2024 UQ Social Science Postgraduate Conference Program and Abstracts Book

Decolonial encounters: valuing and embracing diverse knowledges and territories

Date

Tuesday 22 Oct 2024 10:00 am–6:30 pm

Venue

Terrace Room, Sir Llew Edwards Building (Building 14)

St. Lucia, University of Queensland

What's Up?: South! World Map. ODT (2002)

The conference theme, Decolonial encounters: valuing and embracing diverse knowledges and territories, is an invitation to reflect on how we have been practising and conducting our research and the myriad possibilities of understanding territories. How do we value and incorporate the knowledge of the communities we study? What counts as territory, and how is it represented in our research? How do we challenge the coloniality of knowledge and rethink our citation practices? These are some of the questions driving the activities and presentations at the conference.

The Organising Committee invites everyone to enjoy a day of reflection on these themes by walking, listening to Aboriginal people, and engaging with the varied research presentations.

Conference Program

Time		
8:00 - 09:45 am	**Preconference activity: Aboriginal culture and history of the St Lucia area walking tour**	
09:45 - 10:15 am	Registration and Morning Tea	
10:15 - 10:30 am	Opening - Head of School Prof. Lynda Cheshire and Organising Committee	
10:30 - 11:45 am	**First session – Gender and body** Chair: TBC	
	Julia LeMonde	Is woman-centred care in Australian maternity an oxymoron? Exploring reproductive coercion in maternity care practices
	Helene Diezel	Bodies, practice, and systems: decolonial potentiality of video reflexive ethnography into patient centered care
	Natalie Heni Maihi Fenell	Justice for the invisible, inevitable and unspeakable: An abolition feminism analysis of sexual and gender-based violence and the International Criminal Court
11:45 - 11:55 am	Break	
11:55 - 1:00 pm	**Second session - Housing and homelessness** Chair: Prof. Renee Zahnow	
	Joelle Moore	Territorialising the private rental 'home' through a decolonial lens
	Mel Powersmith	A Critical Phenomenology of 'Home' under Social Housing and Welfare Residualisation
	Sky Constantine	Navigating Nothing About Us Without Us in a PhD research project: identifying opportunities for collaboration, fulfilling institutional requirements, and reflecting on the right to say "no"
1:00 - 2:00 pm	Lunch Break	
2:00 - 3:20 pm	**Third session - Socio-economic impacts on marginalised communities** Chair: Prof. Kristen Lyons	
	Swastika Samanta	Influences of social media-based communication on ecotourism: a case study in India
	Bhakti E. Nugroho	The Pandemics of Marginalization: Study on consequences of the new capital city establishment in six countries on native inhabitants
	Pipin Prasetyono	A thematic analysis of Indonesian informal workers' perception about the Matching Defined Contribution (MDC) pension program
3:20 - 3:40 pm	Afternoon Tea	
3:40 - 5:00 pm	**Fourth Session - Place and Ecologies** Chair: Prof. Sally Babidge	
	Joseph Kneipp	The Liminal Place: Exploring the experiences of residents in a rural Australian border community during the COVID-19 pandemic
	Mitch Gilligan	Place, Ethics and the Coloniality of Space
	Ricardo Labra Mocarquer	Can the Subaltern Design? Historic-ethnographic approaches to Participatory Design in Australian Indigenous Architecture
5:00 - 5:10 pm	Break	
5:10 - 6:10 pm	**Keynote Speaker – Joshua Waters**	
6:10 - 21:00 pm	Drinks, snacks and networking	

Keynote Speaker

Joshua Waters

Joshua Waters is a First Nations K/Gamilaroi man, PhD student and Senior Research Fellow with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University. He is also a core member of Deakin University's Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Lab and a Director of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Collective (IKSC), where he supports a number of regional, national and international partnerships and research projects aimed at utilising Indigenous knowledges and complexity for global systems innovation and change. His work explores the critical role of Indigenous Knowledges in global higher education and institutional contexts. His past research examines the key convergences between Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and natural systems combined with Western scientific domains by using land-based pedagogical approaches to inform methodology, theory development and solution-finding to global complex challenges and socio-political problems.

Presentation abstract

Indigenous spiritualities are an inseparable part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience and worldview. For many-tens-of-thousands-of-years First Nations peoples in Australia have modelled their societies around multilayered interdimensional ontologies which give presence and meaning to their human experience. In the context of Indigenous research, however, colonial structures and post-enlightenment theories generate and perpetuate rigid barriers to their inclusion, compromising the health, safety, and wellbeing of Indigenous researchers involved in research projects across the country. Australian Universities and their ethics processes in this regard, do not often enough account for Indigenous spiritual and cultural experiences, such as spiritual protection, wellbeing, and harm, reflecting the broader impacts of settler-colonialism, structural racism, and religious exclusion along with their ongoing effects on Indigenous spiritual systems of knowledge both in institutions and in Aboriginal communities. Overbearing encounters with colonialism subsequently impinge on Indigenous worldviews in ways that recapitulate dominant values, further marginalising Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies, all the while neglecting responsibilities to uphold a level of spiritual care.

