifest as locally situated phenomena through the platform capitalist mechanism of Airbnb.

## **The inverse response law: Documenting institutional failure in the aftermath of disaster**

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Session 4  
Policy

The inverse care law refers to the idea that people who require the most care actually receive the least and to a lesser standard (Tudor Hart, 1971). The inverse care law is principally concerned with the effect of market forces on health care which create inequities in access to health services through disadvantaging certain groups and advantaging others. In the area of disasters consideration needs to be given to the way in which inequities, driven by economic and social policy as well as institutional decision-making, create vulnerabilities prior to a disaster which are then magnified post disaster through systematic differences in access to resources. In a market model of recovery, vulnerable groups lack the power to compete for necessary services creating inequities in adaptive capacity as well as in outcomes over time. Both the inverse care law and the inverse response law focus on the structural organisation of services at a macro level. Drawing upon the key principles within the inverse care law, this paper proposes an inverse response law that relates to access to resources in the aftermath of a disaster. The inverse care law is explained and recent disasters, both in New Zealand and internationally, are examined in order to illustrate themes at work relating to the inverse response law.



## **Explaining the 2011 English Riots – Where were the politics?**

Deborah Platts-Fowler

Session 5

Victoria University of Wellington

Crime, Social Justice & Inequality

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Debate continues over the nature of the 2011 English Riots. Some commentators focus on the looting, arguing that rioters were not protesting, but merely consuming. Others more optimistically interpret the riots as an ‘incremental politics’. This paper reports on a study of events in two cities before and during the unrest. In one, there was virtually no looting, but five police stations were attacked. This may not have been the assault on global capitalism that some wished for, but it was political. It was an attempt to re-negotiate local power relations, linked to a history of unfair treatment. In the second city, rioting was averted due to better local relationships between police, other local agencies and communities. The study highlights the role of local politics in explaining where riots occur. They determined the extent to which communities could informally control their marginalised and angry young men.

## **Affective methodologies as a tool for the study of masculinity**

Ricardo Quirarte

Session 4

Victoria University of Wellington

Gender and Research

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The study of masculinity has to be, in itself, a critical process that questions the current power relations and the ways of representing and maintaining the sex-gender system. Research on masculinity should show the breaking points of masculinity, as well as the possibilities for its transformation/abolition. That is why the methodology used in this type of research has to be aligned with the interest of a critical sociology. Affective methodologies are a response to the postulates of an objective, positivist science, which is the product of a masculine thought that privileges reason, control and verticalization of knowledge. Affective methodologies put emotions in the centre, as a starting point for the production of knowledge and collaborative work. In my research, this was reflected in two ways: through the selection of the main topics for discussion (affect, sexuality, desire), and through the elusive relationship between participants and researcher.

## **Good refugee, bad migrant: Evolving constructions of the newcomer**

Sahanika Ratnayake and Pasan Jayasinghe

Session 4

Australian National University

Migrants and Refugees

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This paper examines the construction of the categories of 'refugee' and 'migrant' within contemporary New Zealand political discourse. It traces how these categories have been constructed by mainstream political parties from the easing of immigration restrictions in the late 1980s through the ensuing immigration boom in the 1990s and early 2000s to the present day, with a particular focus on the recent General Election campaign.

Through this, we find the figure of the 'migrant' turning from positive to undesirable as their economic worth to society has increasingly come to be framed as a burden instead. Conversely, the 'refugee' has evolved from positive to actively desired as refugee numbers have escalated globally amid a static national refugee quota. We argue that these dual, and in many ways contradictory, constructions reveal a complex development of political xenophobia in the country.

## **From a material of grief to an out loud statement: The New Zealand AIDS memorial quilt**

Claire Regnault

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Session 2

Art & Activism 2

In 1988 New Zealander Daniel Fielding created a memorial quilt for his partner Peter Cuthbert, who passed away from HIV/AIDS related causes. It became the founding panel of the New Zealand AIDS Memorial Quilt. Made by gatherings of friends, lovers, families, and strangers who simply cared, the Quilt came to memorialise the lives of over 270 New Zealanders.

Through the act of memorialisation, the organisers of the AIDS Memorial Quilt project aimed to bring the AIDS crisis to public attention – to stitch a panel was a form of both private and public social activism. By 1991, a Dunedin-based journalist observed that the quilt had become ‘one of the nation’s most valuable resources for promoting a compassionate and educational dialogue about AIDS’.

