



The Irish Sexualities and Genders Research Network

Líonra na hÉireann um Thaighde Gnéasachtaí agus Inscní

Queer Methodologies Graduate Symposium

Online via Zoom, Registration Required

Day One: Friday 20 November 2020 09.45 – 15.30 GMT

Day Two: Friday 27 November 2020 12.30 – 17.15 GMT

About the Symposium

2020 marks 10 years since Kath Browne and Catherine Jean Nash released 'Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research', a volume which amplified a call for queer scholars to shift their focus from conceptualising what queer theory is, to thinking critically about what queer theory does, how it is done, who is doing it, and who it is being done for. Over the proceeding decade, scholars in the social sciences, humanities, and beyond have increasingly engaged in queer methodological debates and further bridged the gap between queer theorisations and the 'blood, bricks and mortar of everyday life'. In connecting queer theoretical frameworks with research design, queer methodologies render 'queer' alive with the potential to open-up possibilities for social action and knowledges unattainable by traditional methods. Debates over what constitutes queer research design have grown in relevance to the extent that Amin Ghaziani and Matt Brim now position us within a 'renaissance in queer methods.' Whether it is by queering existing methods contingent on constant critical considerations, or by creating new innovative methods and frameworks, queer researchers today are pushing the boundaries of what is queer and queer enough to constitute queer research, expanding the subjects of queer research beyond only sexualities and serving a widening range of social, political, and cultural purposes. To date much of the published work on queer methodologies comes from Anglo-North American contexts, leaving much room to expand the debates and bring together scholars developing queer methodologies within different contexts.

This symposium, organised by the Irish Sexualities and Genders Research Network, is a snapshot of how queer methodologies are currently being developed and deployed within gender and sexualities research practices in Ireland and beyond. With twenty two papers from postgraduate and early career researchers across disciplines, the symposium will highlight the ways Irish scholars are contributing to queer methodological debates, and create space for Irish queer scholars and scholars from outside Ireland to bring their ideas over queer methodologies into conversation with each other.

Symposium Organisers

Mark Doyle, *University College Dublin, Ireland*, mark.doyle.2@ucdconnect.ie

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The ISGRN is a network of Irish-based researchers whose interests relate to the areas of sexualities and genders. More information on the network can be found at

irishsexualitiesandgendersresearchnetwork.wordpress.com

Event Registration

Everyone is welcome to attend the symposium regardless of institutional or geographical situation. Please note times given are in GMT as the symposium is being organised in Ireland. All sessions will be taking place online via Zoom. You must register for the symposium in advance.

For full details on how to register for the symposium please go to:
irishsexualitiesandgendersresearchnetwork.wordpress.com

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Symposium Schedule Day One

Friday 20 November 2020

(GMT)

09:45 Opening Remarks

10:00 Session One

- 1) Queer diversity organising in the postcolonial workplace - Hannah Gillard, University of Sydney, Australia
- 2) Cruising as method and methodology - Lars Aaberg, SOAS University of London, UK
- 3) The Social Life of Sex Workers in a Gentrifying Neighbourhood: Towards an Ethnography of Kamathipura, India - Jo Krishnakumar, University of London, UK
- 4) Ethnographically Queering the 'Indian Family' - Shannon Philip, University of Cambridge, UK
- 5) Queering the family and modes of belonging in contemporary Italian women's writing - Peyker Ozler, University of Exeter, UK
- 6) Nowt as queer as folk - Lucy Mooring, Warwick University, UK

12:15 Lunch

13:15 Session Two

- 1) Constructing a queer population? Asking about sexual orientation and gender identity in UK censuses - Kevin Guyan, EDI Scotland, UK
- 2) Incorporating Gender Diversity and Trans* Experiences into Quantitative Methods - Chris Chevallier, National LGBT Federation, Ireland
- 3) The Gendering of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) in psychiatric institutions - Ellen Phelan, Maynooth University, Ireland
- 4) (Dis)counting the bodies: can there be queer methods without queer bodies? - Patrick Hughes, Queens University Belfast, UK
- 5) Demechanising Bodies: Exploring the possibilities for a queer/feminist methodology using Theatre of the Oppressed - Aisling Walsh, NUI Galway, Ireland
- 6) (Un)Queering Paternal Masturbation of a Profoundly Disabled Son - Marlene De Beer, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

15.30 End of Day One

Symposium Schedule Day Two

Friday 27 November 2020

(GMT)

