

U-RED20 PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY
5TH JUNE 2020

Session 1: Crime, Victims and Criminals

Chair: *Dr. Lauren Bradford*

Helen Snow

Criminals or Victims?: Redefining the truth surrounding homelessness and crime

Within modern society, homelessness is an increasingly prominent issue. Homeless individuals are commonly stereotyped and belittled, as well as thought of as criminals and deserving of their situations. Although a certain number of homeless individuals may commit criminal acts, this is not the case for all homeless individuals and a focus on shifting from this narrative should be imposed. This dissertation will focus on the extent to which homeless individuals are victimised, and this shall be achieved using qualitative methods in the form of semi-structured interviews with five individuals working for homeless organisations. As well as focusing on the extent of the victimisation, the type of victimisation is also examined within this research, as well as analysing whether there are specific groups of homeless people most vulnerable and exploring why this is the case. By linking these variables, this dissertation found that homeless individuals are frequently victimised. It was found that there were certain individuals within the homeless community most vulnerable to crime, these being: women; people with mental health issues; people with a drug or alcohol related habit; those who had been homeless longer; and those on the streets rather than in hostels. Furthermore, it was found that theft and violent and sexual crimes were the most commonly experienced crimes within the homeless community. By examining these findings, this dissertation hopes to help change the narrative surrounding homelessness as well as providing foundations for why social policy should change, and proposing how this should happen in order to decrease this high victimisation rate.

Alice Cribbin

The Power of Exercise:

Can exercise contribute to solving the crisis of prevalent mental illnesses within prisons?

It has long been recognised that a large proportion of prisoners across England and Wales suffer with some form of mental illness. Policies have been implemented which aim to provide prisoners with the same mental health care services as the general public. However, there is a much higher proportion of people with a mental illness in prison compared to the general population, and the likelihood of self-inflicted death is 8.6 times higher in prison than in the general population. Despite this, there are still lengthy waiting lists for mental healthcare treatments in prison, suggesting that alternative methods to combat mental illnesses should be considered. Research has shown that exercise is vital for overall health and wellbeing, including mental health. Exercise can be used as a way of reducing negative symptoms of mental illnesses which could be used in prisons to improve mental wellbeing and is accessible in some form to all prisoners. As prisoners live in a confined space which limits the amount of physical activity they can do, it is important for this to be recognised, so that exercise is encouraged and enabled as much as possible. The core focus of this dissertation is to address the current mental wellbeing of prisoners and discuss how exercise could contribute to treating prisoners' mental illnesses.

Katie Weber

Sex, Lies and Legal Consent: Can lies turn consensual sex into non-consensual sex?

This research study aims to investigate the opinions of a sample of the British population about whether they believe lies can turn consensual sex into non-consensual sex, the types of lie where this is true and what influence certain situational factors have. This study was developed in response to the current situation where judges and juries are having to interpret the ambiguous definition of “consent” found in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. To address the aims, a quantitative online questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of Facebook contacts. Respondents to the questionnaire were presented with 10 vignettes detailing fictitious sexual encounters where a lie was told by one of the partners. Respondents were then asked to decide whether they thought sexual consent had been negated. The type of lie told and certain situational factors differed in each scenario. It was found that respondents believed certain lies did have the capacity to negate sexual consent, in particular those that physically endangered the victim, and that certain situational factors did influence their decision including the certainty of the lie told. Overall the study concluded that this area is worthy of further exploration to give clearer guidelines to the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Caitlin Spence

Past convictions, future afflictions: An exploration into the potential mental health implications that follow a juvenile criminal record

Within the United Kingdom, an emphasis has developed on public protection. This is primarily maintained through the criminal record regime, focusing on the management of ex-offenders. However, the impact that criminal records bestow onto a person’s life is vastly underestimated, without the consideration of the collateral consequences that follow. These collateral consequences infiltrate a number of sectors, such as employment and education, and in turn can have the potential to severely affect an individual’s mental wellbeing. Furthermore, despite these potentially damaging consequences, there fails to be a sufficient distinction in place between records acquired as a child and as an adult. Therefore, through a coalescence of separate theoretical literature, this dissertation provides an informed argument of the potential mental health implications that can follow collateral consequences of a childhood criminal record. By using the mental health implications that follow collateral consequences, it offers a key element of criminal records that are significantly under-researched. In doing so, it justifies a critique of the current the criminal record regime, and in turn, the Youth Justice System, as disproportionate and harsh, in order to provide evidence to conclude that there is a significant necessity for alternative measures to be considered, in order to ensure the psychological wellbeing of young people.