In this paper I will explore the American origins of the AIDS Memorial Quilt project, the strategic employment of a non-threatening symbol (the quilt) at its heart, and New Zealand’s successful adoption of the project.

## **Here I am: Trans people in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Hannah Rossiter

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Session 4

Gender and Research

For the first time since the last time, Here I Am is the first survey into the lives of trans people in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in thirty years. This groundbreaking survey will discuss the experiences of 101 survey respondents interact with the healthcare system, being employed and accessing public toilets. Thus, drawing on surveys from the United States and the United Kingdom, this survey shows that transgender respondents in Aotearoa/New Zealand, have experienced discrimination, their lives are significantly better than survey respondents outside of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## **The media: Representing gender stereotypes, or speaking the truth?**

Ashleigh Rushton (gender stream)

Session 7

Massey University

Sexuality and Technologies

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Gender has been extensively researched within the disaster and development paradigm. Key themes have emerged in relation to women, such as vulnerability, victimhood and helplessness. Therefore it has become the accepted norm to describe women as such within both academia and the media. Using the case study of Sri Lanka post-tsunami, a discourse analysis was conducted of English language media as well as the academic literature, in order to demonstrate how women are represented following a disaster. In order to develop an understanding of whether post-disaster representations of Sri Lankan women in the literature and media were accurate qualitative interviews were conducted with women in Sri Lanka.

The research supports the notion of the subaltern other as it identifies how the “third world subject is represented within western discourse” (Spivak, 1988; 271). Consequently, the research briefly investigated how the discourse used in describing women has and can influence decision making regarding gender in the disaster space.

## **Love Helping Hate: On abuse, and misplaced sympathy for entitlement**

Anne Russell

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Session 3

Utopia and Contestation

Whenever marginalised people begin openly protesting oppression, centrist commentators often denounce methods of confrontation they deem too aggressive—blockades, occupations, public callouts, or simply being too angry at their oppressors—and call for a more peaceful approach (often dismissing or ignoring previous attempts at this). In the Trump era, this has taken form in the slogan “Love Trumps Hate”; the implication being that oppressors hurt others only because they are suffering, and that if we soothe their pain they will recognise oppressed people as human beings. This strategy is applied everywhere from small communities that coddle intimate abusers to broad-scale condemnations of self-defence against white supremacist movements and capitalism in general. Drawing on work by Wendy T. Behary and Lundy Bancroft, I argue that this approach ignores the fundamental role that entitlement plays in abuse, and thus is both unsuccessful and harmful. I then propose a political form of love that incorporates fierce resistance against oppression.

## **The Making of Economic Policy: What difference does a productivity commission make?**

Edwin Sayes

Nazarbayev University

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Session 4

Policy

How is economic policy made? What counts as evidence in the context of economic policy? How important is economics as a discipline in the making of economic policy? What role might sociology have in the making of economic policy? This paper presents an initial set of responses to these questions. In particular, it reports findings from a case study: the New Zealand Productivity Commission (*Te Komihana Whai Hua o Aotearoa*). This case study focuses on public sector research related to economic productivity, policy proposals related to productivity, and formalised policies related to productivity. This research was undertaken with the cooperation of the New Zealand Productivity Commission and utilises qualitative methods (including interviews with policy analysts and researchers within the Productivity Commission and the wider New Zealand public sector, as well as the analysis of key documents).



## **Reimagining 'recovery' from mental illness and addiction: An analysis of the talk of child protection social workers and of parents**

Anne Scott, Don Quick and Kelly Pope

Session 4

University of Canterbury

Child Protection

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Aotearoa New Zealand was a leader in the 'recovery' movement, in which self-determination, human rights and the living of a hopeful life replaced simple symptom management for people living with mental illnesses and addictions. To what degree has this reimagined path to recovery shaped social work practice? In this paper we analyse the talk of 11 social workers doing child protection work, as well as thirteen parents living with mental illness or addictions who have been involved in child custody investigations. We ask whether they understand recovery as possible for such parents, and if so, how they see it occurring. We consider the structural context of child protection social work practice; how does it undergird or undermine the 'recovery' perspective as developed by the mental health consumers' movement in Aotearoa and overseas?