12.30 Session One

- 1) The Charmed Circle and Queer Legal Theory: Developing Queer Methodologies - Alexander Maine, University of Leicester, UK
- 2) Conceptualit Frameview: A Methodology - Matt Kennedy, BeLonG To Youth Services, Ireland
- 3) The Nonexistent Academic: Anonymity and the seizure of the first-person singular by the system - Lennita Ruggi, NUI Galway, Ireland
- 4) Photovoice: re/presentation, accidental queerness and the creation of queer space - Hannah Ayres, University of Warwick, UK
- 5) Navigating the UK's competitive queer ballroom dance scene s a non-binary insider researcher - Yen Nee Wong, University of Surrey, UK

14.30 Break

15.00 Session Two

- 1) Probing the Place of Subjectivity in Queer Methodologies and Cultural Studies - Temmuz Süreyya Gürbüz, NUI Galway, Ireland
- 2) Reconceptualising the 'Insider-Outsider' through Queer, Feminist and Decolonial Perspectives: Reflections on 'Travelling' for Abortion Research from England (Back) to Ireland - Aideen O'Shaughnessy, University of Cambridge, UK
- 3) Wearing two hats: from LGBTQ forced migrant activist to LGBTQ forced migrant researcher - a Welsh reflexive perspective - Ourania Vamvaka, Cardiff University, UK
- 4) I THOUGHT THIS WAS A QUEER SPACE/CLASS/PAPER/RELATIONSHIP: Methodologies Towards a Post-Colonial Queer Academia - Migueltzinta C. Solís, University of Lethbridge, Blackfoot Territory, Canada
- 5) Queering Migration Field: Reflections On A Becoming-Woman Story of A Stranger - Gonca şahin

17.00 Closing Remarks

17.15 End of Day Two

Queer Methodologies Symposium

Book of Abstracts

Day One Session One

1) Queer diversity organising in the postcolonial workplace

Hannah Gillard, *University of Sydney, Australia*

This presentation explores the complexities of performing queer workplace diversity efforts in the Australian context, a country with its own specific colonial experience. Since being violently colonised by the British in the late 1770's, governments in Australia have continuously denied the sovereignty of the original custodians-Indigenous people. Governments have also failed to sign a treaty with the original custodians. This presentation focuses on how Australia's colonial experience manifests in the present, and examines the question of how to perform effective, intersectional queer organisational diversity work on stolen land, where Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded. I explore this problem through analysing ethnographic PhD research I conducted at two organisations in NSW, Australia. At both organisations, some workers demonstrated dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of their organisation's LGBTQI+ diversity efforts. I theorise one reason for this is that these organisations need to better confront racism and the ongoing impacts of colonialism in their queer diversity endeavours. Whilst my work contributes to the field of critical diversity studies- which critically analyses the way diversity and inclusion work manifest in organisations- I argue this field needs to be brought into better dialogue with the uptake of postcolonial methodology in Australia. At present, there is no academic literature that brings these fields together to examine queer workplace diversity in Australia. This presentation will be of interest to policy makers, diversity practitioners and queer communities. Overall, I argue that queer diversity efforts at work need to go further in confronting the impact of Australia's colonial experiences.

2) Cruising as method and methodology

Lars Aaberg, *SOAS University of London, UK*

In this presentation I propose cruising as method and methodology, demonstrating how cruising can be used to frame encounters with informants and the field, while addressing epistemic questions of authenticity and aesthetics crucial to interpreting and writing difference. I draw on my ethnography of a nascent LGBTQ workplace movement in India, largely located within the private and formal information technologies (IT) sector, which aims to promote equitable employee benefits and equal protections. I argue that the movement remains closely tied to and reliant on the established grassroots activism and expertise of India's HIV industry. Researching LGBTQ workplace activism requires studying people and places which often define themselves in (binary) oppositions, including grassroots/corporate and local/national. Additionally, given the sensitivity around sexuality in the workplace, and often lacking access to privileged informants working behind the securitized walls of special economic zones, data based on the passing comments of those I saw as I frequented IT conferences, networking meetings, and other events and spaces became invaluable. To underscore the instability in the binaries and boundaries I travelled

across in my fieldwork and to underscore the partiality of data gathered from fleeting encounters, I draw on the practices of cruising as I witnessed it among informants working the catchment zones of HIV-prevention work. Cruising requires not only a learned method of analysis and understanding of objects, but becomes aesthetic as a mode of conveying information, storytelling, and developing an ethics in the formation of sexual kin. As a method, one learns how to identify and connect with desired objects, even when these efforts often fail or produce unintended consequences. As a methodology, cruising often involves storytelling that is non-linear, contradictory, untrustworthy, and criminal. The cruiser is much like the ethnographer, whose aims rely on the assurances of a systematic understanding of a particular group or place, while acknowledging all knowledge as always partial and inconsistent.

