



IGU Commission on Gender and Geography

in collaboration with

School of Geography, University College Dublin

**"FEMINIST AND QUEER SPATIALITIES:
CARE, CONNECTION AND CHANGE"**

August 21-22, 2024

**University College Dublin School of Geography, Dublin,
Ireland**

LIST OF ACCEPTED SESSIONS

EXPLORING THE PRISON SPACE: QUEER AND FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Rachele Girardi
University of Greenwich

Session Abstract

How does the prison space affect the lives of those who inhabit it? How can the carceral be gendered and/or sexualised? And what does it mean for contemporary issues of queer and feminist liberation? Scholars from a variety of disciplines, including queer criminology, carceral geography, feminist and gender studies, are interested in answering these questions, that have long been left unanswered. The increased interest in gender-segregated spaces in public discourse, especially around the case of female-only spaces, has demonstrated that space and design can be employed to regulate gendered and sexualised bodies following heteronormative expectations, and to sanction those who do not conform to them. However, how does this regulation happen in a place designed to deny agency and freedom, strip its inhabitants of their identity, and isolate them from their social groups? What are the spaces, designs and movements that allow or refuse authentic gender and sexual expressions for prisoners? The carceral space offers an opportunity to investigate the expression and management of gender and sexuality in a unique closed environment, that might seem detached from the free world, but that, in reality, is very much connected to it, to the point where traditional gender and sexual norms are “hyper-expressed” in the prison space.

This session will invite researchers from the Social Sciences and beyond to present their cutting-edge work on prisons, exploring the influence of patriarchy, heteronormativity, hegemonic masculinity, homophobia and transphobia, on the organization and endurance of carceral spaces. The session will be in the form of a panel focused on inclusivity, intersectionality and interdisciplinarity, where participants will be invited to present their work in front of an audience, after which we will proceed with a Q&A and group discussion.

To submit a paper for this session email r.girardi@greenwich.ac.uk

BARS, BUS STOPS, AND BACK STREETS: EXAMINING LGBTQ+ PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

Emma Spruce
The University of Liverpool (UK)

Session Abstract

Reflecting its impact on women’s and LGBTQ+ people’s use of public space, interdisciplinary scholarship has extensively considered how to understand and respond to gender and sexuality-based ‘street’ violence and harassment. Crucially complicating this work, research into LGBTQ+ safety politics has drawn attention to the racialised and classed assumptions that have often underwritten, or been (re)produced through, anti-violence interventions (Goh 2018; Hanhardt 2013; Haritaworn 2015; Moran and Skeggs 2004). LGBTQ+ safety politics is, however, an area of fast-moving change and extensive geographical variation that requires

further interrogation. The papers in this session will thereby offer an analysis of contemporary interventions made in the name of LGBTQ+ public safety to deepen our understanding of the risks and rewards of emergent collaborations, the significance of 'place' for framing initiatives, and the theories of change implied by different modes of engagement. Precedence will be given to papers that facilitate dialogue between under-researched sites and thereby extend our understanding of LGBTQ+ spatialities beyond 'global gay' cities.

Whilst recent 'backlash' has illustrated the precarious nature of LGBTQ+ inclusion, the 21st century has nevertheless been marked by an increased recognition of LGBTQ+ people as potential 'victims' who are deserving of protection. As such, today's LGBTQ+ public safety campaigns often involve collaborations between LGBTQ+ activists, corporate entities, state institutions, and cis-hetero allies. This raises several important questions, including: what tensions and shared investments are revealed through these collaborations? What contradictions and conflicts are set in motion when state or corporate actors are turned to for protection? Who is driving the agenda, and how are power dynamics between different stakeholders negotiated?

The sites of interventions have also diversified over this period, extending beyond the boundaries of the 'gayborhood' into the city and across suburban and rural contexts, and from the street into public transportation and commercial venues. To this end, this session will foster a reflection on the significance of 'place' in LGBTQ+ public safety initiatives: how do the kinds of interventions taken reflect their location? What impact do local and national political and socio-cultural contexts have? (How) are transnational currents expressed or challenged in specific environments?

Perhaps in response to the diversification of intervention sites, contemporary LGBTQ+ public safety initiatives also employ a widening variety of methods, seeking to leverage legal mechanisms, change public opinion, influence systems of governance, and/or effect changes in the built environment. Examining the model of engagement can shed light on how the 'problem' of anti-LGBTQ+ public violence and harassment is understood: who, what, and where, is the problem? How do we evaluate the success of interventions? What might LGBTQ+ public safety initiatives tell us about the politics of LGBTQ+ place-making more broadly?

To submit a paper for this session email espruce@liverpool.ac.uk

RELIGION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO SEX, SEXUALITY AND GENDER

Ruth Flanagan
Queen University Belfast

Session Abstract

There is no universally accepted definition of religion. For the purpose of this session the term religion is to be understood broadly as a system of beliefs and practices that attempts to order life in terms of culturally perceived ultimate priorities. Religion has a complex relationship with other cultural structures and systems that may impact and interact with the ways in

which humans experience social life. Religion and religious institutions often have social rules and norms about how to engage in sex and how to express one's sexuality and or gender. The aim of this session is to stimulate a discussion around religion, religiosities or religious cultural environments and their relationship to lived experiences of sex, sexuality, and gender. For this session the term sex should relate to for example; the sexual act, sexual activity, or sexual interaction rather than a biologically assigned label given at birth. We welcome papers that explore how lived experiences of sex, sexuality and gender may change, adapt, or evolve depending on space, place, and religion. The session intends to gather papers based on studies that explore the different religions from across the globe, different geographical locations, or reflections on religious migration and displacement and their relationship to experiences of sex, sexuality and gender. We also welcome papers that may be interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary exploring other aspects of social life related to the intersection of religion, sex, sexuality, and gender.