## **(Un)Healthy? Negotiating 'Health' While Fat**

Aimee B. Simpson

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Session 1

Sociology of Health

The current global preoccupation with obesity as both a public and personal issue, has made it difficult to have 'health' as a fat person. In framing fatness as a disease manifested through poor lifestyle choices, meaningful conversations about health – as a status, goal, or concern – are often shut down or reduced to the topic of weight loss. This presentation will summarise initial findings from interviews conducted with self-identifying fat people in Auckland as part of ongoing doctoral research. Particular focus will be given to how interviewees experience health, the meanings they ascribe to their own health, and how these narratives may inform critical scholarship on health.

## **Refugees welcome here: Critiquing the double the quota campaign**

Natalie Slade

Session 4

Massey University

Migrants and Refugees

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The recent media campaign to double New Zealand's refugee quota called on the government to show a stronger, more empathetic and welcoming response in light of the global refugee crisis. Although altruistic in intention, these discourses of hospitality risk encouraging a regime of compassion and charity that speaks more about ourselves as humanitarian actors, while rendering refugees 'speechless'. Refugees thus become the objects of 'our' moral responsibility, passive victims whose voices are silenced and marginalised by the very act of solidarity and protest that is performed on their behalf. Drawing on media analysis and interviews with people involved with the campaign to double the quota, this presentation reflects on the relationship between discourses of hospitality and the politics of representation, and what these discourses may say about western responses to humanitarian crises.

## ***Sex toys and sexual subjectivity***

Janelle Smith

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Session 7

Sexuality and Technologies

What do sex toys mean to the women who use them? What kind of values are attributed to them by the women and companies who sell them at in-home sex toy parties? Due to the sorely unresearched nature of women's sexual pleasure (Fahs and Swank, 2013) my masters research aims to investigate women's sexual subjectivity in relation to sex toys and sex toy parties and will attempt to answer these questions. Deploying analysis of personal experience, combined with ethnographic participation-observation and in-depth interviews that explore women's sexual experiences as mediated through technology, will be examined at the subjective-narrative level. The parameters of sexual subjectivity I aim to investigate ranges from the marketing and gender performance occurring at the parties through to its enactment 'in the bedroom'. Through the lens of sexual scripts, performativity and human-technology interactions my thesis will explore what impact sex toys and sex toy parties have on the reflective / reflexive narratives of women's sexual subjectivities, and why this matters for the wider socio-political issues of women's sexual pleasure, fulfilment, and liberation.

## **iD Dunedin fashion week, Dunedin style and the craftivism agenda**

Natalie Smith

Session 2

University of Otago

Art & Activism 2

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Craftivism has gathered momentum since the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh on 24 April 2013, and the death of 1,133 workers. The plaza housed five garment factories which manufactured clothing for the Western market, in the aftermath of the buildings collapse the global Fashion Revolution was born. This paper explores Craftivism within the context of iD Dunedin Fashion Week and the tensions which exist between events which promote crafting as a localized form of resistance, linked to the global fashion revolution, and which encourage a socially responsible citizen through a “make do and mend” philosophy; and crafting as commodified rebellion (Morris 2016), a form of cultural capital harnessed to connote socially responsible consumption.

## **Analysing visual culture on social media: Why an ideology critique is the necessary step forward**

Janaki Somaiya

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Session 5

Social Media

The current methodologies used to analyse social media often conflate visual culture today with a sense of freedom from ideological representations imposed from above, as opposed to earlier media technologies. Moreover, there has been a tendency for more surface reading of visual culture and a concerted effort towards a depoliticized understanding of social media, disavowing how it partakes in the drives of capitalism. I argue that despite all the ‘freedoms’ that users of social media enjoy, the basic premise of ideology is that it does not work through coercion but through representation, in how subjects recognize themselves in these representations in the form of images. Capitalism’s need for superstructural justification for the way things are, is to be identified in language, in the textual and visual discourses that are normalized. And to that extent, this paper will argue how there is a need to delineate the ideological demeanours that mediate visibility on social media. The contention here is that an omission of ideology critique in visual culture is a denial of the real subsumption of culture and subjectivity within late capitalism. Any radical political, economic, cultural transformation therefore must begin with not just an acknowledgement of this real subsumption but must simultaneously follow up with a radical way out of it.

