1. RESEARCH IMPACT
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This past year was unique in many ways. COVID-19 altered the landscape of higher education as it did with other aspects of life. This was the first year where all CHEER activities moved online. The new space came with its particularities, complexities, and even dichotomies. For example, as we were all confined to our homes, the ‘windows’ on the various Zoom calls opened up unprecedented opportunities for connecting to the world. We were able to invite international scholars in diverse areas of interest and engage keen audiences from around the globe. Indeed, these momentous times hold out invaluable prospects for enrichment and growth if we only allow ourselves the chance to pause and reflect.

Mariam Attia,
Lecturer in International Teacher Education,
and acting CHEER Director, Spring 2021
University of Sussex.
RESEARCH IMPACT

1. Louise Morley was the introductory speaker in the webinar, COVID-19, Women and Governments in the Department for Gender and Sexualities, University of Malta on 13 July, 2020. She presented ‘Which Inequalities Have Surfaced/Been Reinforced by the Pandemic Crisis?’. 

2. CHEER member, Mariam Attia contributed to the publication Multilingual Online Academic Collaborations As Resistance: Crossing Impassable Borders, edited by Giovanna Fassetta, Nazmi Al-Masri and Alison Phipps. The book details online collaborations between universities in Europe, the USA and Palestine. The chapters recount the challenges and successes of online collaborations which promote academic connections and conversations with the Gaza Strip (Palestine) and forge relationships between individuals, institutions and cultures. Mariam’s contribution is to Chapter 6: ‘Gaza Teaches Arabic Online: Opportunities, Challenges and Ways Forward’. 

3. Simon Thompson, Tab Betts, Emily Danvers, Tamsin Hinton-Smith and Mariam Attia designed and facilitated ‘Scaling Up Pedagogic Research Methods and Skills: Planning, Teaching, Assessing and Evaluating’. The bespoke professional development programme was offered online by the University of Sussex Department of Education to more than 15 parliamentary researchers and trainers from Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand and Philippines, between 30th November – 4th December. 

4. Louise Morley made a keynote presentation Sexual Harassment in Higher Education: Disrupting Norms and Dissolving Disadvantage to the TARGET Project’s Co-Creation Workshop on Sexual Harassment in Academia in May, 2021, and shared expert advice on policies and strategies with the University of Belgrade, Serbia. TARGET is a Horizon 2020 structural change project which supports 7 institutions in developing and implementing gender equality plans. 

5. Louise Morley facilitated a session at the online 7th EWORA Conference (European Women Rectors’ Association) entitled Can Women Make a Difference in University Leadership? in June, 2021. Some questions that were considered included: What are your views on the recent valorisation of women leaders in the global pandemic?; How can we promote women’s leadership without degenerating into binary logics, homogenisation, and essentialisation?; Rather than focussing on counting more women into university leadership as it stands, let’s consider what type of leadership is required for universities in the post-pandemic period?; What values, principles, and processes do we wish to see? For further details of the conference, see https://www.ewora.org/7thconference-theme 

6. Emily Danvers presented key findings of the project Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers’ access to higher education on 24 November, 2020 at the University of Sussex Conference ‘Representing the under-represented in HE’. This wasn’t just an academic conference as it attracted a lot of teachers, widening participation colleagues etc. Emily also presented with 2 non-academic colleagues - Maxine Lambert, Teacher for Friends, Families and Travellers and Tommy Buck, Practitioner for Friends Families and Travellers. 

Louise Morley and Janet Boddy worked with Professor Uma Vennam and Professor Vijaya Lakshmi, from Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (Women’s University), Tirupathi, India on a British Council-funded research study to analyse the factors contributing to gender disparity in higher education in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (AP).

**The research aimed to:**
1. Analyse the gender gap in higher education in the state of AP;
2. Identify ways to increase female enrolment in higher education;
3. Develop an effective ‘gender-responsive’ governance framework across sectors;
4. Facilitate the State Government to accelerate efforts towards advancing gender equality in higher education. The study findings and recommendations will be presented to the AP government.
1. **Context analysis of the higher education and research system**: Key figures on the size and importance of research and development and on participation in tertiary education, basic characteristics, qualification and career structures.

2. **Gender participation** in tertiary education and academic careers: Including indicators on degrees and doctorates and on academic staff.