To submit a paper for this session email ruth.flanagan@qub.ac.uk

NEGOTIATING QUEER 'SAFETY'

Kayleigh Charlton
University of Bath

Session Abstract

This session would invite speakers to discuss the topic of 'queer safety'. Discussions about LGBTQ+ safety is pertinent right now amidst the disappearance of physical urban queer spaces in North America and Europe (Campkin and Marshall, 2016). Additionally, the rising visibility of queer bodies in the media has been linked to an increase in violence toward queer people in public spaces and an overall increase in hate crime toward the LGBTQ+ community (Stonewall, 2017; Home Office, 2022). In a 2019 survey, Galop and Stonewall found that 50% of the British public recognise that LGBTQ+ people must modify how they present and behave in public spaces to avoid being targeted. Indeed, some trans people, avoid entire areas altogether (Arup, 2020). This session encourages researchers to consider what a spatial/geographical approach can tell us about the ways in which safety is negotiated among the LGBTQ+ community. What does 'safety' mean to you? Is 'safety' possible? How do gender, race, and class impact our experience of safety within the queer community? An understanding of how we define, conceptualise, and negotiate queer safety might have a positive effect on how we can continue to build, maintain, and protect queer spaces/populations. This session aims to bring together postgraduate and early career researchers undertaking work that concerns ideas about safety among the LGBTQ+ community. The goal is to generate a comfortable and supportive environment to share ideas and pose future questions for feminist and queer geographies. Masters and PhD students are welcome, as well as early career academics, to contribute papers at any stage in the process.

To submit a paper for this session email kaec21@bath.ac.uk

THE QUEER FRIENDZONE: LOCATING NONSEXUAL QUEERNESS

Joe Jukes

University of Bristol; University of Brighton, UK.

Session Abstract

What do queers do, and how do they do queer, without doing 'it'? This session invites contributions that consider how care, connection and change are enacted through situated bonds and actions other than sex.

Feminist and queer geographies have long considered how sex both disciplines and excites the public and private lives of gendered and queer subjects. This deeply rooted centrality of sex in our subjective and intimate lives has the effect of platonicising certain political frameworks by positioning them as normative, or even 'anti-sex', whilst rendering 'queer' certain platonicisms (Kenney, 2020), celibacies, (Kahan, 2013) and asexualities (Przybylo, 2019).

Audre Lorde (1984: 54) frames the erotic as 'not a question only of what we do [but] a question of how acutely we feel in the doing'. This panel seeks to extend and reflect on this call through a feminist and queer geographical approach exploring queer permeations in platonic relations. We call for these nonsexual spatialities to be recognised as queer and political, thus extending our understandings of sex, sexuality, and spatiality.

We frame these conversations through the epistemologically situated idea of the Queer Friendzone. This friendzone extends queerness through and beyond the physical incidences of sex and desire, to embrace nonsexual expressions of queerness. Such a space offers theoretically fruitful opportunities for locating queernesses whilst embracing concepts like citizenship, kinship and a/bi/sexualities, which do not default to strictly identitarian or exclusively sexual frameworks. The queer friendzone, then, might not only be a space into which one finds oneself rejected or sidelined, but instead, that one might claim alongside various others for emotional, erotic and emancipatory purposes.

This session will present four stand-alone papers, each concerning what queer friends do in, to and across spaces to foster connection, care or change. These friend-zones range from activist and academic, to community and digital spaces, as below:

- Queering the Institution or Institutionalising Queerness? An autoethnographic navigation of kinship and activism situated within Higher Education Institutions

Dr Rosie Nelson (they/them)

Lecturer in Gender, School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies, University of Bristol

Rosie.Nelson@bristol.ac.uk

- *Queer Friendship as Mutual Aid: queering intersectional activist spaces through care*

Rosa Targett

Lecturer in Sociology, School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies, University of Bristol

rosa.targett@bristol.ac.uk

- *Lavender Vespers: rural queers making space for free(dom)*

Joe Jukes, PhD Researcher in Humanities (Geography & Sexuality), University of Brighton

J.Jukes3@brighton.ac.uk

[TBC]

We will be joined by a fourth scholar of the friendzone, preferably with expertise in digital geographies.

For more details email J.Jukes3@brighton.ac.uk

INFRASTRUCTURES OF TRANS* LIFE

Wiley Sharp, Matt Smith

University of Toronto; University of Brighton

Session Abstract

In the last decade, social scientists have adopted the notion of social infrastructure to describe the social relationships that animate material infrastructures and the infrastructural character of social reproduction (Klinenberg 2018; Latham & Layton 2019; Hall 2020; Smith 2023; Bain and Podmore 2023). In other words: social infrastructure is constituted by the relationships that “bind[] us to the world in movement and keep[] the world bound practically bound to itself” (Berlant 2016, 394). In accordance with the conference theme, we invite papers that explore the infrastructures of trans care, connection, and political change—in short, that which enables a trans* public life. Trans* scholars in and beyond geography have analyzed how cisheteropatriarchal violence and social exclusion work to annihilate trans* lives in legal and extralegal ways (Spade 2011; Haritaworn 2019; Rosenberg 2021; Todd 2023), and the session will explore how trans* people create grassroots infrastructure that enables trans lives to flourish in the face of these carceral, patriarchal, and white supremacist violences. Drawing from recent trans* studies scholarship, we see gender transitivity as life that exceeds the colonial modern binary in ordinary and extraordinary ways (Crawford 2016; Malatino 2022), and we encourage papers that explore the lives of a heterogenous array of trans* subjectivities, especially the unique gender embodiments of trans* people of color. This session seeks to advance scholarly dialogue about trans* geographies by elevating research that examines the ways in which infrastructures of trans* life create the conditions for human flourishing beyond the gender binary, and, in turn, build analyses of trans spatialities that exceed the exigencies of cisheteropatriarchal violence.

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- Todd, James. 2023. "Exhaustion, Exhausting Temporalities, and Young Trans People's Everyday Lives in the UK." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 113 (3): 771–789.