## **The debrief: feminist solidarity in rape resistance education**

Kayla Stewart, LK Ross and Bell Murphy

Session 2

University of Otago

Gender, Bodies, Empowerment

EAAA (Enhanced Assess Acknowledge Act) is a women's sexual violence resistance education programme developed in Canada by Charlene Senn and piloted in NZ at halls of residence at the University of Otago. It involves two female peer facilitators who deliver scripted information and foster group dialogue, by way of activities and interactive media rooted in an emancipatory pedagogy. As sexual violence researchers and peer facilitators of the program, we have become aware of the prevalence of the discourse of self-care as it pertains to working in this difficult field. We are attuned to a gap in the discourse with regard to caring-for-each-other. A core part of our facilitation strategy has involved mutual support between facilitators, and has directed our attention to the possibility for solidarity in the shared experience of facilitation. Further, this has opened inquiry into praxis regarding caring-for-each-other as academics involved in difficult and intimate areas of research, whether or not one has personal experience of the subject matter. This presentation aims to discuss the theoretical basis of caring-for-each-other and mutual emotional labor in this context.

## **China's investments in Africa: A partnership or a new colonialism? A case study on a Chinese water factory in Cameroon**

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Session 2

Social Theory

Africa, after decades of western colonial ruling, is now welcoming Chinese investments. In exchange for the access to the natural resources, the Chinese authority offers development assistance to many African countries, which means that the western powers have ceased to be the only option to African countries when it comes to aid and development. Critics of Chinese policies in Africa argue that China is advantaging its own country at the expense of African people and believe that China seeks to establish itself as a new colonial power. However, is this really the case? I conducted a two-month research in a Chinese water factory in Douala, a major city in Cameroon, in the summer of 2012, during which I had the opportunity to interview Chinese management team and laborers in the factory, Cameroonian workers in the factory, receivers of the water, and Cameroonian governmental officials related to the water project. The project was based on Chinese preferential loan. The first phase of the factory, which is also the part I have studied, was completed successfully at the beginning of 2012. Though the water factory is only a tiny piece of Chinese investments in Africa, my findings demonstrate that Chinese investments in Africa are not just a new colonialism as claimed by some literatures, but an exploration of a new form of partnership between China and African countries. The aim of the partnership is for mutual developments and mutual benefits, which will pave the path for a long-term cooperation between among themselves.



## **The non-voter, social movements, and the party**

Dylan Taylor

Victoria University of Wellington

Session 3

Utopia and Contestation

This is a speculative paper exploring how a politics of emancipation might account for the figure(s) of the non-voter in liberal democracies, the actions of social movements, and the possibilities of a rejuvenated party-form. Through questioning existing literature on the non-voter, it will be asked what type of emancipatory politics might be informed by, and able to work with, the persistent (and growing) presence of non-voters in liberal democracies. In looking for answers I draw upon and extend my previous thinking of social movements and their possible relations to the party. An emancipatory politics of the twenty-first century requires a bold re-imagining of what politics can offer, it needs a utopian horizon; but it also requires a concrete assessment of the current situation as a point of departure.

## Malaysian national school uniforms and social cohesion

Jeffery Thiry and Brendon Tagg

Session 7

Monash University, Malaysia

Schools, Teaching and Culture

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Students across government schools in Malaysia wear similar uniforms, although for example Malay girls usually wear *abaju kurung* and non-Malay girls often wear a pinafore. Six Malaysian school counsellors discussed these uniforms in terms of the government's attempts at "Enculturating the spirit of 1Malaysia to foster social cohesion and national unity" (Eleventh Malaysia Plan, 2016, pp. 4-21). Most participants valued the uniforms' apparent disciplinary functions but also acknowledged that with students' growing resistance the uniforms can also *create* issues. In line with the collectivist ideals of unity and sameness, permitted variations are typically those imposed from above (e.g. for religious identity) rather than those chosen for individual reasons (e.g. for individual identity). The asymmetry as to the acceptability of cross-cultural variability may further reinforce perceptions of cultural difference and social injustice.