3) **The Social Life of Sex Workers in a Gentrifying Neighbourhood: Towards an Ethnography of Kamathipura, India**

Jo Krishnakumar, *University of London, UK*

This paper is a collection of thoughts towards a literature review of my PhD project on sex work in India with a focus on Mumbai. Kamathipura, Asia's second largest red light district, is a collection of 14 lanes that comprises independent brothels, rental rooms, and small shops. Due to its location in Mumbai's richest cluster of localities, South Mumbai, Kamathipura, while it continues to get gentrified, refuses to die out like its physical space. There are dozens of smaller 'Kamathipurans' budding on the outskirts of Mumbai, with sex workers who used to once work in Kamathipura making their livelihood outside of it. The paper and eventually the PhD project aims to understand how sex workers' communities are recreated in other, newer, red-light districts through continuing crises- whether that may mean a pandemic, gentrification, or state sanctioned violence. With current literature focusing heavily on conversations on HIV, labour, and the NGO-ization of 'red-light districts', this paper goes beyond these conversations to see how multiple networks of economies bonded in one place are renewed in another and how the movement from one area of work to many more areas affect the working communities in the area. The paper draws on my individual experiences of being a trans person who has grown up on the fringes of the queer movement in India and offers a humane and sex worker centred voice to my work, where I act only as an amplifier to the sex workers' rights movement in India and the Global South.

4) **Ethnographically Queering the 'Indian Family'**

Shannon Philip, *University of Cambridge, UK*

Heterosexual arranged marriages are the normative form of social and familial organization in Indian society. As Indian feminists have long argued, arranged marriages are crucial for the reproduction of caste, class, heterosexist and gendered hierarchies in India, as well as for the strict control over bodies. I carried out 14 months of longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork with young unmarried Hindu men in New Delhi, and critically examined their masculinities, sexualities, families and sexual relationships. In my study I found a pattern wherein young men and their families reproduce heteronormativity, but at the same time the everyday sexual and gendered practices of young men challenged these structures paradoxically. Young men would engage in frequent sexual activities with other men and transgendered persons, but continue to bolster heterosexist ideas and heteronormative structures. Young men would classify such non-normative sex as 'masti' or 'fun' rather than sex itself. Hence through close and detailed participant observation as well as a decolonial understanding of sexual and gendered practices, my research reveals both the power

and fragilities of heteronormativity in everyday contexts. I argue interview based methodologies that privilege the spoken word rather than actions, crucially miss the complex sexual flows and everyday realities of seemingly 'homophobic' and 'straight' Indian men. In this way my research queers the 'Indian family', whilst also queering research methodologies within sociology and beyond.

5) **Queering the family and modes of belonging in contemporary Italian women's writing**

Peyker Ozler, *University of Exeter, UK*

Queer theory offers a framework that is particularly useful to understand non-normative genders and sexualities. It is undeniably concerned with cultural texts because queer theory uses them to problematize normative concepts of gender and sexuality and to expose and challenge oppressive gender and sexual norms. As David Halperin suggests that queer can be considered as a "positionality" that is available to anyone who aims to subvert hegemony. In my project, queer becomes a verb and thus "to queer" enables possibilities to establish oneself beside existing heteronormative structures to render a new mode of being in the world. This project seeks to address contemporary Italian women's writing that conceptualizes queer subjects as complicating traditional notions of linear time, reproduction and progress. Putting these texts in dialogue with queer theory literature, I aim to analyze the representations positioned as queer in terms of their relation to temporality. Paying particular attention to the cultural workings of reproductive bodies, I focus on temporality, specifically on how "particular orchestrations of time" function to maintain intelligibility, as well as how these trajectories can be disrupted. Such disruptions do not necessarily occupy the timelines and hierarchies they inherit from the dominant culture they stem from. My project argues that the function of queer modes of belonging and families is to disrupt the notion of progress and reproduction which shape typical connections of life, death, birth and marriage. Temporal disruptions can foster queerly generative affinities/modes of belonging/families, thereby providing alternatives and challenges to normative temporal trajectories.

6) **Nowt as queer as folk**

Lucy Mooring, *Warwick University, UK*

This paper seeks to re-examine and contest normative discourses of queer women and rural spaces. It understands queerness, and lesbianism as historically contested and situated, and therefore all space as that of being culturally imagined. Much of existing literature has sought to further metronormative narratives that propose rurality as a space of solely homophobia and isolation. In doing so, they locate the urban as a trajectory towards freedom and community. I seek to negate that urban space is a necessary to invoke and perform queerness. My paper is based on the culmination of one hundred surveys undertaken by queer women, an in-depth analysis of an example of 'queer rural space' (Hebden bridge) and archival research completed at Glasgow Women's Library. In undertaking a broad, varied research my paper therefore demonstrates the diverse realities of queer women's lives in rural spaces. I also uncover how queer, rural women have historically found themselves and one another. This by; lesbian newspapers, phonebanks, zine culture, separatist communes, and the contemporary relationship between queer women and the internet.