To submit a paper for this session email wiley.sharp@mail.utoronto.ca

ORGANISED WOMEN AND ACTIVISM? THE CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SHAPING SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Catalina Quiroga Manrique and Martina Angela Caretta
Lund University, Department of Human Geography, Sweden

Session Abstract

There is substantial literature focusing on the role of women in the defence of life, territory, and the reproduction of life at various scales in the face of worsening socio-environmental crises (Agarwal, 1992; Ojeda, 2011; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Publications have considered women's participation in climate and global environmental governance (Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Moreano Venegas et al., 2022), women's resistance against extractivism (Cruz, 2020; Ulloa, 2016), the inclusion of gender perspectives in public policy and academical analysis (Arora-Jonsson, 2011), the production of women subjects and subjectivities in politics, and the role played by women in implementation of local environmental projects (Sultana, 2018, 2014; Terry, 2009). Furthermore, the literature examined the additional burden resulting from conservation of and care for nature in the context of climate change (Fernández, 2021), the inclusion of the body and emotions in social processes and the defence of life, nature, and

territories (Colectivo Miradas Críticas del Territorio desde el Feminismo, 2017; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021), and the role of women in forming and sustaining grassroots organizations worldwide (Fondo de Acción Urgente, 2021). Some of these publications have problematized how women have developed local leadership, with some also addressing the role of academia in analysing these topics (Sultana, 2007). Notwithstanding this extensive literature, through our fieldworks we see that women's political and communitarian work is becoming increasingly demanding, leading to local transformations and new approaches to activism and political action. Given the current socioenvironmental crisis, characterized by lack of water, food, and work, women have had to double up their efforts, requiring them to reinvent community work and activism, including the adoption of new forms of social mobilization.

Building upon these reflections, this session aims to discuss the challenges faced by women in social organization, political engagement, and community work within contexts characterized by socio-environmental inequalities and the precariousness of life. Much of the literature has tended to highlight women's activism, whether in pockets or in major organizations, under the light of cooperation, resilience, and success. In this session, we welcome contributions critically reflecting also on when women fail to organize, when only a few women leaders pull a much bigger group forward, how women must co-opt or adapt to outside projects and policies to ensure their communities' survival, how care work has become a limit to engage in organized work, how the ongoing economic and climatic crises restrict women's participation and how we as researchers present data not showcasing women's success stories.

The goal of this session is to understand how the relationships between feminist activism, organized and unorganized local women, and scenarios of life precarity develop to advance new research and methods in contemporary feminist geography. This session is also geared towards the preparation of a special issue to be submitted to an area journal.

To submit a paper for this session email Catalina.quiroga@keg.lu.se and martina_angela.caretta@keg.lu.se

DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES OF MUNDANE VIOLENCE

Tabea Bork-Hüffer and Elisabeth Militz
University of Innsbruck, Department of Geography

Session Abstract

This session is dedicated to a critical discussion of normalised and mundane violence that is (co-)produced, sustained, promoted, and/or enacted through digital technologies and spans entangled socio-material-technological spaces. Digital technologies are an intrinsic and entangled part of social, cultural, and political negotiations, discourses, and processes. Digital – and particularly digital feminist – geographers have long pointed out their potentially “oppressive and violent effects” (Kwan 2007: 22). More recently, a growing body of research from digital (feminist) geographies, media and communication studies, as well as studies of violence, have dealt with digital technologies' roles in the (re-)production and normalisation

of diverse forms of violence in everyday life. This emerging research on the “digital geographies of mundane violence”, is characterised by “a critical and reflective engagement with the dynamic and non-linear spatialities of mediated violence as it unfolds in multiple and specific entangled spaces as well as with the practices and processes that counter-act the emergence and escalation of violence” (Bork-Hüffer et al. 2023: 185). Research in this context has dealt, for example, with hate speech as well as right-wing violence in social media (Wiertz & Schopper 2022, Militz 2022), embodied (Brydolf-Horwitz 2022), domestic (Cuomo & Dolci 2022), sexualized and gendered (Datta 2020, Mahlkecht & Bork-Hüffer 2022), and/or racist (Mott & Cockayne 2021) digital violence. Given the volatility, diversity, and mutability of digital technologies, the “digital geographies of mundane violence” are at once a rapidly evolving and changing field in need of more attention and research.

We invite abstracts for papers that make theoretical, empirical, and/or methodological contributions to the study of the digital geographies of mundane violence. Possible topics may include but are not limited to:

1. Digital geographies of (mundane) sexualized, gendered, racist, (neo-)colonial, symbolic, silent, and other forms of violence,
2. Critical methodologies and research methods studying the spatialities of digital geographies of mundane violence,
3. Theoretical and conceptual approaches that attempt to grasp digital geographies of mundane violence, e.g., from perspectives of Black Studies, Black Geographies, Queer, Trans, and Feminist Code Studies,
4. Research ethical reflections in the context of research on the digital geographies of violence,
5. Studies on counter-violence and/or counter-politics, resistance and/or resilience to violence.

References:

- Brydolf-Horwitz R (2022): Embodied and Entangled: Slow Violence and Harm via Digital Technologies.
- Bork-Hüffer, T, Mahlkecht B, Markl, A, Kaufmann K (2023): Digital Geographies of Mundane Violence: Outline of an Emerging Research Field and the Example of (Cyber-)Bullying in Young People's Lives.
- Cuomo D & Dolci N (2022): The Entanglements of the Law, Digital Technologies and Domestic Violence in Seattle.
- Datta A (2020): The 'Smart Safe City': Gendered Time, Speed, and Violence in the Margins of India's Urban Age.
- Mahlkecht B & Bork-Hüffer T (2022): 'She Felt Incredibly Ashamed': Gendered (Cyber-)Bullying and the Hypersexualized Female Body.
- Mott C & D Cockayne (2021): Understanding How Hatred Persists: Situating Digital Harassment in the Long History of White Supremacy.
- Wiertz T & Schopper T (2022): Geographien von Wahlkampf, Medien und Gewalt: Extrem rechte Bewegungen aus assemblagetheoretischer Perspektive.
- Williams S (2015): Digital Defense: Black Feminists Resist Violence With Hashtag Activism.