By examining how post-enlightenment theories and perspectives influence processes within Indigenous research, along with the limitations of Western colonial frameworks on Indigenous spiritualities, this presentation seeks to conceptualise the notion of 'spirit' in global and Australian Indigenous research, while nurturing deeper understandings of the importance of Indigenous spiritualities when promoting inclusive research practices that foster Indigenous spiritual health, wellbeing, and self-determination. Finally, an emergent theory of extended relatedness will be introduced, focusing on the collective power of Indigenous communities to determine and select for relationships that harness spiritual energy within an economy of care, trust, and mutual respect over time. Emphasis is provided for 'gifts' of entanglement, which are an inherent component of Indigenous research and Indigenous community values worldwide, and which illustrate the potential for responsible research practices grounded in Indigenous ontologies and spiritualities.

Preconference Activity

Aboriginal culture and history of the St Lucia area walking tour with Alex Bond

Alex Bond strongly identifies as a member of the Kabi Kabi people of south-east Queensland, but also has descent links with the Waka Waka (Burnett River) and Kaanju (Cape York) and Kumu (Dirranbandi) peoples.

He has an extensive knowledge base on Aboriginal culture and history in South-East Queensland. Alex is regularly employed at the Aboriginal Environments Research Collaborative (The University of Queensland) for community-oriented projects. He is also a casual tutor and research assistant at the Collaborative and conducts guided tours of the Aboriginal cultural landscape in the Brisbane CBD for UQ students of anthropology, human geography and architecture.

He has been conducting cultural landscape tours since 2011 and is passionate about sharing his cultural knowledge. In his spare time, Alex loves busking and playing his guitar.

Abstracts

First Session – Gender and Body

10:30 am – Terrace Room

Is woman-centred care in Australian maternity an oxymoron? Exploring reproductive coercion in maternity care practices - *Julia LeMonde*

The medicalisation of pregnancy and birth has had a profound impact over the perceived safety of childbirth and conceptualisations of women's bodies. However high-income countries like Australia are seeing increased reports of women emerging with birth trauma and accounts of experiences of obstetric violence in maternity settings. My research seeks to address this issue and repositions women's knowledge of birth at the foreground to find out what it is that some women seek in their birth processes and what it is that they do not seek or need. Understanding what women want in their birthing processes across contexts allows for a decolonisation of the Western model of rationality and scientific positivism which underpins medicalised birth. Qualitative data obtained from women's narratives reveal what it less known about the medical approach to birth when it fails to place women at the centre of their birth processes. Positioning women's birth knowledge at the centre of birth challenges the ideology of quality, evidence-based, scientific approaches to maternity care. At the same time it destabilises the ethic of woman-centred care– a cornerstone of Australia's maternity system. Results reveal complex and often unconscious acts of reproductive coercion as informed consent, body autonomy and intuitive processes are revealed to be curtailed or denied for some women. I argue that acts of violence toward women are not only women's issues but need to be resolved at a societal level because our humanity is at stake if we do not acknowledge how care-practices hurt some women under the guise of care.

Bodies, practice, and systems: decolonial potentiality of video reflexive ethnography into patient centered care – *Helene Diezel*

The conference theme my PhD research most speaks to is decoloniality of methodology, with video reflexive ethnography (VRE) chosen for the ability to promote collaborative methods across diverse participants. This approach allowed me to engage equally with knowledge of patients and various healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors, nurses, allied health), each providing unique perspectives on patient-centered care in endocrinology. My study highlighted tensions between patients and healthcare professionals, leading to productive disruptions. Points of tension have been visibilised during my VRE study into patient centered care in endocrinology. As I engaged participants with VRE methods, patients began advocating for their desired care and re-engaging with previous interventions, while healthcare professionals refined their practices and initiated investigations into identified issues. Specifically, patients began to advocate for care they wanted and re-engage with previously abandoned care interventions. Healthcare professionals reprocessed their practice with peers to pinpoint areas to improve and those with seniority began investigations into sub-par processes illuminated during the research. These conflicts had tangible impacts on care practices and systems, even within a single PhD cycle. Conflict that arose to do with patient territory and healthcare professionals terrorist had a material impact on bodies, practice, and systems, highlighting the productive potentiality of VRE as a decolonising set of methods. Decolonial methodology enhanced patient-centered care and management through ongoing reflexivity, improving both patient and healthcare

professional practices. Post-reflexivity led to formal investigations that addressed sub-optimal care, creating material impacts on healthcare systems. Inequalities were addressed in patient and healthcare professional territories by incorporating participant feedback and elevating least-empowered voices, such as patients. For instance, I pursued an ethics amendment to facilitate deeper engagement with patient feedback as requested by healthcare professionals. As such, my PhD research colonialised methodology in social science study and had a material impact on bodies, practice, and systems.