DAY ONE SESSION TWO

1) **Constructing a queer population? Asking about sexual orientation and gender identity in UK censuses**

Kevin Guyan, *EDI Scotland, UK*

For the first time, the UK's 2021 (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and 2022 (Scotland) censuses will ask voluntary questions about sexual orientation and gender identity/trans status. This paper explores this development in relation to the idea of 'queer data' and the collection, analysis and use of gender, sex and sexuality data, particularly as it relates to the lives and experiences of LGBTQ people. I examine the benefits for LGBTQ people of 'being counted' but also the risk of engaging in data collection exercises that, through their design, exclude and further marginalise some LGBTQ people. In particular, I highlight decisions made in the Scottish Parliament to exclude non-binary identities and not embrace predictive text technologies that might facilitate the analysis of sexual orientations beyond the heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual triad. These decisions demonstrate how the census design process constructed a queer population that 'made sense' to the cis, heterosexual majority and 'designed-out' queer lives that the state did not wish to bring into being. This highlights an uneasy relationship between queer data and state power, and the question of who is actually counted when we count LGBTQ people in national data collection exercises. These themes are pertinent for future censuses in Ireland and the potential addition of questions on sexual orientation, gender identity or the provision of non-binary response options to the sex question.

2) **Incorporating Gender Diversity and Trans* Experiences into Quantitative Methods**

Chris Chevallier, *National LGBT Federation, Ireland*

Trans*, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming individuals and communities are often rendered invisible within quantitative data; silenced and stifled by binary gender options, an inability to indicate transitions (i.e. grouped in with Cisgender individuals), being limited to selecting one gender, or lumped into categories as part of research designs rather than in accordance with who they are. They also run the risk of being treated as part of a monolith, with their unique lived experiences unexplored and intersectional analysis unpursued. Although accommodating diverse genders presents considerable challenges for statistical analysis, these obstacles are surmountable and must be challenged in order to gather vital data. This paper will provide an overview of the design, dissemination, and analysis of a survey focused on Gender Minority students in Irish third-level institutions. Focus will be paid to the demographic results of the survey and the growing complexity of gender identity (e.g. nearly a quarter of respondents selecting multiple genders). The paper will also highlight the challenges posed by the findings (e.g. conducting analysis on 18 different genders) and how the research team attempted to address them while maintaining a commitment to empowering each respondent's voice, thereby providing suggested practices for future surveys. The paper will conclude by stressing the importance of quantitative data for designing effective policies, especially in terms of LGBTQIA+ healthcare, public safety, and educational inclusion.

3) **The Gendering of ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) in psychiatric institutions**

Ellen Phelan, *Maynooth University, Ireland*

This paper examines the experiences of working-class autistic women and non-binary people in the public healthcare system. It is a systematic problem that these people slip through the cracks at the fault of inadequate mental healthcare services, the media, and the production of knowledge on autism in academia. Previous research that has found the link between gender and misdiagnoses/underdiagnoses have no systematic analysis of the roots of patriarchy and capitalism within these psychiatric institutions. It is a question of the self and identity, gender, class, the politics of psychiatry, and a life-long experience of othering.

4) **(Dis)counting the bodies: can there be queer methods without queer bodies?**

Patrick Hughes, *Queens University Belfast, UK*

The superhero power of queer theory may lie in its ability to feel out and disrupt binaries and other boundaries. But how does it work when queer theory disrupts the edges of its own critical methodology? For some, queer methods have matured and are regularly mobilised in productive settings by adapting and queering recognisable social science methods e.g., using queer discourse theory to set up and challenge the kind of LGBT-ness that results in homonormalisation. For others, queer methods carry a more radical potential. Few could dispute that quantification, or counting the (queer) bodies in a society, has, in some ways, resulted in an activism that opened up access to healthcare, funding and political agency that has benefitted people in overlooked and ephemeral kinds of lifeworlds. Alongside that, qualitative empiricism in the form of case studies, queer migrant narratives and innovative archival methods bring 'ghost' stories to life. But can (and should) queer methods stretch into lifeworlds beyond these queer bodies, whether counted or heard? By examining the critical potential of queer assemblages, and considering the queernesses of lifeworlds beyond the human, this proposal explores the challenging idea of whether queer methods require a queer human body to qualify as part of the canon of queer methodology.