Olamide Ajayi

“Woop-woop! That’s the sound of da police, Woop-woop! That’s the sound of da beast”: Police Relations with The Young, Black, and Male

Not much seems to have changed in the context of the relationship between the black community and the police. History details a legacy of unlawful and discriminatory treatment black people faced at the hands of the police and how it has impacted on their perceptions of, and attitudes towards the police. From the 'sus laws' under the Vagrancy Act 1824 to the more commonly used 'no-suspicion' stop and searches under PACE Act 1984 today, black people, particularly young men, continue to feel at odds with the police. Hence, the Brixton Riots 1981 and Summer 2011 Riots, were said to have originated from the unfair and disproportional treatment of the black community. Existing literature has revealed a homogeneity in negative attitudes towards and perceptions of the police held by black men - a vast majority of which is limited to the US context. This dissertation investigates the perception and attitudes of young Black British men towards the police. In using a focus group research method, this dissertation concludes that; early socialisation, negative encounters with the police and police use of Stop and Search powers, all contribute to the negative perceptions and attitudes young black men hold towards the police.



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Session 2: Gender and Identity

Chair: *Dr. Elena Genova*

Nadia Thair

The Healthy Female Citizen: The role of Instagram influencers within women's health regulation and female body image norms within society

The pursuit of health and a healthy lifestyle has become prevalent within contemporary society, as ideas of health are embedded and promoted within all aspects of life. Forms of health promotion are evident within the mass media as magazines constantly advocate ideas of becoming a healthier self. Yet, with the rise of social media and Instagram influencers, health-targeted content is increasingly portrayed within the everyday lives of women on Instagram. These women have an influential role within the social media platform of Instagram and their health content likely shapes how young women understand ideas of health care within modern society. Previous research has explored notions of health within the media yet lacks to uncover the extent to which messages of health are portrayed and embedded, within the images and texts posted by social media influencers on Instagram. Through employing the qualitative methods, thematic content and discourse analysis, this study aims to investigate the portrayal of women's health and body image norms, in health and lifestyle targeted content within 10 Instagram influencer accounts. It will also explore how wider social discourses of; consumerism, neoliberalism, surveillance and body image norms are embedded within influencer content and regulate ideas of health.

Megan Piper

'Getting THE PIC for THE GRAM':

An investigation into how Instagram use affects young women's perceptions of self-worth

This paper investigates the impact of Instagram use upon young women's perceptions of self-worth. The focus remained on the stages of Instagram use, including, the staging of photographs, the editing processes and the effects upon self-worth following posting to Instagram. This dissertation explores factors within these stages, such as conforming to idealised femininity, selfie culture practices, and self-presentation theories to fully understand the impact of Instagram use upon self-worth. Six semi-structured interviews with young women between the ages of 20-22 were employed and analysed thematically to map the impact of Instagram use. In doing so, I reveal how Instagram use regulates and disciplines young women's self-presentations through the adoption of selfie culture and influencer practices. The stages of Instagram use all elicit an emotional response from my participants, detailing how the whole process involves feeling positive at some stages and negative at others. I conclude this paper highlighting that Instagram use is not inherently positive nor negative, rather, it is situational and context specific.

Flora McCorquodale

Real men aren't Dyslexic?

A study into the role of gender in the access of support for student who identify as having dyslexia

This dissertation will address the research gaps which are apparent in sociological research on dyslexia in relation to non-physical disabilities and masculinity. It does this through an empirical study which will examine students who identify with having dyslexia and its effects on gender, especially masculinity, in relation to asking for academic support. Through semi-structured interviews with 6 students, of all genders, at the University of Nottingham who have dyslexia, this research works towards an understanding of symbolic meanings around dyslexia and its interactions with the understanding of what being masculine means. The data from these interviews shows, for example, that the connotations around the term of dyslexia is misunderstood and sometimes stigmatised in wider society. Furthermore, my data shows that these two connotations together can make those who identify as masculine and dyslexic struggle between those two identifiers, and struggle to accept academic support for their disability. Even more, these connotations create resentment from those who identify as feminine and dyslexic, as they feel 'let down' by men who are dyslexic for not 'coming out' with their identity of dyslexic. This research could be of considerable assistance to those working in universities to increase access to relevant support for those with dyslexia, especially those who identify as men.