3. **Gender-specific aspects** of scientific careers: Social, cultural and institutional context, horizontal and vertical segregation, whereabouts and drop-outs in science, possible exclusion mechanisms, further gender-specific differentiations, e.g. according to type of university, teaching and research, science sectors, prestige or regional distribution.

4. **Gender and international mobility**: Gender-specific data on international mobility, access to (international) networks, significance of international mobility for an academic career, Germany as a target country, needs for funding and changes.

The study aimed to explore the reasons for the low female participation among grants of the Humboldt Foundation. The Foundation likes to receive impulses for action on how it can attract more excellent women scientists to the Humboldt Network. To this end, the study combined a needs analysis with a deficit analysis: The needs analysis examined the potential for qualified female academics on the demand side and analysed the requirements for the international mobility of female academics and their needs.

**The study considered the following aspects:**

1. **Context analysis of the higher education** and research system: Key figures on the size and importance of research and development and on participation in tertiary education, basic characteristics, qualification and career structures.

2. **Gender participation** in tertiary education and academic careers: Including indicators on degrees and doctorates and on academic staff.

3. **Gender-specific aspects** of scientific careers: Social, cultural and institutional context, horizontal and vertical segregation, whereabouts and drop-outs in science, possible exclusion mechanisms, further gender-specific differentiations, e.g. according to type of university, teaching and research, science sectors, prestige or regional distribution.

4. **Gender and international mobility**: Gender-specific data on international mobility, access to (international) networks, significance of international mobility for an academic career, Germany as a target country, needs for funding and changes.

Louise Morley and Yasser Kosbar worked with GESIS (Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften, Köln, Germany) on a Humboldt Foundation-funded project that aims to attract more excellent women scientists to the Humboldt Network. Within the framework of this study, the mobility culture and specific aspects of the scientific careers of women scientists have been addressed. CHEER has provided reports on Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, South Africa, and the UK.
Dr Emily Danvers, Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith and Chris Derbyshire have been working on several projects looking at access to higher education for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) young people. GRT are a vastly under-represented group in higher education, with estimates suggesting that less than 1% of young people go on to university in the UK. A key factor to this educational trajectory is a lack of progression through compulsory schooling with GRT pupils having higher overall and persistent absence rates than any other ethnic group in England and the lowest average attainment score at key stage four. Some of the main contributing issues cited for this education ‘achievement gap’ include experiences of racism and bullying, a lack of understanding of GRT culture by teachers, as well as cultural and historical valuing of particular forms of work.

The researchers have completed the following projects on this area:

1. Delivering and researching a targeted university outreach programme in East Sussex to support the educational transitions for young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) backgrounds. This work was led by Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith and Dr Emily Danvers and funded by the Sussex Learning Network.

2. Researching the experiences of GRT learners during the Covid-19 ‘lockdown’ in East Sussex, via a creative arts project led by Tommy Buck from Friends, Families and Travellers. This work was led by Dr Emily Danvers and Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith and funded by the Sussex Learning Network.

More details on the project can be found on the link: www.grtinhe.com

The team is currently engaged in the following ongoing projects:

1. Supporting four schools across Sussex to provide targeted support and resources for GRT learners, including training for teachers themed around access to higher education.

2. Creating a website and training for educational professionals wanting to focus on supporting GRT inclusion in higher education. This work is being led by Dr Emily Danvers with Tess Michaels as research assistant and is funded by the ESRC Sussex Knowledge Exchange Fund.
Wendy’s part-time doctoral research seeks to understand the aspirations and experiences of Foundation Year students. She is supervised by Dr Louise Gazeley and Professor Gillian Hampden-Thompson. Wendy is currently writing her thesis.

The last academic year has been challenging: COVID-19 has entailed previously unheard-of isolation from friends, family, and colleagues. I have missed the ease with which I was once able to access CHEER’s support and intellectual stimulation. As might be expected, COVID has impacted my doctoral research. My research seeks to understand Foundation Year provision, specifically the experiences of Foundation Year students. The follow-up interviews I planned had to be cancelled, and trying to balance completing the analysis of the data I had alongside home-schooling proved ‘tricky.’ On the other hand, so much time at home gave me space to think more deeply about ‘time’, specifically the difficulties we experience in reliably predicting future, even near future, events.