5) **Demechanising Bodies: Exploring the possibilities for a queer/feminist methodology using Theatre of the Oppressed**

Aisling Walsh, *NUI Galway, Ireland*

Theatre of the oppressed (TO) has long been an accepted practice in community spaces for exploring social issues, using theatre to explore individual and collective oppressions and the stage as a space to rehearse pathways towards social transformation. A feminist practice and aesthetic has been emerging with the global TO movement over the last ten years, under the impulse of practitioners who felt the need to explore the gendered and patriarchal routes of social, cultural and political oppression within and outside of other social and political struggles. Through years of practice, multiplication and reflection by the Ma(g)dalena network, a methodology has begun to emerge which puts gendered and sexualised bodies at the centre of creative expression. By putting the body at the centre and using the 'subtle language' of theatre, this paper explores the possibilities of using TO for reaching truths that other forms of investigation may not access so readily. On the one hand the dramaturgy of TO makes explicit links between the personal and political, while striving for social transformation.

On the other hand, I will argue that the methodology is particularly suited for exploring the socially constructed nature of gender, the (re)production of bodies and sexualities and the work of 'demechanising' our bodies for embracing other possibilities. This paper is based on my practical experience as a participant and facilitator in Theatre of the Oppressed workshops in Latin America, particularly Guatemala, over the last six years, supported by decolonial feminist and queer theories of embodiment and social

6) **(Un)Queering Paternal Masturbation of a Profoundly Disabled Son**

Marlene De Beer, *University of Johannesburg, South Africa*

This presentation reflects and draws on processes of data gathering and analysis as part of a doctoral study by publication in progress, as a way to un-queer the act of disability sexual assistance through parental masturbation. The real-world, in-depth, descriptive and explanatory, embedded single-case study of a father who masturbates his profoundly disabled son, used multiple sources of data, as numerous semi/informal interviews, follow-up discussions, observations by myself during home visits and park walk meetings, internet sources and discussion forums which had postings of the case. In addition, to develop the depth and detail of the case study, a duo-ethnography emerged. A duo-ethnography is a dialogic, multi-vocal story through a processes of jointly reading, note taking, conversing, sharing, and negotiating a detailed storyline between two people while creating space and possibilities for new narrations, or even counter narratives, to re-vision, re-tell, and re-understand something that is not possible through self-reflection and interviews alone while constructing new knowledge. However, despite the detailed account provided in the case study as the first part of the doctoral study, the following remained unanswered: What actually happens during the sessions that the father calls 'therapeutic masturbation'? How can it be assessed? What would be reasonable questions that others could benefit from and how to record the detail? Would a Likert scale balanced with open questions be useful? Or would a survey checklist be better? Ideas were run past the father and we eventually agreed on developing and refining an assessment and monitoring guide checklist. After baseline data collection, deeper questioning was added until saturation of the data was reached to have a checklist consisted of 30 questions trying to capture and monitor the masturbation sessions that father have on his son.

DAY TWO SESSION ONE

1) **The Charmed Circle and Queer Legal Theory: Developing Queer Methodologies** Alexander Maine, *University of Leicester, UK*

The research provides a seminal qualitative assessment of the UK's Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Act 2013 using queer legal theory and a queer methodology. In doing so, it constructs homonormativity and the homoradical as identities existing within the sexual hierarchy. Not only does this thesis investigate the impact of the Act, it also assesses the lived experiences of LGBTQ individuals in relation to the passing of the legislation – including their views on equality, normativity, and sexuality. As such, it significantly adds to existing LGBTQ narratives by using visual methodologies alongside more traditional qualitative methods. Utilising semi-structured interviews with 29 self-identified LGBTQ individuals utilising mixed-method sampling to create rich interview data and unique visual data. Applying a queer theory analysis and by reconceptualising Gayle Rubin's 1984 'charmed circle' design, the study has found that the 2013 Act reinforces the sexual hierarchy in the construction of the homonormative and the homoradical as concurrent LGBTQ identities. In constructing the sexual hierarchy, this study has made visible the ways in which same-sex marriage reinforces and upholds heteronormative institutions. It confirms marriage to be a social and legislative organiser that reaffirms the centrality of the legal regulation of sexuality and the construction of 'good' and 'bad' sexuality. The paper will discuss the employment, use, consequences, and validity of such visual methods and discuss the findings arising from such use in conjunction with their temporal relevance.