Olivia Barby

Freedom or Coercion:

A comparison of online newspaper representations of sex work, street-based and Only Fans

In today's society, the media heavily impact the ways certain groups are represented and, often, misrepresented. With this said, how their meanings are construed are impacted by this representation. This dissertation sought to ascertain different online newspaper representations of sex workers by using a directed qualitative content analysis approach. A selection of online newspaper articles on female street-based sex workers and female Only Fans were analysed to establish themes from the two. This was further investigated using feminist theorists, Radical Feminists and Sex-Positive Feminists, to denote how these themes could be interpreted through a theoretical lens. Overall, the media representations established between female street-based sex worker and female Only Fans were unsurprisingly dissimilar, which suggested that the media chose to represent them in certain ways to create explicit meanings around them. These different media representations and meanings were damaging for themselves and it allowed for their work to be misjudged.



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Session 3: Ethnicity, 'Race' and Class

Chair: *Tiago Costa*

Naomi Dadzie

Why are all the black people in the lecture hall sitting together?

This dissertation investigates the self-segregation of Black British students within higher education. This is a largely under-researched area that is worthy of academic commentary. Reasons for this behaviour are extensively explored, using already existing literature and empirical research to gain a thorough understanding. Primary, qualitative data from human subjects is collected using semi-structured interviews. The findings highlight that although at first glance, this research topic may appear trivial, it is far from it. Findings uncovering reasons for this segregation include black solidarity, racial identity and discomfort. Furthermore, the sociological concepts this empirical research is grounded in include othering and socialisation. Notions of what it means to be black namely, Black British are also explored.

Sana Shafi

WHO AM I?:

South Asian International Students Perspectives on Facing an Identity Crisis in Multicultural Britain

The United Kingdom is the second most popular destination for international students. (The Universities UK International, 2017). The economic benefits of these students to the UK economy are tremendous. It is therefore important to study the experiences of these students to ensure their well being and continue their net- inflow into the country. This dissertation interviews 3 South Asian international students at The University of Nottingham to explore their perspectives on identity change and adjustment to the British culture. Qualitative methodology is used to conduct semi-structured interviews to uncover the perspectives of these students. Existing literature on international students focuses on factors influencing adjustment to a new culture and the reported changes in the identities of these students. This dissertation aims to uncover whether the reported changes in identity of South Asian international students were a conscious effort to assimilate into the British culture and secondly, whether any change reported in identities of these participants had a positive or negative understanding of themselves in the host culture. My findings revealed that participants made no active change to assimilate in the new culture but reported positive changes in the way they perceived themselves after spending time at university.

Temil Lawal

You're not a real Nigerian

An exploration of the impacts of lack of mother-tongue knowledge on identity and belonging

Migration and its effects have been explored in depth over the years, taking precedence in national debates such as Brexit. In more recent years, transnational families have been explored, with the relationships being sustained over a geographical distance. However, little attention has been paid to language, and the effect that this can have on identity. It is unsurprising that this has received scant attention, as the vast majority of research surrounds those who can speak the mother tongue, and when research is centred around those who cannot, it often conveys negative attitudes towards the mother tongue. This dissertation seeks to explore the impact that lack of mother tongue knowledge has. Concentrated on four ethnic minority university students, this dissertation determines that whilst language is regarded as important, it is not as integral to identity as previously assumed.

Jaya Gordon-Moore

'I'm a product of my environment...So my music, 'course it's violent'

With inequality, knife crime, mental health issues and UK Drill music (UDM) rising simultaneously, there is undoubtedly a sense of discontent in the UK today. Alongside this, neoliberalism has been the forefront of British politics for almost 50 years. Through a thematic analysis of UK Drill lyrics, this dissertation investigates the impacts of neoliberalism on the mindsets and experiences of young black socioeconomically disadvantaged males. UDM is dominated by young black impoverished males, who at the same time are impacted the most by neoliberal enforced austerity policies. Exploring the relationship between neoliberalism and the emergence and criminalisation of UDM, I found that young black males' identity in neoliberal Britain can be understood through Du Bois double consciousness. On the one hand they identify as the British narcissistic neoliberal, conspicuously consuming for the most respect and power. On the other, the young black criminal, excluded and demonised in society, turning to the pressures of consumerism and illegitimacy to be successful.