The temporal orientation of ‘raise aspirations’ higher education policy problematically assumes students’ ability to reflect and plan for the future. The neoliberal future is empty, waiting to be filled, and guides present-day practice. Yet within policy, this empty future is simultaneously assumed to be both predictable and mechanistic: if young people ‘invest’ in their education (input), they are assured a ‘good’ career (output). Yet, recent events have made clear that the future is both unknown and unknowable. Edwards (2010: 71) reminds us that the future remains unpredictable and uncertain: ‘to act responsibly, therefore, would seem to involve accepting this incalculability to the future.’

This unpredictable COVID year has meant that I have instead focussed on writing up my doctoral research. Very little research literature concentrates on Foundation Year courses or students, and what does exist is mainly pedagogical. The Augar Review (2019) was critical of Foundation Year provision, but my research indicates that such courses might provide a valuable alternative route into mid-to-high tariff universities for those who would not usually be able to do so, due to their prior qualifications. My research also indicates that Foundation Year students are not a homogenous group and have diverse reasons for undertaking a Foundation Year course. The inclusion of under-represented groups within higher education is a key aim of my colleagues in CHEER.

Teaching was also disrupted this year due to COVID as we had to quickly shift to online delivery, something I had not done previously. With all conversations now conducted as emails, all meetings hosted via Zoom, along with the need to redesign teaching materials, the teaching workload has increased significantly. On the other hand, in these difficult times it has been those moments spent with my students, both in teaching-moments and one-to-one Zoom calls, that has provided a place of refuge. I have come to admire the enthusiasm, persistence, and willingness to engage demonstrated by my students this year. All the nicer then, that my efforts were recognised when I was awarded a Spirit of Sussex Award (2020). I was awarded for my ‘passion, kindness and can-do attitude.’ This award made all my efforts worthwhile.
Another high point of 2021 was the publication of the SEDA Special Issue (No. 44): Transitions Into, Through and Out of Higher Education, which I co-edited with Dr Wendy Garnham. The themes drew on the findings of my doctoral research, which indicts that some students need more support as they move through university. It was a joy to showcase the research undertaken by practitioners, nationally and internationally, on this topic: https://www.seda.ac.uk/product/transitions-into-through-and-out-of-higher-education-supporting-students/.

We supported the publication with three SEDA webinars and are now building a community of practice involving practitioners from across the UK and beyond, who meet once a month to share ideas. While COVID might have made some things more difficult, this ability to connect with those geographically far away, such that our intellectual and practitioner closeness is revealed, has been a notable positive.

The rest of this academic year will be spent drafting my thesis. I am sure that I will continue to be ably supported by my colleagues in CHEER, CTLR, ESW and beyond, both remotely and soon - hopefully - in person.

References:


ONLINE SEMINARS

POST-COVID TOPOGRAPHY: WHAT NEW LAND DO WE INHABIT?

JULY 2020

Group discussion

The event offered a space for critical exploration of the lines of inquiry generated as a consequence of the pandemic. Attendees engaged with the concept of ‘snapping points’ as a way of making sense of lived experiences in unprecedented times, and wondered how this significant moment could provide a context for change in the global academy, so it is more hospitable, humane and hopeful. Allowing time for reflection and internalisation of this historical event was perceived as key to any inner transformation.

PAYING THE PIPER? THE GOVERNANCE OF VICE-CHANCELLORS’ REMUNERATION IN AUSTRALIAN AND UK UNIVERSITIES

OCTOBER 2020

Speaker: Professor Rebecca Boden, Research Director of the Social Research Programme at Tampere University, Finland