To submit a paper for this session email tabea.bork-hueffer@uibk.ac.at

QUEER COLONIALITY: REMAKING & REVEALING RELATIONS OF POWER ACROSS BODIES AND LANDS

Onyx Sloan Morgan & Sarah Hunt/Tłaliłila'ogwa

University of British Columbia, Okanagan, Canada ; University of Victoria, Canada

Session Abstract

Coloniality has long been interrogated as a structural process and ordering of power, bodies, and decision-making that attempts to dictate, define, and reproduce relationships with land and one another (Kauanui 2016, Simpson 2016). The historical premise of Geography as a discipline is underwritten by and intertwined with colonial aims of dispossession from lands and bodies, including the creation of maps, knowledges, and power formations that assert who, how, and when land (and water) can be related to and governed (Blomley 2003, de Leeuw and Hunt 2018), including how we can care for land and our relationships with one another. Despite coloniality itself translating in heterogeneous ways across the globe, dynamics and relations that result often have similarities through sharp edges that impact communities on a myriad of scales—from the personal, to the home, to the institutional level and beyond. In addition to shaping relations to and with land, the 'sharp edges' of coloniality are uniquely gendered along patriarchal and heterosexual lines that attempt to uphold, normalise, and centralise expressions and orderings of power. We seek to think alongside scholars who have looked to these 'edges' in geography (e.g., de Leeuw, 2016; Goeman, 2013; Hunt, 2023a, 2023b; Mollett & Faria, 2018; Whetung, 2019) to reveal how studies that privilege analysis on political levels only invisibilise and naturalise patriarchy and heterosexuality as uniquely gendered targets of dispossession across bodily, political, and intimate scales.

In this session, we aspire to bring together papers that speak across the spatialities of colonialism to make explicit and visible the gendered and queer encounters to, with, and against dynamics of power and oppression from bodily to land-based scales. While we convene this session to make these spatialities visible, we seek to do so in ways that foreground place to reveal the care, resistance, and connectivity that results—both historically and contemporarily—despite and in light of colonialism's patriarchal dimensions and oppression of queerness. Potential topics could include, but are in no way limited to:

- queering anti-colonial land-based pedagogies and political ecologies
- creative geo-humanities of the erotic
- queer and trans resistance to colonial violence
- the gendered and sexual dimensions of anti-colonial activism
- gendering archival and historical narratives of empire
- queer and trans solidarities across colonial spaces

If you are interested in presenting a paper in this session, please send your abstracts and a brief bio to Sarah Hunt/ Tłaliłila'ogwa at: sarah[at]uvic[dot]ca and Onyx Sloan Morgan at onyx.sloanmorgan[at]ubc[dot]ca by January 5th, 2023.

References:

- Blomley, N. (2003). Law, property, and the geography of violence: The frontier, the survey, and the grid. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93(1), 121–141.
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(IN)VISIBILITY, AGENCY, AND POWER 'BEYOND THE CLOSET'

Ale Boussalem and Rasa Kamarauskaite
University of St Andrews – UCL

Session Abstract

The metaphor of the closet has been challenged as a simplistic rendition of queer invisibilities. The binary understanding of queer people's lives as being either 'in' or 'out' of the closet glosses over the complexities of how sexuality is concealed and/or displayed in everyday life. Research on the intersections of race, migration and sexualities has shown how tacit or unspoken sexualities are not necessarily invisible or victimised (Decena, 2011; McLean, 2007; Chou, 2013).

This critical perspective on the closet prompts us to reconsider questions of agency and power. The assumed universalism of verbally declaring one's sexuality as a means to claim agency and empowerment against oppressive structures has been disproved by demonstrating its contextually contingent qualities. Silence and/or invisibility can be sites of agency and empowerment.

We invite authors to explore the dynamic between the spoken and unspoken in processes of sexuality concealment and disclosure. How do queer subjects navigate the "in" and "out" of the closet in their daily lives? What are the relations between the spoken and unspoken aspects of their sexualities? How do these navigations and relations change in different contexts and under different circumstances? How does this dynamic change over time? How do these processes exist in intersection with other categories of identity and difference? How does (in)visibility relate to care for self and others?

We also invite them to take a closer look into dynamics of power, agency, and (in)visibility: how and by whom are power and agency exercised in various configurations of queer (in)visibility? How can we understand the links between agency and visibility/concealment in ways that are more reflective of everyday queer experiences?

We are seeking contributions that are exploring these questions. Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Intersections of sexualities, race, gender, disability, class and their impacts on processes of sexuality disclosure/concealment
- Cultural representations of the closet and queer silence/verbalisation
- Sexuality concealment/disclosure across online/offline geographies
- Dating "beyond closet": romantic/sexual relations and sexuality concealment/disclosure
- Relation between sexuality disclosure/non-disclosure and LGBTQAI+ political mobilisation
- Navigation of sexuality disclosure/concealment within different family settings
- Strategic concealments/disclosures in everyday contexts (professional, educational, leisure, familial)
- Choosing invisibility
- (In)visibility as care
- (In)visibility across lifespan

To submit a paper for this session email ab563@st-andrews.ac.uk and rasa.kamarauskaite.15@ucl.ac.uk

RELIGIO-CULTURAL SPATIALITIES: EMERGING FEMINIST DISCOURSES FROM NORTHEAST INDIA

Bhaswati Borgohain
Tezpur University and UPES

Session Abstract

Located in the Eastern Himalayas, Northeast India is a distinct geographical and political administrative division of India. A fragile ecological hotspot, the region is inhabited by more than 200 communities predominantly dependent on nature based livelihoods. Indigenous only to this region, most of these communities' culture and identities are intrinsically linked to their surrounding ecology. They have been custodians of the natural environment through traditional ecological management and conservation throughout history which are also deeply linked with their sacred cosmology.

