

## *Cluster 4*

### **Theme 1: Migration and mobility**

Policies and interventions surrounding migration have become centred increasingly on management, prevention and crisis control over the past decades. Although labour markets globally thrive on the circulation of workers, the dominant rhetoric intimates an uncontrolled over-supply of labour, often of the wrong type, which in turn nourishes discursive distinctions between wanted and unwanted migrants. This rhetoric developed in the global North but has since mushroomed into regional and local discourses elsewhere, advocated strategically by European states tying border control into development assistance. Today, even policy discourses concerning historical internal and cross-border mobilities are permeated by a globalised language of risky journeys, rent-seeking, exploitation. In this perspective migration bans or repatriation are presented as measures of protection even though they also serve to control mobilities. Intersecting restrictive mobility regimes create new avenues of uncertainty in mobilities built on migration and rule out legal transnational mobilities for a large proportion of people in the global South. The tightening of borders and boundaries comes at a time when rising inequalities globally and locally have paved the way for new uncertainties, disenchantment with the status quo, and desires for different types of lives. To deal with uncertainty and lack of opportunity commensurate with skills, moral values, quests for change, and personal aspirations, migrants are compelled to make choices and trade-offs regarding their mobilities.

The participants in this theme are invited to explore different dimensions of mobilities and immobilities, not as binary but rather as intertwined concepts with social, material and spatial attributes that operate at the macro, meso and micro level. In particular, we will discuss how discrepancies between politics of prevention and practices contesting the power of states intersect with hope, anticipation and the diverse nuances of precarity and disappointment that shape contemporary mobilities. Our discussion aims at bridging different levels to foreground how societal hope and uncertainty interact. At one level, states have a role in distributing hope for residents within their territories, in the most extreme

form by granting them legal existences or deeming them illegal. This is not just a question for the state but has moved to a supranational level where the Western interpretation of rights and wrongs is becoming increasingly dominant. At another level, societal hope is about the collective and normative values ascribed to migration. Most migratory projects are rooted in a shared expectation of migration as a means to upward social mobility, empowerment and/or social change, erasing distinctions between individual and collective interests.

Grounded in empirical research, the papers will demonstrate that for migrants, immobilities – due to debt, the need to remain invisible to authorities, doing work with stigmas attached, blockages imposed by the control of boundaries, to mention but a few – require negotiation and circumvention. Just as mobilities rooted in new configurations of gendered subject positions and material manifestations of success demand skilful assertion to be conducive of individual and collective pursuits of better futures across different spaces.

### Theme lead

Dorte Thorsen, University of Sussex

### Panel

Sebastien Bachelet, University of Manchester

Hans Peter Hahn, University of Frankfurt

Nauja Kleist, Danish Institute for International Studies

Bina Fernandez, University of Melbourne

Neha Wadhawan, ILO New Delhi

## Theme 2: Crime, Conflict and (In)security

This theme considers the problems and issues that arise in managing uncertainty in areas typically defined by Western nation states as ‘high risk’. Concentrating on two such areas – cyber-security and politically and religiously motivated violence – contributors will grapple with the impacts and effects of ambiguity and contingent knowledge on the definition and regulation of (perceived) threats. In particular, underlying questions of power will be addressed, alongside forms of engagement that ostensibly materialize out with the ambit of formal institutional processes.

The processes and practices delineated above will be addressed through the lens of law in the case of cyber-security, with a specific emphasis on the implications of a looming Brexit. In relation to ‘terrorism’, the prisms of analysis will be pre-emptive counter-radicalisation strategy and survivor’s accounts of critical incidents. Presenters will seek to elucidate the specific challenges presented by ‘unknowns’ and to account for the modes of uncertainty that are rarely acknowledged. In addition to criticizing extant modes of managing incertitude, contributors are invited to render explicit particular dilemmas and ponder on alternative approaches to conceptualizing and addressing uncertainties in the context of the problem of politically and religiously motivated violence.

### Theme lead/ Chair

**Gabe Mythen, University of Liverpool**

### Panel

**Narzanin Massoumi, University of Exeter**

‘The role of para-statal agencies in counter terrorism policy practice.’

This paper will contribute to the discussion about uncertainty by examining the lack of transparency and accountability of counter terrorism practice. While there is some recognition of the highly secretive and unaccountable actions of security and intelligence agencies, the focus of this paper is instead on one neglected area of counter – terrorism

practice: the role of para-statal agencies. In particular I will focus on the formation and the delivery of the UK Prevent programme. My research demonstrates that at both the level of policy formation and policy implementation, the UK Prevent programme is heavily shaped by the activities of a number of 'para-statal agencies'. These agencies are comprised of a number of think tanks and civil society organisations which act alongside governmental actors to deliver and develop counter terrorism initiatives. The relatively autonomous nature of these actors means that they are able to evade the (albeit limited) range of official forms of scrutiny of their actions. My paper will consider the implications of the role of non-state actors in delivering official policies with respects to questions of accountability, transparency and democratic decision-making.

**Will McGowan, University of Liverpool in Singapore**

'Comparative Uncertainty: A Tale of Two Tragedies.'

'Uncertainty' has become a particularly enigmatic signifier in recent years, with global elections and Britain's relationship with Europe among the events contributing to both a tangible yet vacuous sense of incertitude. To speak of 'uncertainty' in the abstract at such politically charged times seems absurd. This paper and discussion will attempt to provide something of a re-specified account of uncertainty by offering a comparative reading of two cases of political violence and terrorism: the shooting of innocent protestors by the British Army in 1972 in what we now refer to as 'Bloody Sunday' and the bombing of London's transport system in 2005 (or '7/7'). In trying to make sense of these various pasts in the present, I will tell a story of how two distinct sets of 'survivor groups' have traversed life since these tragic events, how we might locate and concretise uncertainty within their accounts, and offer my thoughts on how contemporary political conditions might differentially intermingle with these survivors' sense of collective identity and ontological security.