In this presentation of research conducted with Julie Rowlands (Deakin University, Australia), Rebecca Boden critically analysed the determination of vice-chancellors’ remuneration, framing it as a governance issue. In the context of corporatised public universities, she argued that reforms in university governance towards greater marketisation and financialisation may have contributed to the shifting nature and increasing levels of vice-chancellors’ remuneration in Australia and the UK. The stark conclusion is that much of the remuneration is more akin to economic rent rather than appropriate salary payment for work undertaken. In conclusion, proposals for fundamental governance reform were set out.
In this presentation, Dr Paul Roberts introduced key findings of his doctoral research. Based on interviews with eight individuals who had served as Graduate School Managers in eleven different institutions (eight Pre-1992 institutions and three Post-1992 institutions), Paul Roberts discussed the affective lives of Graduate School Managers in the context of the UK Neoliberal University.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Paul Roberts passed his viva on 16 December 2020. His EdD thesis was entitled The UK Doctorate: Policy, Power, and Professionals in the Neoliberal University. The external examiner was Professor Rebecca Boden, Tamperre University, Finland, and the internal examiner was Emerita Professor Valerie Hey. Professor Louise Morley was Paul’s first supervisor, and Dr Barbara Crossouard was second supervisor.

Rosa Marvell passed her PhD viva on 12 March 2021. Her thesis: Social inequalities and the journey to postgraduate taught study: Narratives and Navigations of First-generation Students in England, was examined by Professor Penny Jane Burke, University of Newcastle, Australia as external, and Dr Kathryn Telling, University of Sussex as internal. Rosa’s PhD was supervised by Dr Tamsin-Hinton Smith and Dr Louise Gazeley.

Helen Murray successfully passed her PhD viva this morning with minor corrections. The thesis: Universities, Conflict and the Public Sphere: Trajectories of the Public University in Lebanon was examined by Prof Tristan McCowan, IOE/UCL and Prof Yusuf Sayed, University of Sussex, and chaired by Dr Nigel Marshall. Helen was supervised by Mario Novelli, John Pryor, and Barbara Crossouard.
Virtual Book Launch:

The Roma in European Higher Education: Recasting Identities, Re-Imagining Futures.
December 2021

Welcome remarks & Introduction
Ethel Brooks

The Roma in European Higher Education: Explaining the Educational Gap of Roma in Higher Education
Andrzej Mirga and Nadir Redzepi

The European Discourse of Inclusion Policies for Roma in Higher Education: Racialized Neoliberal Governmentality in Semi-Peripheral Europe
Daniel Leyton

Phaori si duje xulajenqe te keres buti (Nobody Can Serve Two Masters) Higher Education Expansion, Roma Access and Neoliberal Globalization
Spyros Themelis

Capability Strengthening: Roma as Knowledge Producers
Paul Roberts

Creating Knowledge about the Roma in Higher Education
Iulius Rostas and Simona Torotcoi

The Roma in Spanish Higher Education: Lights and Shades after Three Decades of National Plans for Roma Inclusion
Teresa Padilla-Carmona, José González-Monteagudo, and Sandra Heredia-Fernández

Higher Education in Nordic Roma and Traveller Policy Documents – Analysing Silences
Jenni Helakorpi and Ulpukka Isopahkala-Bouret

Widening Access of the Roma in the Global Knowledge Economy: The Case of Serbia
Tanja Jovanovic

Greek Roma in Higher Education: How Did They Get There?
Panagiota Gkofa

Conclusion
Margareta Matache
DECOLONIZING TRANS/GENDER STUDIES?
TEACHING GENDER, RACE AND SEXUALITY IN TIMES OF THE RISE OF THE GLOBAL RIGHT

FEBRUARY 2021
Speaker: Alyosxa Tudor, Senior Lecturer in Gender Studies, Centre for Gender Studies, SOAS, University of London

To celebrate LGBTQAI+ month, CHEER hosted this seminar where Alyosxa Tudor argued that a decolonial perspective on ‘gender’ means conceptualising it as always already trans. Their object of investigation was ‘gender’ as a category and ‘gender studies’ as a field of knowledge. In order to discuss what decolonising trans/gender studies in Europe could mean, Alyosxa brought different strands together that have been held apart so far: resistance against global attacks on gender studies, resistance against transphobic feminism, and the ‘decolonising the curriculum’ movement in the UK. A critical focus on Eurocentric knowledge and truth claims means to define ‘Europe’ as a complex set of geopolitical, historical and epistemological processes and not just as a neutral location. The seminar was attended by 150 people from around the globe.