However, in the post-colonial times, particularly in the last few decades, the region has witnessed a rapid force of violent change introduced by an extractive development agenda of the contemporary neo-liberal Indian state. Although primarily ecological, this content of change is multifarious, unplanned and rigorous which has led to a systemic erasure of culture and identity of the indigenous people. This panel titled 'Religio-cultural Spatialities: Emerging Feminist Discourses from Northeast India' will voice the contemporary feminist discourses that have emerged from the region as a resistance to this systematic erasure of the people. This panel will do so by discussing how the communities of these sacred geographies are negotiating with the challenges that they are facing as a result of this change, especially with the double binds of patriarchy introduced by the ongoing political, cultural, ideological and religious shifts in the region as well as the state. The panel proposes four papers from this dynamic region each representing a tribe and a geographical area. While discussing the diverse unfurling of this complex content of change across context and space, these papers highlight the fundamental connectedness of these changes.

1. Bhaswati Borgohain:- *Institutionalisation of Indigenous Faiths: Changing religio-cultural spatialities in Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India*

Arunachal Pradesh is witnessing a twin process of rapid Christianisation on one hand and institutionalisation of indigenous faiths on the other hand. This paper locates these changes in the sacred space amongst the Nyishi tribe, the numerically largest in the state within the context of nationalism and state-making in the region as a security frontier. The paper argues that a new form of patriarchy is imposed on the existing tribal patriarchy, which in the process has erased traditional female spaces and the connection of indigenous faiths to the ecology.

2. Bitopi Dutta:- *Gender, Mining and Displacement in Matrilineal Cultures: Case of Meghalaya in Northeast India.*

This paper discusses how coal mining has radically restructured gender relations in indigenous tribal societies. Through an in-depth case study of the Northeast Indian state of Meghalaya, one of the few matrilineal societies of the world, this paper analyses how people cope with

conflicts in their perception of self, family, and society brought on by the transition from traditional modes of living to increased urbanisation, and how these experiences are different for men and women. It investigates the ways in which this gendered change is experienced intergenerationally and also analyses people's changing attitudes towards matrilineal structures where a masculinised mining economy has gradually taken over the collective perception.

3. Maitrayee Patar:- *Sacred Geographies and Women's Agency: Case of the Female Ritual Specialists of the Tiwas in Assam, Northeast India*

Extending the existing feminist discourses around Global South to the specific context of northeast India, this paper critically examines the matrilineal tradition of female ritual specialists followed by the Plains Tiwas, a patrilineal tribe from Central Assam. The paper follows the contemporary political shifts in the state machinery, and the process of nation-building as a work of ideological, religious and cultural polarisation, and highlights how indigenous women's agency actualises itself through the ritual space of ancestral connections and ecological care.

4. Prithibi Pratibha Gogoi:- *The Ecopolitics of Sacred Geography: The Case of the Dimasas of Northeast India*

The paper discusses the case of sacred geography akin to the community-driven conservation practices entangled with the socio-religious life of the Dimasas in Assam and Nagaland. The ecological care connection reflected in the tradition of the community following the system of double descent presents the varied genderscapes of the region which gets overlooked in the sociological engagements from the region. The paper tries to present the intricate human and non-human relationship in a space which is deemed sacred by the community.

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YES! : A PLACE TO CARE, CONNECT AND CHANGE

Elisabeth Militz, Maria Anne Fitzgerald
University of Innsbruck, University of Delhi

Session Abstract

The YES! Group is the IGU Gender and Geography Commission's platform for Young and Emerging Scholars* initiated by a group of early career feminist geographers. YES! was officially launched in 2016 during the Commission's pre-conference in Barcelona. The aim of YES! is to create opportunities for networking, mentoring and sharing. Our objectives are to uphold feminist solidarity in academia that transcends geographical and institutional divides; to recognise the importance of slow scholarship and multiple pathways to 'success' in academia; to generate a space where feminist politics and friendship can thrive; and to engender change that advances the feminist commitment to social justice.

While this session is envisioned to be more of an interactive community space rather than a classical paper session, we welcome short contributions and/or interventions showcasing the research and scholarship of YES! members. Come join us in this session, if you would like to meet and engage with young and early career feminist geographers from across the world, if you want to learn more about YES! past, current and future activities and how to get involved and/or if you wish to contribute to a caring, supportive and translocal network of feminist geographers.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with the organizers if you are unsure if this session is for you.

*Young and emerging scholars are identified as people in untenured positions (e.g. students, doctoral candidates, postdocs, activists, assistant professors, independent researchers).

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FEMINIST SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Roberta Hawkins, Elisabeth Militz
University of Guelph, University of Innsbruck

Session Abstract

While feminist scholars have long identified core principles of feminist methodologies in analogue research settings, less has been said about feminist methodologies in digital research settings. This is surprising given that feminist digital geographers, and especially queer, Black, Indigenous scholars, and scholars of color, demonstrate that digital spaces, such as those unfolding through social media, are power-laden spaces. They are subjective, situational, intimate, embodied, affective/emotional, and embedded in or emerging from the everyday lives of differently positioned people. But, how exactly do feminist researchers engage with these power-laden spaces? How does conducting social media research feel? What embodied, emotional and contradictory experiences do researchers have in examining social media spaces? How do researchers establish respectful research collaborations through social media platforms? How can scholars value the digital work of content producers, who make social media research possible in the first place? How can feminist ethics of care, reciprocity, collaboration and embodiment be engaged with in research on and through social media?