**Helena Farrand-Carrapico, Northumbria University  
(and Andre Barrinha, University of Bath)**

‘A Britain-less future? The Impact of Brexit uncertainty on the cybersecurity landscape.’

The EU has, in the last few years, set in motion a series of policies, institutions and initiatives that is changing the cybersecurity landscape in Europe: from a directive (NIS) that forces companies to disclose cyber-attacks to the development of a joint EU approach against large-scale cyber-attacks. As Britain is one of the most advanced member states in this field, Brexit will certainly have an impact on the development of EU’s approach to cybersecurity. This paper has three main ambitions in that regard. First, to take stock of the UK’s contribution to EU’s cybersecurity. Second, to assess the terms of the future relationship between Brussels and London in terms of cybersecurity by conceptualising the uncertainty that is currently being experienced in the field. Third, to discuss the future direction of EU’s cybersecurity policy. By looking at this policy area, it will be possible to offer some potentially relevant insights on two issues beyond cybersecurity: on the role larger member states play in developing policy initiatives, and on the UK’s track record as a net contributor to EU’s security actorness. These insights are important not only in terms of understanding the driving elements and shaping dynamics within this policy field, but also for comprehending how the UK’s potential withdrawal from the EU is affecting the latter’s stance as a cyber security actor, and is likely to do so in the future.

### **Theme 3: Culture, Religion and Perception**

Uncertainty is a perennial and fundamental aspect of human experience, and making sense of living and dying with uncertainty is a central element of many of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, as well as many non-western and indigenous cosmologies. This session attempts to explore some of the breadth of religious, spiritual and cultural understandings of knowledge, faith and certainty in order to ask how insights from these might enrich (the often more narrowly 'risk-framed') academic and policy debates around decision-making under conditions of uncertainty.

Contributors from a range of disciplinary backgrounds will bring both scholarly and personal reflections to bear on questions such as:

- How do specific cultural, spiritual or religious traditions characterise the limits to human knowledge, and what do these limits imply for decision making under conditions of uncertainty?
- Does the holding of a religious or spiritual belief change one's attitude toward uncertainty, and in what ways?
- What is the relationship between faith and certainty?
- Can greater awareness of the insights from different spiritual and cultural traditions help to foreground the need for more humble, plural ways of characterising decision making under conditions of incomplete knowledge?
- What insights can different spiritual and cultural traditions offer about the relationship, if any, between the drive to know fully and to control?
- Is there a spiritual or religious dimension to the whole discourse of 'sustainability' or 'transformation', and if so what does this imply for decision-making?

#### **Theme lead/ Chair**

**Rose Cairns, SPRU, University of Sussex**

**Panel****Bronislaw Szerszynski, Reader in Sociology, Lancaster University**

‘De-animating nature, taming the future.’

In this talk I will try to problematize not uncertainty but certitude, situating the modern, ‘Baconian’ aspiration to predict and control nature as a distinctive development within the *longue durée* of the shifting cosmopolitics of western cultures. I will start by talking about the relation between two historical developments: the replacement of ‘shamanic’ non-literate hunter-gatherer cultures by settled, literate, agricultural societies with organised religion, and the move from a social, conversational model of the interactions between humans and nonhuman nature to a more technical one – crudely, from craft to technology (Ingold 2000; Szerszynski 2005). Secondly, coming closer to the present, I will argue that changes in the social and political ordering of European society since the medieval period have produced a number of ‘temporal gestalts’ (Luhmann 1976) – felt relationships between past, present and future – which give shape to diverse contemporary attempts to ‘tame the future’ (Adam & Groves 2007).

**Anna Waldstein, School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent**

‘Everything works for you, nothing can be against you: Pronoia as Rastafari spiritual comfort in uncertain times.’

Rastafari is a spiritual movement from Jamaica that promotes equal rights and justice for the African diaspora. Between 2011 and 2013 I was privileged to receive mentorship from a Rastafari spiritual teacher at the BaRaKa tabernacle in south London. One of the first things that my mentor told me was ‘everything works for you, nothing can be against you, you are protected (by) Rastafari.’ This was something he would frequently remind me of, especially whenever I expressed anxieties about uncertainty in my life and in the wider world. As my interest in Rastafari developed into an anthropological research project, I discovered that such attitudes of pronoia were widespread and related to meditation practices facilitated by smoking cannabis. In this presentation I will reflect on the ways that

pronoia is cultivated in Rastafari, and how it contributes to keeping the emotions balanced, which is key to good decision making.

**Chris McDermott, Zen practitioner and Chaplain of Sussex University**

‘Epistemic humility and uncertainty in Zen and Christian apophatic spirituality.’

Uncertainty in the most positive sense of that word features powerfully in two traditions in which I am rooted: the apophatic spirituality of the early Christian Church and in the practice of Zazen. The former is characterised by a linguistic strategy that proceeds by way of affirmation, negation and negation of the negation. Zen similarly proceeds with epistemic humility by way of a similar use of language that draws on Nagarjuna’s ‘Mūlamadhyamakakārikā – ‘The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way.’ The confluences of these two traditions in the experience of ‘religious multiple belonging’ mutually reinforce and resonate with each other.

A positive value of ‘uncertainty’ as an aspect of life in this context is also enhanced by the insight of feminist critique of the three terms: ‘religious – multiple – belongingness’ and Gillian Rose’s notion of ‘the Broken Middle’. This engenders an ‘at home-ness’ with uncertainty rather than anxiety and disposes life in the direction of openness, resistance to closure and hope.