## On being Pākehā in a time of constitutional transformation

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Session 5

Colonialism

A text from which Pākehā might gain guidance in this situation of Māori-initiated constitutional transformation (Matike Mai Aotearoa 2016) is Franz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. Two features of that book suggest itself for this role. The first is the polite indifference Fanon exhibits to the inheritors of colonial privilege: the text is not written for them. The second feature is the wrestling with that fact by Jean-Paul Sartre in his Preface to the book. Sartre's writing foregrounds the difficult question as to what it might mean for the European to respond to such a text, given its portentous implications for colonisation. As for Matike Mai, it imagines the displacement of socio-political norms associated with New Zealand's secular colonial capitalism. Sartre's approach to the underlying structure of Fanon's book demonstrates points of knotting around which left-liberal responses to such projects may become stuck: identification with a 'critical' stance in the anticipation that the position encapsulates the lived relations in whose service the critique would seemingly function ('commodity-fetishism') and; identification with an idea as if its content corresponds with the set of social relations of which it speaks ('categorical fetishism') – see Kordela (2007). The colonial capitalism in which this situation unfolds suggests a small set of means by which the unravelling of these knots might be attempted from positions within itself.

## **To vote or not to vote? Understanding young New Zealanders' attitudes towards politics**

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Session 2

Politics and Society

Much of the literature on youth political engagement tells a story we have heard many times before – young people are less likely to vote. This worry is reserved not only to scholars but shared by a concerned public, who point to an apathetic young population that does not care about politics. It does not help that young people are increasingly demonised as disinterested or indeed lazy by the media. Using results from interviews conducted for my own Masters research, this paper critiques a few important ideas that scholars sometimes take for granted. Most importantly, putting a piece of paper into a box every few years is not the only way to think about politics. A growing field of research into non-electoral political participation is central to this rethinking. So how do we get more young people engaged, in a time when they feel politics does not respond to their needs?

## **Coercion as an emerging strategy in the prevention of maltreatment and associated infant and child fatalities**

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Session 4

Child Protection

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 utilising a legislative mechanism called a presumption of harm against 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. The use of a presumption of harm is unprecedented in contemporary child protection law in New Zealand and as such, represents a research gap for vulnerable families who are targeted by section 18A and its associated presumption of harm. This paper identifies the challenges relating to the drafting of the presumption, its interpretation and the implementation of section 18A in practice.

## **Teaching trainee health professionals about providing healthcare for transgender people: A panel discussion with community members, support providers, researchers and teaching staff**

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### Contributors

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4. Cassie Withey-Rila, independent community educator & Master of Public Health student, Dunedin
5. Hahna Briggs, Queer\* Support coordinator, Otago University Students' Association, Dunedin
6. Louise Pearman-Beres, Family Planning, Dunedin
7. Charlene Rapsey, Department of Psychological Medicine, University of Otago, Dunedin
8. Alfie Gamble Blakey, Bioethics Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin
9. Gareth Treharne, Department of Psychology, University of Otago, Dunedin

This panel discussion will outline an emerging programme of participatory action research into the involvement of transgender community members in the training of health professionals at the University of Otago. The aim of this educational approach is to address the acknowledged lack of education about providing healthcare for transgender people. Transgender community members will outline the role they play as co-educators and co-researchers and will discuss the value of drawing on personal narratives and making a contribution to education that has the potential to shape healthcare for transgender people in the future. Support providers will outline initiatives being undertaken to

improve healthcare and support for transgender people in the present. Researchers and teaching staff will outline their role in creating opportunities for community co-educators and researching the pedagogical processes of teaching about values. We will welcome input from audience members about theoretical and applied issues relating to gender and education.

## **Re-imagining social work critique: The use of positive critique to examine school social work practice in the aftermath of the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes**

Raewyn Tudor

Session 5

Ara Institute of Canterbury

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The traditional approach to critique is focused on the structural processes and societal inequities that perpetuate the personal concerns and social issues social workers routinely deal with in their practice. As a negative form of critique, this critical social work stance has been challenged for its overly negative view of power and for advocating for social workers to eliminate injustice, conditions within which they themselves are located. In contrast, positive critique recognises power relations in terms of their productivity, engendering a focus on the appeal of discourses, practices and techniques. In this presentation I outline some findings from an inquiry in which positive critique was used to examine social work practice in Christchurch schools in the aftermath of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. The findings make visible how school social workers' preferences for relational practice are embedded *within* the productive, vitalising, political objectives prioritised within the earthquake recovery context.