2) **Conceptualit Frameview: A Methodology** Matt Kennedy, *BeLonG To Youth Services, Ireland*

A conceptualit frameview is best understood as a fusion between a literature review and a conceptual framework. In this paper, I will unpack the methodology of the conceptualit frameview, a piece that is in constant evolution and is queerly joined. I will do so by tracing the queer and trans methods which have informed this synthesis and will tend to aspects of the conceptual logic produced by this fusion in relation to my PhD on transnormativity in Ireland. The conceptualit frameview acts as the methodological scaffolding to support my conceptual interrogation of existing literature which has influenced my current theorising of transnormativity. Inspired by a combination of trans and queer methods, the conceptualit frameview holds the tensions between queer and trans intellectual praxis. This hybrid methodology creates a space in which queer methods become exposed to 'transing' and trans methods exposed to 'queering'. The conceptualit frameview also embeds my lived experience as a mode of inquiry within the scholarship. By creating a methodological foundation that can entangle and interrogate scholarship and lived experience; there is an opportunity to recognise transnormativity as tangible, emergent and largely unexplored in an Irish context. Thus additionally within this paper, I will demonstrate what I believe to be lacunas of analysis in existing literature as a young trans person in Ireland. Finally, I will conclude this paper on what I anticipate will be key themes to guide the exploration of transnormativity through fieldwork informed by the conceptualit frameview.

3) **The Nonexistent Academic: Anonymity and the seizure of the first-person singular by the system**

Lennita Ruggi, *NUI Galway, Ireland*

People who walk around NUI Galway may notice a statue portraying an empty graduation gown sitting below a Quadrangle-shaped dome and a worldly-inspired sphere. I am not privy to the original intent, but seeing it always reminds me of Italo Calvino's *Nonexistent Knight*. Agilulfo is the incarnation of duty, a truly unpleasant character created to troll military rules and bureaucracy in general. The perfect soldier, Calvino implies, has no shadow, no feelings and no body – even though he is obviously male and his armor is pristine white. In a way, this is also the trope of the perfect scientific subject, that feminists, anti-racists, decolonial and queer theories unmask as an epistemological fraud. I have been walking around NUI Galway to do my PhD, an ethnography dedicated to gender equality among staff in the university. It would be dramatic, but truthful, to call it a mine field. My first application to the Research Ethics Committee was rejected because 'The reviewers had serious concerns regarding the independence of the researcher from the funding source'. My Doctoral Fellowship is awarded by the Centre for Global Women's Studies with funds from the office of the Vice-President for Equality and Diversity and in my re-submission, I attached letters from my supervisor and the VP herself vouching I am not a puppet-for-management doing commissioned research to prove NUI Galway made great improvement towards gender equality. To say it differently, the many steps of my investigation are taken amid people (lectures, peers, research participants, ethical reviewers, friends) who are themselves involved in university politics, contending about the meaning, priorities, policies and targets of gender equality – just as I am. This background might make it easier to understand why I go around quoting statues. They seem safer public things I can approach without endangering anonymity, which is the core (however late) issue in this abstract. To counter the risk of re-identification, especially high in such context, I have proposed not to ask about personal experiences in my interviews. This was a difficult decision, since it feels like betraying my theoretical foundations. First-persons narratives are the ground from which anti-racists' and feminists' theories flourished. The battle against the Nonexistent Academic was made with the flesh and sweat of people using their own lives to defy and implode the position of objects to academic knowledge. As much as I esteem such legacy, I have an intuition first-person's accounts became a bureaucratic duty in certain contexts. They seem to be engulfed in interpellation mechanisms that coerce people (especially the ones branded 'diverse') to publicly enunciate intersectional components of themselves. It is like occupying discourse required someone to do the I-am- game as an antidote to the privilege of having a say. I am a Brazilian white middle class cis woman, by the way. My suspicion is that the I-am-game mostly protect institutional power and position as oppose to people or, better said, that first-person narratives may have been seized and disciplined by the system. This pressure to performatively disclose personal life frames identity as a self-explanatory pattern in a gown, and not a relational instable precarious subject-position that haven't got the privilege of avoiding its own shadow. I am afraid, however, that by not collecting or accounting for personal narratives, my research risks reinstalling the norm of the Nonexistent Academic, for of course how higher education is experience depends directly on one's positionality within it. To counter such dangerous, I would appreciate the opportunity to reflect on how queer methodology disrupts expectations of anonymity, discuss public outing, and generally creates a space where statues, ethical failures and methodological uncertainties are welcomed.