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Session 4: Global Politics

Chair: *Karolina Trdlicova*

Bethany Allsop

White, Western and Wealthy:

To what extent is the privileged Gay man a participant in the demonisation of the Middle East?

In the modern West where ever-mounting fears of Islamic terror have triggered substantial anti-terror legislation and military interventions in the East, the presentation of the Arab within the media is continually reproduced as the villain. Post-9/11 and more recently the Manchester arena bombing, attitudes towards Muslims (or anyone who appears to be Muslim) have become increasingly hostile, with many facing violence and micro-aggressions living in the UK and the USA. With western liberal democracies placing increasing importance upon the inclusion of gay rights within their human rights portfolio, studies have suggested a relationship between the increasing inclusion of gay western citizens and the exclusion of the Arab other. Puar describes how western states are guilty of Homonationalism; using their advocacy for gay rights to legitimate symbolic and physical violence against the Middle East due to the perceived homophobia rooted within Islam (2007, 2013). However, the role of the privileged gay man in these perceived processes of legitimating discrimination of the East, is an area in need of discussion. As the key benefactors of Homonationalist processes due to their relative privilege compared to other queer groups, it is necessary to uncover whether their improved status and perceived victimhood to the Islamic evil makes them party to Islamophobia at an institutional level. Furthermore, promoting an analysis into their specific involvement with the exclusion of Middle Eastern gay people within the western gay communities in which they dominate.

Florencia Mercado

'Calladita no te ves más bonita'

Conceptualising Femicides as a Weapon of War in the context of the Mexican Drug War

The militarisation stemming from Mexico's 'War on Drugs' has fostered violence throughout the country. Whilst previous research has examined the drug war in relation to politics and drug policies, research into femicide remains scarce. The accepted definition of femicide is 'the intentional killing of women and girls because they are women'. The dissertation studies '*feminicidios*' in a qualitative manner and proposes they be conceptualised as a weapon of war due to Mexico's current geo-political context of conflict. Legislation on femicide, at its current capacity, appears to fail to protect women from gender-based violence. A cultural explanation emerges for femicides along with the low reporting, recording and prosecution rates of its perpetrators. The objective shifts to demonstrate how pervasive *machismo* is in Mexican culture altogether, not just crime culture or during the drug war. Two conclusions are reached. Firstly, there is insufficient research on the war on drugs' effects on women and on gender-motivated killings in wartime. Secondly, in Mexico, women are no more at risk at the hands of a narco than a policeman judging by the sociological exploration of the country's gender attitudes.

Daniella Sayer

Analysing the lack of concern and optimism towards Climate Change in the United Kingdom

This dissertation acts as a means to analyse a possible overarching lack of concern and optimism regarding climate change. It is more than evident that we are not doing enough as a society, or as individuals to tackle such imminent issues. Qualitative methods were employed in order to collect rich and in-depth data, but most importantly to understand one's perspective regarding climate change. Face-to-face, semi structured interviews were utilized to gather student opinions. The interviews were further processed through 'thematic analysis' in order to break down relevant findings; subsequently five sub-themes were identified: 'money', 'lack of adequate solutions', 'inevitability of climate change occurring', 'human selfishness' and 'lack of awareness and education'. Accordingly, the complexity of climate change is reinforced with the many dimensions identified as sub-themes. Neoliberalism was one major driving force, propagating the commodification of sustainability whilst enhancing the impacts of climate change. It places climate responsibility on the individual, when a collective response is needed. The issue regarding neoliberalism is reiterated through the commodification of natural resources which are fundamentally 'free'. Consequently, concern and optimism regarding climate change are dulled and, thus, we are unable to tackle matters regarding our environment despite the importance and urgency to do so immediately.

Amber Sacre

'To (B)regret or not to (B)regret':

A quantitative analysis of attitudes towards Brexit in 2015 and 2017

Brexit has enveloped the UK and contemporary politics. This study explores attitudes towards European Union membership in 2015 and 2017. The aim is to identify a category of flexible individuals who are more prone to changing their opinion and why this is the case. The British Social Attitude Surveys of 2015 and 2017 had logistic regressions conducted on a select number of variables deemed statistically significant in the bivariate tests. It was ascertained that attitudes towards Brexit did differ between the two years, and political opinions were more influential in this change. Second-age theory and the work of Ulrich Beck is employed to explain these findings.