## **From homophobia to heteronormativity: A 'queer' approach to New Zealand Sport Organizations**

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Session 6

Queer Sexualities

The first international study into homophobia in sport, *Out on the Fields* (2015), revealed that 78% of New Zealanders have witnessed or experienced homophobic episodes within sporting settings, whilst most LGB youth are likely to keep their sexuality concealed. These findings raise sensible questions in terms of whether, how and why sport organizations address sexual orientation. From a sport management perspective, sexuality has received little academic attention; most of the efforts focusing on the (debated) benefits that a diversity of 'sexual identities' may bring to an organization, thus disregarding the role of power and heterosexuality as the norm. Adopting a Critical Theory lens and building upon the premises of Poststructural Feminism and Queer Theory, the proposed study aims to move beyond demographic identity constructs to interrogate, rather than presume, their differences. In particular, it explores how heteronormativity is (re)produced within New Zealand's sporting system, for whose benefit, and with what consequences.

## **Strategic invisibilization and hypervisibility among Tohoku marriage migrant women**

Shinya Uekusa & Sunhee Lee

Session 6

University of Auckland

Migration and Marriage

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This paper draws upon qualitative interview data to explore the everyday experiences of marriage migrant women in Tohoku, Japan – particularly in the disaster-affected Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures. It discusses the issues that they faced in the 2011 Tohoku disasters. What is it like to live in rural farming and fishing communities as marriage migrant women? The main objective of this paper is to understand their diverse experiences through their personal stories with a reference to their visibility: do they blend in and accept the host culture (and a subordinated position within it)? Or do they stand out by being different? What are their prospects for ‘passing’? This is investigated to understand the complexity of perceived vulnerability and resilience of these women in their domestic realms within Tohoku rural communities.

## **Producing Pesticide Ignorance to Create an Acquiescence to Toxicity: The Case of New Zealand's Painted Apple Moth Pesticide Spraying Campaign**

Manuel Vallee

Session 1

University of Auckland

Governance, Power & Environmental Justice

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In 2002-2003 the New Zealand government pursued an extensive aerial pesticide spraying campaign over densely-populated regions of West Auckland, in an attempt to eradicate the invasive Painted Apple Moth. This urban pesticide campaign was of unprecedented scope, whether we consider the amount of time it lasted (18 months), acreage that was sprayed (over 11,000 hectares), or number of people exposed (over 193,000). This paper explores factors that contributed to the public's acquiescence to the campaign, with a particular focus on tactics pursued by the New Zealand government. Drawing on an analysis of government pronouncements in state documents and mainstream media, I argue the New Zealand government consistently misrepresented the pesticide as being safe, actively concealed the ingredients sprayed on the citizens, applied the pesticides in a way that departed significantly from the Health Risk Assessment produced for the campaign, and systematically dismissed health complaints emerging from the community. The analysis highlights the important role government ideological work can play in creating acquiescence for urban aerial pesticide spraying campaigns, as well as toxicant use more generally.

**Different pathways to enhancing student eco-literacy**

Manuel Vallee (environmental stream)

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In their seminal work *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*, Schnaiberg and Gould (1999) articulate why society's major institutions are addicted to economic growth and why they accelerate economic expansion, despite the social and environmental disorganization it produces. While they discuss numerous institutions (including family, work, unions, and governments), their discussion of educational institutions is particularly salient. Although it is acknowledged that achieving environmentally just futures will require transforming many, if not all, major institutions, it can be argued university reform will be of greatest importance, for universities are at the epi-center of the problem. Year after year they inculcate the next generations with beliefs, perspectives and practices that perpetuate and even strengthen society's focus on economic growth at the expense of environmental justice, sustainability and resilience. Part of the problem is that few institutions require their students to acquire a sound eco-literacy before graduating. This paper examines exceptions to that rule, focusing on the pathways three different tertiary institutions have pursued to institutionalize environmental literacy as a graduation requirement for all students.

## **Dowry and the “New Indian Woman”: Narratives from young migrant women in Chennai, India**

Josephine Varghese

Session 6

University of Canterbury

Migration and Marriage

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Dowry is considered to be one of the major factors contributing to daughter aversion and bride harassment in India. Recent statistics suggest that a woman dies every hour in the country as a result of dowry-related violence. Notwithstanding the overwhelming statistics and a legal ban that has been in place since 1961, the practice continues unabated, and has spread to regions and communities where it was hitherto non-existent. Scholars argue that among other factors, colonization, and later, post-independence modernization processes like the Green Revolution, economic growth and the rise of consumerism have aided the spread of dowry, also resulting in tremendous inflation in dowry amounts. There is also a general notion that women play a key role in the perpetration of dowry. In this paper I discuss scholarly insights on the reasons for the persistence of the practise in the subcontinent, while it has declined in other parts of the world. More significantly, I present the voices of young women who are at the centre of dowry transactions and yet get neglected from most discussions on dowry. These voices were gathered during my two stage ethnographic research (over 2015 and 2016) in Chennai, India, as part of my doctoral study on experiences of young migrant women living in the city.