4) **Photovoice: re/presentation, accidental queerness and the creation of queer space**

Hannah Ayres, *University of Warwick, UK*

Photovoice is a visual method used by researchers that allows participants more agency in the creation of data; gives voice to those who have difficulty communicating in other ways (speaking, writing etc.); allows the researcher insight into areas they would not typically be allowed to access, and gives a voice to more disadvantaged individuals and groups. Typically, this involves participants taking photographs of the world around them, in essence allowing the researcher to see through their eyes. I use photovoice in my studies to investigate identity and the ways in which participants critique and internalise queer re/presentation in museums. The participants go around a queer exhibition or tour and take pictures of things that they feel they identify with. I later conduct a semi-structured interview with the participant to discuss the photographs and finally they are invited to attend a focus group in which a key member of the museum staff is in attendance so that the group has the opportunity to feed directly back to the museum. This method has led to interesting results with some participants ignoring the tour/exhibition and taking their own images afterwards. Others have produced what I deem moments of 'accidental queerness', in which we queer the world around us simply by existing in it. This method has allowed me to research identity without interfering with the participants experience in the moment. I believe this method can be taken further by getting participants to queer 'non-queer' spaces in museums through photography.

5) **Navigating the UK's competitive queer ballroom dance scene s a non-binary insider researcher**

Yen Nee Wong, *University of Surrey, UK*

Being a queer, non-binary researcher can be a double-edged sword, at times positioning one in a place of uncertainty with regards to gender performance, at other times opening up opportunities for rapport development and in-depth sharing from participants. The above reflects my experience as an insider researcher in the UK's competitive same-sex ballroom dance scene. In this paper, I seek to discuss my entry into the field as an insider researcher, which positioned me within the more recent debates over whether to restructure the same-sex dance scene to promote trans-inclusivity or maintain the long-established queer dance habitus hinged upon a binary structure of the classical dance form. I reflect on my gender performance across two key methods adopted, namely unstructured interviews and autoethnography. I demonstrate how I leveraged on the in(visibility) of my gender identity to my participants to (1) develop rapport, (2) inspire more honest discussions unbiased by prior knowledge of the researcher, and (3) create opportunities for unexpected sharing from gender non-conforming participants. I also examine some challenges faced in validating my personal experience as a non-binary dancer in the scene and engaging in personal sharing through autoethnography. I conclude that contextual disclosure by non-binary researchers can be beneficial towards (1) eliciting new insights which supports a grounded theory approach, and (2) integrating the often-discredited embodied sensory experiences of non-binary insider researchers into the subject of research.

DAY TWO SESSION TWO

1) **Probing the Place of Subjectivity in Queer Methodologies and Cultural Studies**

Temmuz Süreyya Gürbüz, *NUI Galway, Ireland*

This paper presents the main questions around queer methods and methodologies, by way of looking at how queer theory has an impact on different disciplines in humanities and social sciences in terms of research techniques. One of the most practical effects of queer theory is producing the possibility of new methods that account personal experience and subjectivity as central as collected data, which contrast certain sections of social sciences and humanities that insist on empirical and quantitative methods. How queer theory emerged, coming from activist social movements and being developed by post-structuralist perspectives drawing from Foucault's deconstruction of sexuality, shows that its destabilizing effect in cultural studies "has relied on a humanities-centered displacement of the disciplinary innovations", as observed by Matt Brim and Amin Ghaziani in their introduction to a special volume of *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* on queer methods. However, the academic works that investigate queer methodologies are mostly sociological studies that demand fieldwork, rather than cultural theory-based studies within humanities or philosophy that are more closely associated with the formation of queer theory. I would like to look at the reasons behind this seemingly paradoxical situation in academia and hopefully ask necessary questions to open up a discussion around how to deploy queer methods and bring subjectivity in to the realms of textual analyses of cultural productions. How could we adopt queer methodologies?

2) **Reconceptualising the 'Insider-Outsider' through Queer, Feminist and Decolonial Perspectives: Reflections on 'Travelling' for Abortion Research from England (Back) to Ireland**

Aideen O'Shaughnessy, *University of Cambridge, UK*

Whilst feminist approaches to epistemology have become increasingly integrated into sociological theory and methods in recent years, the 'issue' of researcher 'positionality' – its import in terms of access, analysis and knowledge production - remains divisive both within sociology and across the social sciences more broadly. Encouraged to recognise and make use of our original 'standpoint' on one hand, the spectre of positivism continues to loom large on the other; particularly for researchers who dare to truly begin where they stand. This paper aims to deconstruct the 'insider-outsider' paradigm in contemporary sociological research. I ask what constitutes 'insider-outsider' status? Where do we draw the lines of biographical, geographical or moral proximity? Who is the 'insider-outsider'? Are they a stable referent and how do we account for the multidimensionality of their subjectivity? To whom and in what way does the 'insider-outsider' matter? Do they have a greater emotional or representational obligation to research participants? How or why do they justify their status moving in and out of the academic field? Drawing on my own experience travelling back to my home country to conduct research on the Irish abortion rights movement, I engage with the above questions and more to articulate how the 'insider-outsider' position contains radical potential for researchers interested in feminist, queer and decolonial research in the Irish context and beyond.