This session seeks participants willing to share their experiences with research methodologies in social media settings and reflect on the possibilities and challenges of engaging feminist research methodologies in digital spaces. Depending on the type and number of submissions this session will include (short) paper presentations followed by an open discussion on presented topics with presenters and audience members invited to contribute.

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GENDER AND CARE: MOBILITIES AND IMMOBILITIES

Sara McLafferty, Valerie Preston

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign USA, Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Canada

Session Abstract

Care, in its diverse forms, is a prominent theme in contemporary human geography. Care – a “person’s proactive interest in the wellbeing of another (Conradson 2003, p. 451)” or oneself -- is a relational concept that reflects people’s social, experiential, and emotional interactions with the people and place contexts in which they occur. Geographers have examined the spatiality of care, questioning who provides and receives care, the places where care is provided, and who benefits from care. Increasingly, attention is turning to the mobilities and immobilities at the local, national, and international scales, and at time scales from the everyday and beyond that are deeply enmeshed with geographies of care. Mobilities can enable or constrain access to people, resources, and environments that support care. Mobility is central to the daily lives, space-time constraints, and wellbeing of care providers, both paid and unpaid. Care mobilities are gendered and racialized, with women, and especially women of color, doing care work. Geographers have studied care from diverse theoretical lenses and using diverse methodologies, quantitative and qualitative; but the literatures, which have developed in fields like health, urban, social, and transportation geography, are often siloed.

The goal of this session is to illustrate current geographical perspectives on gender and care mobilities and immobilities, highlighting the intersectionality of care and its shifting spatiality. Case studies illustrate geographies of care in high-income, middle-income, and low-income contexts, showing how the benefits and costs of care are unevenly distributed. In addition to challenging current notions about the identities of caregivers and the nature of caring, the case studies also show how digitalization is transforming care, care work, and the spatiality of care. Potential themes include: mobility of care, domestic care workers, double-duty carers and health care workers, self-care and therapeutic experiences, gender identities and care mobilities, immigration and care work, political economies of care mobilities, space-time constraints and women’s care-related travel, care mobilities among vulnerable and minoritized women, and care and mobility justice. The case studies demonstrate how an intersectional and comparative approach to geographies of care fractures taken-for-granted notions of the relations between mobility and immobility and gendered geographies of care.

References:

Conradson, David. "Geographies of care: spaces, practices, experiences." *Social & Cultural Geography* 4, no. 4 (2003): 451-454.

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TRANSNATIONAL IM/MOBILITIES: GENDERED GEOGRAPHIES OF AGE, AGING AND CARE

Dr. Sanjukta Mukherjee

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Session Abstract

According to a latest report of the United Nations (2023), the number of people aged 65 and older worldwide is projected to double over the next three decades, reaching 1.6 billion in 2050, or more than 16% of the global population. The report also highlights global inequalities in experiences of aging and eldercare practices worldwide. The Covid19 global pandemic further revealed and intensified long-standing issues of exclusion, poverty, and isolation that is particularly acute amongst the elderly population. Intensification of mental health issues like depression and anxiety, and rising incidence of domestic violence have been reported in many places. Simultaneously there are also narratives of active aging, stories about resilience and success through economic and digital inclusion projects like creating work opportunities for the elderly, training them with new skills like computers and social media. Sandberg (2013) argues that constructions of old age and the elderly are often caught between binary discourses of decline or success. Yet we know that processes of aging and notions of “old age” are not universal, rather they are culturally specific. Age and aging must be understood as “geographically contingent, spatially produced, and embodied social process” (Sampaio et al. 2018, 441). Within patriarchal gender regimes, experiences of aging and identities of the elderly are different for men and women, especially since women have historically borne the responsibility of care work (Lamb 2000; Sandberg 2011). Contemporary processes of neoliberal globalization, migration, and attendant restructuring of the family has further complicated the experiences of the elderly, notions of care and new meanings of aging are being re/constructed and negotiated (Ahlin 2018; Horn and Schweppe 2017; Sampaio, et al 2018; Yeates 2009; Zechner 2008; Zhou 2012).

This paper session will explore the relationship between transnational migration and gendered geographies of age, aging and care. Older persons are embedded within global migration networks in complex ways and their perceived immobility often enables the mobility of their kin. There is a growing body of scholarship on global care chains (Hothschild 2000; Parennas 2001) and increasing transnational relations characterizing care work (Baldassar and Merla 2013; Koffman and Raghuram 2015; Yeates 2009) including care work performed by elderly persons (Lamb, 2009, 2013). Feminist geographers have long highlighted the geographies of inequalities that have risen from commodification of care as neoliberal market relations have rolled back social welfare and privatized healthcare in the global north (Cox 2013; Green and Lawson 2011). The spatial dimensions of such inequalities lay bare the ethical dilemma of recruiting care workers from poor countries of the global south to benefit the richer countries of the global north (England and Henry 2012) and its impact on how migrant care workers care for their own family who are left behind. Less attention has been focused on emerging eldercare services in the global south in response to migration to the global north. Focusing on gendered geographies of age, aging and care will allow us to understand the social, economic, and political transformations in transnational spaces of the home, family and community that are increasingly reconfigured by contemporary processes of neoliberal globalization, migration and a global health crisis.