## **Technology and Sexual Violence in Singapore**

Laura Vitis

University of Liverpool, Singapore

Session 6

Gender and Justice

Technologically Facilitated Gendered Violence (TFGV) is readily becoming a key site of analysis for criminologists. Within the burgeoning scholarship on TFGV a range of practices including: online sexual harassment, image based sexual abuse and gender based cyberhate have been identified as manifestations of TFGV that extend the continuum of violence against women. However, much of the existing empirical scholarship focused on mapping TFGV has been produced within the US, UK, Canada and Australia and there is limited research on this phenomenon within South East Asia. To address this gap, this paper examines whether and in what ways technology is shaping Singaporean women's experiences of sexual violence/harassment or resistance to violence/harassment. To do so, this paper presents findings from an exploratory research project which examined case summaries, legal session reports and case management notes collated, during 2016, by a Singaporean women's, advocacy and support organisation focused on sexual assault support provision. Rather than examining whether one 'type' of TFV was present in these 2016 cases this paper presents findings on the range of roles technology played within clients' experiences of sexual violence/harassment. Drawing from these cases this paper reflects on technology as both a facilitator of violence and a tool of resistance.

## **Persistent precariousness: hazards, disasters and the insecurely sheltered in New Zealand**

Vicky Walters, JC Galliard & Megan Rickerby

Session 8

Massey University

Homelessness

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The existence and magnitude of those who are insecurely sheltered in New Zealand, including the homeless, has been the subject of much attention of late. Based on field research conducted in New Zealand during 2014-2016, we examine how the insecurely sheltered understand and experience both everyday and large scale natural hazards. The key findings are 1) that their vulnerability to large scale natural hazards is high but they are not considered in Disaster Risk Reduction policy and nor do the insecurely sheltered give significant to these events in comparison to everyday hazards and, 2) that their vulnerability manifests from “persistent precariousness”: an enduring condition where people are forced to live in volatile and unstable life worlds that continue to exist over a sustained period. Persistent precariousness exists across an individual’s life-cycle rather than in a single time and context and is created and sustained through the operation of power, and lack thereof.

## **Farmer suicide and rural wellbeing in New Zealand: What is the media saying and not saying?**

Vicky Walters and Alice McSherry

Session 7

Massey University

Suicide and Assisted Dying

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Farmer suicide in New Zealand has been receiving increased attention by politicians, industry stakeholders and media in recent years. However, to date there has been limited academic and policy attention on the issue. Research in other western country contexts has linked farmer suicide to the concept of wellbeing but the literature in this area is still relatively sparse. Drawing on a thematic content analysis of media reporting on this issue we consider the emergent popular discourses and interventions on farmer suicide in New Zealand through the conceptual lens of rural wellbeing. Highlighting the dominance of individualised mental health discourses and community level interventions, we suggest that future research and policy considerations on farmer suicide in New Zealand would benefit from thinking about farmer suicide through a holistic understanding of rural wellbeing as it is more broadly influenced and shaped by different factors at different scales.



## **Māori and Samoan experiences of youth justice: undertaking international comparative research**

Robert Webb, Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni & Juan Tauri

Session 5

University of Auckland

Crime, Social Justice & Inequality

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Muncie (2006) argues for the engagement of international youth justice studies with both global and localized dimensions of justice. An ongoing area of major concern for Māori and Pasifika communities in Aotearoa NZ is the criminal justice system, and in particular, the system's responses to youth and their whānau/aiga and vice versa. Finding solutions that address the needs and concerns of these ethnic communities is important, as offending statistics continue to indicate that a high proportion of the young people charged in youth court are Māori (56%) and Pasifika peoples (12%) (most of whom are Samoan). This conference presentation outlines the aims of our three-year Marsden research project on international comparisons of Māori and Samoan experiences of youth justice. And, it highlights the theoretical and methodological frameworks it seeks to employ. The overall aim of the presentation is to generate a rich conversation between the researchers and the audience on the project's proposed theoretical and methodological frameworks.