Justice for the invisible, inevitable and unspeakable: An abolition feminism analysis of sexual and gender-based violence and the International Criminal Court - *Natalie Heni Maihi Fenell*

Sexual violence pervades narratives of war. Despite this ubiquity, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was long overlooked due to its categorisation as an inevitable by-product of conflict. As a result, SGBV was historically absent from the literature, reduced to laconic references in war chronicles or essentialist accounts which considered it an inescapable consequence of the hypermasculinity and chaos of warfare. The unprecedented visibility of the atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia pushed SGBV to the forefront of humanitarian and scholarly rhetoric, yet the increased visibility was "dangerously easy", and paradoxically concealed the needs of victim-survivors within a faceless, infantilised and feminised mass in need of saving, whilst simultaneously demonising those responsible through racialised stereotypes. Given the colonial roots of SGBV these narratives are symptomatic of the coloniality of knowledge, an omnipresent and insidious affliction which positions the neo-colonial institutions of international law as a supercilious saviour. My research interrogates this tension, to extricate the myriad intersecting violences intimately intertwined within, and invisiblised by, normative conceptualisations of justice. It was born from abolitionist, feminist and decolonial questions: can the rigidity of international humanitarian law catalyse justice for heterogeneous and protean traumatic experiences; and is there justice in incarcerating those responsible for SGBV, acts predicated upon sexist, misogynistic, patriarchal, classist and colonial attitudes, within carceral institutions which are tools of sexist, misogynistic, patriarchal, classist and colonial violence, within which sexual violence is prevalent and normalised?

My oral presentation will discuss my empirical findings from my examination two cases adjudicated by the International Criminal Court (ICC): The Prosecutor v. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, the first individual to be convicted, though later acquitted, of SGBV, and The Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen, a previous child soldier and the most recent to be convicted of SGBV.

Second Session - Housing and homelessness

11:55 am – Terrace Room

Territorialising the private rental 'home' through a decolonial lens – *Joelle Moore*

In my PhD thesis I utilise Deleuze and Guatarri's ideas on territorialisation, de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation as a framework for understanding the private-rental 'home' through the experiences of older lower-income private renters. This presentation discusses how these concepts can account for the complexity of 'home' - allowing us to acknowledge and reveal the inconsistencies, ambiguities, and contradictions inherent in 'home'. I contend that these contradictions arise from fundamental differences in relationships to land and the sociolegal context of territory. These differences reflect deeper cultural and philosophical worldviews and have profound implications for private renters' ability to make a 'home'. I will discuss how understanding these historic and culturally-specific relationships to territory can help to explore the inequalities that persist around 'home' and 'home-making' in the private rental sector. For example, Australian housing policy is deeply embedded in colonial legal frameworks that prioritise individual ownership and the accumulation of wealth through land. As a result, Australian land tenure systems reflect these priorities and the values of the colonial period and its settlers (often to the detriment of marginalised groups), and private renting is viewed as an inferior form of tenure. This presentation argues that these colonial frameworks, systems and policies perpetuate inequities within the private rental sector where powerful processes destabilise or de-territorialise the 'home'. For example, landlords have powers over tenants that undermine their ability to make a 'home' through a lack of legal rights and control over the residential space. Thus, a decolonial approach to housing policy would involve rethinking our conceptions of territory and territorialisation - including the ways we imagine the private-rental-home - to address historical injustices and inequalities, and prioritise the needs of those who have been systematically excluded from decent housing, such as low-income older people.

A Critical Phenomenology of 'Home' under Social Housing and Welfare Residualisation – *Mel Powersmith*

Home can be described as a place where people can exercise control or are free to be themselves (e.g, Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). However, although social housing provides a vital source of security, people's ability to make 'home' can be more difficult within the constraints presented by social housing tenure. This paper discusses tenants' firsthand experiences of social housing and welfare residualisation and their assertions of home under these conditions. It presents the findings from 37 hybrid interview/go-alongs with tenants across Greater Brisbane, using an embodied, reflexive, and phenomenological approach to explore how tenants orient themselves in the dwelling/home, as well as broader society. I use relational interviewing and my positionality to help relate to, and empower research participants (Ross, 2017). I am a precarious worker and renter, and have first-hand experiences of residualised programs/contexts, such as accessing statutory payments, social housing tenure.