Some key themes/topics could include:

- a) Trans/national migration and gender identities of elderly
- b) Intersectional constructions/representations of aging/the aged body
- c) Sexuality and aging
- d) Gendered and racialized spaces of eldercare services in the global north and/or south
- e) Mental health and aging
- f) Senior citizens organizations and advocacy for rights
- g) Social and spatial impact of Covid on elderly populations
- h) Urban redevelopment and impact on aging
- i) Feminist critiques of aging and eldercare policy

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INFORMAL CAREGIVING OF THE ELDERLY IN MIDLIFE: SPACES, CIRCULATIONS AND GEOGRAPHIES

Anindita Datta, Carina Listerborn, Elena Vacchell
University of Delhi, Malmö University, University of Greenwich

Session Abstract

Informal caregiving is intrinsically bound to notions of family. Research has revealed that informal caregiving can place a heavy burden on those involved (Goodhead and McDonald 2007). The burden of unpaid and informal caregiving for elder family members falls disproportionately on women (Kenway 2023). Caregiving of elder relatives often coincides with midlife and women entering the menopause. The ‘menopausal turn’ is thus “an opportunity to revisit and reimagine who populates the “real world” of menopause, and the great breadth of questions, priorities, needs and experiences that lie therein” (Jermyn 2023) as well as to simultaneously explore who carries the burden of informal care giving for elderly and the spatial decisions and outcomes that such caregiving can trigger at this life stage. In this session we thus explore the intersection between the midlife menopausal age and the experience of informal caregiving for elderly adults. As feminist geographers, we are particularly interested in the spatialities and geographies that such informal caregiving at this specific life stage entails. Departing from a feminist ethics of care (Tronto 1993) we aim to further the discussion about caregiving to both embrace the caregivers’ embodied situation and the material and spatial conditions and connections involved in such informal caregiving in midlife. Our call is in relation to the fact that infrastructures of care have involved aspects of planning, mobility (Binet et al., 2023) and housing (Power and Mee, 2020), but less focus has been on caregivers- specifically in relation to their own transformative period in life.

For this session, we invite papers addressing, (but not limited to) the following subthemes:

- Spatialities of elderly caregiving practices involving carers in post-reproductive age
- Emerging caregiving crises in specific geopolitical contexts including spatial organization around elderly caregiving;

- Queering notions of family and global and local circulations of informal and unpaid elderly care;
- Emotional geographies, mental health and family relations in informal caregiving for elderly in midlife
- Intersectional perspectives on informal caregiving for the elderly in families and diasporic communities;
- Contextual interpretations of menopause and expectations of informal caregiving.

References:

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- Goodhead, A., & McDonald, J. (2007). Informal caregivers literature review. A report prepared for the National Health Committee Health Services Research Centre: Victoria University of Wellington.
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- Kenway, E. (2023) Who Cares. The hidden crisis of caregiving, and how we solve it, *Wildfire*
- Power, E. R., & Mee, K. J. (2020). Housing: an infrastructure of care. *Housing Studies*, 35(3), 484–505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2019.1612038>
- Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral boundaries*. Routledge.

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IN CONVERSATION WITH THE DEAD: MAPPING COLLECTIVE GRIEF, MOURNING AND RESISTANCE

Nour Almazidi, Niloofar Rasooli
ETH Zürich, London School of Economics

Session Abstract

The house of the dead can be a radical location of rupturing, revolting, and reclaiming; a place of queering the hegemonies of Time. This is what happened during the funeral ceremony of Jina Mahsa Amini on the 17th of September 2022, in Aichi cemetery, Saqqiz, Kurdistan, Iran. We witnessed how the flames of a collective fire, revolt, and resistance ignited in that very moment when Kurdish women were unveiled and, together with the dead of history, chanted Jin, Jîyan, Azadî [Woman, Life, Freedom]. We witnessed how everything began in that cemetery, the place of forced erasure of memory, time, and desires.

From the feminist revolution in Kurdistan and Iran to anti-colonial and anti-apartheid resistance in Palestine, to indigenous movements in Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia, the act of collective mourning has been at the core of various social and political movements. We have observed how, in these struggles, the collective plea for life has emerged from political death and from the location of death; we have seen how death and disappearance have been

the starting point, the binding tie, the nourishing soil, and the pedagogy of remembrance and revolt. We have seen how mourning has had a generative political affect that orients us against regimes that seek to erase and banish our deaths and our ghosts from memory. For many of us engaged in these movements, grief has become an archival practice against forgetting (Pandit, 2022). We have seen how death and mourning have been queered.

In this session, we seek to explore death, grief, and mourning on multiple registers. Drawing on our decolonial queer feminist sensibilities, we pose the following questions: What is queer about the locations of mourning, about the placelessness of political death? What does it mean to stay tethered to the dead? What does it mean to grapple with death and mourning as integral processes in collective resistive politics and political imaginations? How does mourning produce different political geographies of affects and feelings? How does grief operate as a queer temporality, disrupting governing capitalist time as a lingering rupture in our revolutionary consciousness and struggle? Finally, what kinds of queer feminist epistemologies does death conjure up?

Throughout this session, we invite people interested in writing intimate queer stories of political death, mourning, and grief. Our aim is to map and imagine the wheres and whens of the emergence of radical yearnings for life in the midst of witnessing political death. Through alternative ways of writing, we aim to be in conversation with death so as to create queer meanings of our intimate, sensorial, embodied, and affective experiences with death.

References:

Pandit, N. (2023). Re-membling: Tracing epistemic implications of feminist and gendered politics under military occupation. *Feminist Theory*, 24(1), 102–122.
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INVESTIGATING SEXUALITY ACROSS THE CITY

Ricardo J. Millhouse
Arizona State University

Session Abstract

In this panel, we invite scholars to queer urban geography, black studies, design practices, urban planning, among other interdisciplinary fields and areas of activism outside of the traditional academy. We refer to queer as a critical practice that creates new paths to social scientific imagination and a social identity that has spatial articulations. By spatial articulations, we mean the way that lesbian and queer people produce space—urban or otherwise— that reflect their intersecting desires, values, and social identities. Queer spatial-identities for marginalized people across different topographies of urban space function as modes of political power to challenge tendencies in urban affairs to reproduce heteropatriarchy in space and place and the race, gender, and sexual power structures. In this session, panelists will discuss how these intersections manifest across public space, intimate

space, and beyond in the context of racialized spatialities, care-work (i.e. community-led strategies to resist domination), health, atmosphere (Ricardo J. Millhouse 2020, Ben Anderson 2009), nostalgia, and other processes; the impact of gentrification on night-time economies and queer social places; and methodologies for conducting research on queer space studies.