3) **Wearing two hats: from LGBTQ forced migrant activist to LGBTQ forced migrant researcher - a Welsh reflexive perspective**

Ourania Vamvaka, *Cardiff University, UK*

My study is located within the field of migration research. I focus on the lived experiences of Black/PoC/Ethnic Minority LGBTQ refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. I explore how this marginalised group creates unique expressions of LGBTQ community in Wales and how they navigate the UK asylum policies which define such expressions. This empirical research was shaped after my years of involvement, in an organiser's capacity, with a Black/PoC/Ethnic Minority LGBTQ grass-roots community group, based in South Wales. For this study, my researcher's positionality and reflexivity are paramount as I identify as a queer ethnic minority woman and I have a refugee family background. Thus, I find myself in the unique position of being an insider collaborating with insiders and using my 'privilege' as a social scientist to amplify the marginalised voices of my community within academia. On one hand, as a community organiser I have built trusting relationships with my participants which allow me to scientifically assess my insider knowledge and access otherwise well-guarded truths. On the other hand, due to my familiarity with the participants, my fieldwork often becomes a balancing act. There are various ethical considerations that require close attention which revolve around role conflict, self-disclosure, unexpected answers/incidental findings, and pre-existing knowledge. In this paper, I will discuss how I have successfully tackled the above issues, using a combination of methods: Alvesson and Skolberg's four level reflexivity model and grounded theory. Such combination allows me to triangulate my findings, avoid harming my relationship with my fellow community members/ participants, and evaluate my role and responsibilities as a social scientist.

4) **I THOUGHT THIS WAS A QUEER SPACE/CLASS/PAPER/RELATIONSHIP: Methodologies Towards a Post-Colonial Queer Academia**

Migueltzinta C. Solís, *University of Lethbridge, Blackfoot Territory, Canada*

Was it wrong for us to force queer methodology into the cool, unaffected, "objective" light of the institution? Does queer theory and methodology abandon desires toward decolonization, having ingratiated itself to the structural demands of academia? How is it that even as queers write, read and lecture about affect, relationality and intimacy, we treat each other like shit? Are we traitors for disseminating our experiences and those of other minoritarian experience for the benefit of academic enlightenment? How can we recode queer – and decolonial – life, knowledge and stratagem in such a way that it resists its own commodification? In this paper/presentation, I use autotheoretical analysis, as framed by Lauren Fournier, to fail to answer these questions. I investigate these questions as they relate to my creative fields of performance art and experimental academic writing. The past decade has seen a huge – and important – push to elevate and assign academic cultural value to queer performance as a site for what Joshua Chambers-Letson calls, in his eulogy to José Esteban Muñoz, *After the Party*, "making queer of color life." Ephemerality, the body, the trace and feeling are presented as lived, fluid, active, shifting, cruising, fugitive ingredients that make up queer expression, resisting documentation, definition and confinement, even in an age of distancing. In this presentation I call for a material examination of how we use ours' and each others' queer bodies toward academic production, for a decolonial

restoration of knowledge-power within queer institution, and for a reinvention of how we write and lecture about queer experience.

5) **Queering Migration Field: Reflections On A Becoming-Woman Story of A Stranger**

Gonca Şahin

The current research on forced migration reveals a wealth of exciting debate; however, when this field is thought in relation to the experiences of queer refugees, in particular those residing in the transit regions like Turkey, the literature seems to be lacking. Against this backdrop, my current study confirmed the importance of sexuality for forced migration by demonstrating that transnational migration might precipitate queer practices, identities, and subjectivities. My current study is aimed at understanding the life history of an Asian trans refugee woman, residing temporarily in Turkey, by utilizing oral history. This study is intended to explore the emotional politics of home space and emancipatory potential of home making. The research has found out that my participant's homemaking in the transit country has reflected not only a desire for a radical break from the oppressive heterosexual home of the origin country but also a will to experience another form of home with alternative norms, values, emotions, and belongings in the transit country. My participant's story offers a ground to discern the workings of macro processes of forced migration through singular lives of the individual survivors. It also underlines the individual agency suppressed by the prevalent discourses victimising the refugee image which inform most mainstream migration research. The use of oral history in the current study has offered not only a novel and nuanced knowledge on queer experiences but also some possibilities for queering migration literature.