MODERNITY/COLONIALITY AND RESEARCH IN THE WESTERNISED ACADEMY

APRIL 2021
Speaker: Ali Kassem, Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Arab Council for Social Sciences, Beirut Urban Lab, American University of Beirut (funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York)

This session offered an introduction into decolonial theory, particularly in its Latin American strand and the Modernity/Decoloniality collective’s work, focusing on the ‘Westernised University’ as an institution of Modernity/Coloniality. The presentation raised and explored key issues and debates around research from within such an institution. The session also proposed ‘immersive decolonial listening’ as a reflexive practice that can support researchers in decolonising their projects, the university, as well as their own beings and knowing.
PALESTINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IN PROTRACTED CRUSES: IDENTITY, RESILIENCE AND HOPE

JUNE 2021

Speaker: Dr Nazmi Al-Masri, Associate Professor of Education, The Islamic University of Gaza, Palestine Department of Education, University of Sussex.

Palestinian higher education institutions were born under military occupation and have been subjected to many protracted restrictions - including isolation and siege. Drawing on moral principles and ethical values - especially asserting identity, resilience and hopefulness - they strive to overcome these challenges and offer quality educational services through diverse and creative avenues, such as developing wide international academic networks, and making the best of available technologies. This seminar shed light on the state of Palestinian higher education institutions today.

For recordings of past event, please see:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/events/archive202021
PUBLICATIONS


**SPECIAL ISSUE OF DISCOURSE: STUDIES IN THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF EDUCATION. ROUTLEDGE, 42(1).**

CHEER was delighted to announce that the publication of the Special Issue: *Does Class Still Matter? Conversations about Power, Privilege and Persistent Inequalities in Higher Education* from its 2017 10th Anniversary Seminar (https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cdis20/42/1?nav=tocList). The contents included:


In December, 2020, CHEER hosted an online booklaunch for the first publication to exist on the Roma in Higher Education. The book evolved from the HEIM Project (http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/researchprojects/), and authors presented their chapters online to an international audience. We were honoured to have eminent members of the Roma academic community as discussants: Professors Ethel Brooks, Rutgers University, USA, and Magareta Matache, Harvard University, USA.

The book includes the following contents:
• Introduction: Recasting Identities, Re-Imagining Futures, Louise Morley (University of Sussex, UK), Andrzej Mirga (Roma Education Fund, Hungary) and Nadir Redzepi (Roma Education Fund, Hungary).

Part I: Theories, Resources, Policy and Professional Interventions for Challenging Roma Exclusion from Higher Education
» Thinking Differently about the Roma in Higher Education: Beyond Sex, Slums and Special Schools, and Towards Epistemic Inclusion, Louise Morley (University of Sussex, UK).
» The European Discourse of Inclusion Policies for Roma in Higher Education: Racialized Neoliberal Governmentality in Semi-Peripheral Europe, Daniel Leyton (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile).
» Phaori si duje xulajenqe te keres buti (Nobody Can Serve Two Masters) Higher Education Expansion, Roma Access and Neoliberal Globalization, Spyros Themelis (University of East Anglia, UK).
» Capability Strengthening: Roma as Knowledge Producers, Paul Roberts (University of Sussex, UK).
» Creating Knowledge about the Roma in Higher Education, Iulius Rostas (Central European University, Hungary) and Simona Torotcoi (Central European University, Hungary).

Part II: Focus on Europe: Examples of What is Going On in Greece, the Nordic Countries, Serbia and Spain
» The Roma in Spanish Higher Education: Lights and Shades after Three Decades of National Plans for Roma Inclusion, Teresa Padilla-Carmona (University of Seville, Spain), José González-Monteagudo (University of Seville, Spain), and Sandra Heredia-Fernández (Seville City Council, Spain).
» Higher Education in Nordic Roma and Traveller Policy Documents: Analysing Silences, Jenni Helakorpi (University of Helsinki, Finland) and Ulpukka Isopahkala-Bouret (University of Turku, Finland).
» Widening Access of the Roma in the Global Knowledge Economy: The Case of Serbia, Tanja Jovanovic (University of Sussex, UK).
» Greek Roma in Higher Education: How Did They Get There? Panagiota Gkofa (King’s College London, UK).
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The Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research is located within the Department of Education in Essex House on the University of Sussex campus. The University is situated on a modern campus on the edge of the South Downs National Park near the lively seaside city of Brighton. London is one hour away by train, and there is easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

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