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COLORING THE FIELD: RACE, CARE, ETHICS AND REFLEXIVITY IN FEMINIST FIELDWORK

Maria Anne Fitzgerald, Ushna Saikia
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Session Abstract

Feminist fieldwork is defined by the practise of challenging patriarchal, racist and masculinist thinking which structure power dynamics in the field (Staheli and Lawson 1994). Engaging in feminist fieldwork examines how relational qualities between the researcher and researched informs research agendas and knowledge claims within geography (Nast 1994). The determination of research ethics in feminist fieldwork involves acknowledging specificities of local context, unanticipated responses from participants and the positionality of the researcher among other aspects. These ethical concerns are based on caring practises and unknowingly shaped by gender relations. Together, these characteristics suggests that the ways of doing feminist fieldwork are mostly emergent practices rather than existing principles.

Through our experiences of doing fieldwork in marginal locations in India, we ascertain that feminist fieldwork pushes us to analyse how discourses are produced and sustained, by uncovering and engaging with their social construction. (Kobayashi 1994). Consequently it also provides an opportunity to also re-define these discourses to align with feminist praxis. Hence, we aim to unpack and foreground the ways in which feminist fieldwork can potentially influence the production of geographical knowledge.

For this session we invite scholars to reflect and share critical insights on the ways of doing feminist fieldwork in their particular spatial context. We particularly welcome contributions from underrepresented groups in academia and early-career scholars. Sub-themes for discussion include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical issues and challenges in feminist fieldwork
- Fieldwork from the margins
- Collaboration, care and reciprocity in fieldwork
- Critical feminist reflexivity in the field
- Decolonising feminist fieldwork
- Negotiating power dynamics in the field
- Interdisciplinary approaches to feminist fieldwork

References:

- Kobayashi, Audrey, 1994. Coloring the field: Gender, "race," and the politics of fieldwork. *The professional geographer* 46 (1): 73-80.
- Nast, Heidi. 1994. Women in the field: Critical feminist methodologies and theoretical perspectives. *Professional Geographer* 46(1): 54-66.
- Staeheli, Lynn A., and Victoria A. Lawson. 1994. A discussion of "women in the field": The politics of feminist fieldwork. *The Professional Geographer* 46(1): 96-102.

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SUSTAINING CARING RELATIONS IN THE FACE OF DISPOSSESSION

Michelle Daigle, Yolanda Gonzalez Mendoza, MM Ramirez and Pavithra Vasudevan
University of Toronto, University of Maryland Baltimore County, , Simon Fraser University,
University of Texas at Austin

Session Abstract

In this roundtable discussion, we discuss care as the work of sustaining relations in the face of dispossession (Yazzie & Risling Baldy 2018; Hobart & Kneese 2020; Reese & Johnson 2022). Capitalism and colonialism are structured through distorting and preying upon our relations. These distortions attempt to make life static, to confine and displace through law and custom. To confront these distortions, people use everyday practices of care and movement to make life liveable in the face of legal, social and economic violence. Practices of celebration, conviviality, community-building and solidarity enact care even when people's movement is restricted. Care is building relations through movement across colonial boundaries and cultivating spaces of belonging where some are legally not supposed to be. We see care as well as in the collective labor of dreaming and building a world otherwise. Communities organizing against colonial and racial capitalism continue organizing because they care so deeply, even as they tire, even as they must leave their homes, even as they put their lives at risk. As scholars and students of anticolonial praxis, we learn from our Elders, our communities and our collaborators how care can become a powerful antidote to colonial and racial harm, bringing something else into existence.

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- Melanie Yazzie and Cutcha Risling Baldy, "Introduction: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* (Special Issue: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water) 7 no. 1 (2018): 1-18.

Panelists:

- Michelle Daigle, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies and Geography & Planning, University of Toronto
- Yolanda González Mendoza, Assistant Professor of Geography and Environmental Systems, University of Maryland Baltimore County
- M.M. Ramírez, Assistant Professor of Geography, Simon Fraser University
- Pavithra Vasudevan, Assistant Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

We will also be inviting Sofia Zaragocin and Ashanté Reese to join us in this roundtable.

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UNIVERSITIES ON THE EDGE: FEMINIST AND QUEER PERSPECTIVES ON THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Ann M Oberhauser
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Session Abstract

Contemporary destructive shifts in higher education are evident in increasingly frequent and severe financial crises, attacks on academic freedom, and adverse political measures from lawmakers and the public in general. These trends are widespread, appearing in diverse and sometimes high-profile global contexts. What some describe as the neoliberal turn in higher education has escalated in recent years to present existential threats to academic integrity, people of color and others from marginalized identities, and the pursuit and production of knowledge.

Feminist and queer geographic perspectives provide critical insights to many of these shifts in higher education through inclusive and ethical frameworks of solidarity. This work contributes to analyses of inequities in the labor market, decolonizing academia in the Global North and settler colonial states, and decentering privileged positionalities in ways that challenge systemic oppression and other unequal institutional power relations. Furthermore, many public and private universities are facing significant budget cuts which disproportionately impact progressive scholarship and teaching in the humanities and social sciences. In this context, feminist and queer pedagogies and curricula must contend with heightened scrutiny that erodes or misconstrues many aspects of academic freedom. These measures are often linked to populist and white supremacist political forces and power struggles that attack diversity and equity initiatives under the guise of protecting free speech.

This session examines the shifts in and existential threats to higher education within diverse global contexts. Contributors will examine how educational institutions, faculty, and students are impacted by and challenge these measures through solidarity, engaging action, and other means of pursuing progressive scholarly work within a framework of care and ethical practices.

We invite papers from feminist, anti-racist, queer, and decolonizing scholars, activists, and practitioners who can examine the borders and develop new synergies to confront these shifts in higher education.

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