## **Using criminology to save our bees**

Alika Wells

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Session 2

Interdisciplinary Approaches

We are witnessing a potential turning point in the ecological history of our planet. While our society continues to use the environment to preserve itself, corporations, states and citizens alike subscribe to values and social systems that both exonerate any moral obligation we have to the planet and justify our unsustainable lifestyles.

## **Talking about it: A narrative exploration of suicide among Māori**

Suzanne Wereta

Session 7

University of Otago

Suicide and Assisted Dying

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*I'm just numb, I don't even know what is happening, everything is just happening and I'm following and doing things like wtf. I don't think anyone cares but then I know they do, I don't want to cause more shit. I'll just handle it...*

*It's hard...*

*I want to tell my parents but they're already dealing with heaps...*

*Why would he do that to me?*

*It's real hard...*

*God I wonder how long this lasts. It hurts; it hurts so, so much. I don't even know if I can handle this...*

*This sucks ... I just need to get out of here, it's too much...*

*My brother killed himself yesterday. I don't know what to do anymore ...*

*Anon*

Suicide has been, and continues to be, an extremely contentious topic in Aotearoa. Statistics from Aotearoa share a growing and disturbing theme regarding youth suicide in Aotearoa. Our Rangatahi are killing themselves.

This presentation serves to engage an alternate lens to the dominant discourse of suicide prevention in Aotearoa. Drawing on my PhD thesis, I will present narratives from those most impacted by suicide that challenge dominant discourse to consider alternative prevention measures incorporating their voices as a framework of understanding. The uncomfortableness of suicide requires an ideological shift in strategies for prevention; this presentation is one such shift.

## **Artificial intercourse: Human-robot sexual relations**

Suzanne Woodward

Session 7

University of Auckland

Sexuality and Technologies

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Teledildonic innovation is flourishing, eliciting an array of moral, technical and political responses. Popular perceptions of sex-robot technology vary considerably, but certain concerns are also evident: the ethics of human-robot sexual relations, and moral panics about the impact teledildonics will have on our sexual morals, our understanding of intimacy and fidelity, and our sexual attitudes and abilities. For example, are sex robots going to encourage sexual irresponsibility and addiction, or empower the lonely and eliminate sexually transmitted diseases? What is the potential of teledildonics in an imagined future? The utopian version of that future presents advances in cybersexual technology as progressive, while technophobic reactions seem designed to titillate while also fuelling public outrage. Sex robots raise questions about the meaning of sex and love, infidelity and dehumanisation, power and exploitation, but also offer insight into contemporary sexual politics - the objectification of women, the ethics of consent, and default heteronormativity.

## **Assisted dying research in New Zealand**

Jessica Young, Chrystal Jaye, Richard Egan, Tony Eagan & Janine Winters

University of Otago

Session 7

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Suicide and Assisted Dying

Assisted dying is a highly topical and globally significant issue, and is of national interest given the current controversy over legalisation and proposed law changes. My talk will briefly cover the history of assisted dying in New Zealand. I discuss the extant literature and many polls and surveys that have been conducted in this area to date. In doing so, I highlight the gaps in what we know about assisted dying in New Zealand and internationally. I then discuss my PhD research. I am going interview those who are approaching the end of life who would chose an assisted death were it available to them. Lastly, I position my own research theoretically and discuss the methods I will use. The results of my research will shed light on why some New Zealanders with terminal illness want assisted dying; this will further inform societal and political debate.

## **Transcending chaos: The role of personal spiritual experiences in post-earthquake recovery in Canterbury, New Zealand**

Susan Young

Session 3

Lincoln University

Art & Activism 3

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The Christchurch Earthquake Sequence of 2010/11 was an Extreme and Unusual Environment (EUE) which challenged people's recovery. Stress and coping theory suggests that finding meaning in such situations can help people recover, and that religion and spirituality often play a role in post-disaster resilience. Despite this, there is very little research literature examining this phenomenon and even less that considers spirituality separate from religion. This research focuses on this underrepresented area by considering the personal spiritual experiences of people in post-earthquake Canterbury. Interviews eliciting personal narratives are analyzed for understanding of the individual's meaning construction and coping/recovery process, and identifying connective themes and patterns amongst the narratives. This research contributes to recognition of spirituality in coping with challenging life situations and also creates discussion of the spiritual domain, especially for secular New Zealanders. Finally, it may provide insight into ways that individuals, communities, and organizations can respond to such disasters.