Tenants' abilities to make home in social housing is being undermined by impacts of residualisation, stemming from intensified targeting of meagre stock, as well as variations in quality, upkeep, and design. Residualisation exerts an attritional force and tenants deal with incursions on their domestic space from other neighbours and interruptions of peaceful down-time. Their home lives are multiscalar (Blunt & Dowling 2006), and are touched by Australia's evolving welfare system, climate, financial systems, as well as the broader housing crisis. People experience belonging or a lack thereof in the broader urban landscape, as well as trials and tribulations related to health/disability, gender, and ethnicity, and other difficult life events. However, tenants' stable housing, proximity to amenities, and its

relative affordability grants them an important but limited sense of agency. Tenants also share important insights on housing and welfare policy and discuss the vital role of the sector.

Navigating Nothing About Us Without Us in a PhD research project: identifying opportunities for collaboration, fulfilling institutional requirements, and reflecting on the right to say "no" - *Sky Constantine*

This paper draws on the processes, methods, and methodology of a PhD project in progress, exploring the possibilities and opportunities for lived and living experience involvement to contribute to the end of homelessness in Australia. This project has used Community Based Participatory Action Research as its methodological foundation however this methodology does not provide an easy fit for HDR requirements nor the realities of working in collaboration with multiply marginalised populations. This presentation will overview the practical processes of undertaking collaborative research while balancing ethics applications, limited resources, and diverse stakeholder needs. This presentation will also reflect on the necessity of engaging with both intellectual and emotional vulnerabilities in creating opportunities for genuinely collaborative research.

Third Session – Socio-economic impacts on marginalised communities

2:00 pm – Terrace Room

Influences of social media-based communication on ecotourism: a case study in India – *Swastika Samanta*

Ecotourism has emerged as a sustainable alternative to mass tourism, predominantly in developing countries. The benefits claimed by ecotourism include a focus on environmental protection and sustainable development with equitable financial distribution. But its implementation in practice faces challenges due to ambiguous interpretations, competing stakeholders, and increased social media usage. Social media, increasingly used to market ecotourism, has led to overtourism in these pristine destinations, perpetuating some of the detrimental environmental, socioeconomic and cultural impacts of mass tourism.

India has also experienced similar issues, particularly in certain fragile and climate change affected areas of the Trans-Himalayas, such as the Spiti Valley and Ladakh. Despite ecotourism's potential, the role of communication in realizing it's sustainable and equitable outcomes has been rarely studied. Using a case study approach, this study examined the role of communication and engagement amongst key stakeholder groups, focusing on their social media usage. Considering limited scholarship in India, the focus was on understanding the pivotal role of social media communication and the emergence of influencers in promoting ecotourism goals beyond mere marketing purposes. With the aim to integrate decoloniality as a research methodology, qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups were combined along with textual analysis of key participant groups' public Instagram profiles. The was done to facilitate deep listening and sharing within native, local communities in the case study areas and not just rely on analyses of digital data. Preliminary findings highlight a growing digital divide concerning influencer culture in the regions, revealing how new media environments have transformed not only communication practices and engagement but also ways of living, consequently affecting the sustainable implementation of ecotourism.

The Pandemics of Marginalization: Study on consequences of the new capital city establishment in six countries on native inhabitants – *Bhakti E. Nugroho*

Many countries in history have transferred their new capital to other geographical locations to bold national identity, deal with environmental pressure, and generate efficient bureaucratic processes in a more organized space (Rachmawati et al., 2021; Rossman, 2018). Nevertheless, an official ground for the countries to relocate their capital is often aligned with the personal motive of the person in power, which is not a coincidence. The new capital city project in many countries reflects the consolidation of authoritarian leadership to maintain its power and regime interest by designing a space that may hamper coups, mass political rallies, and external invasions (Knutsen et al., 2024). Moreover, since the capital city used to be a center where the modal accumulated, the construction of the new capital city facilitated the economic interest of capital owners in emerging new industries, which often declined the traditional economic force (Kratke, 2014).

The political interest of the ruling regime, thus an economic advantage for the capital owners, made the project of capital city relocations more beneficial to the elites. Like a pandemic, establishing a new capital city in many countries marginalizes a particular powerless group. Using the decolonial approach, this presentation will bring the story of marginalization and exclusion in the establishment of the new capital city of Brazil (Derntl, 2024), Nigeria (Amba, 2010; Jonas & Matthias, 2022; LeVan & Olubowale, 2014), Malaysia (Narayanan, 2017), Kazakhstan (Koch, 2014; Shelekpayev, 2018), Myanmar (Seekins, 2009; Seekins, 2022), and

Indonesia (Satriani et al, 2023; Cahyadi et al, 2023; Saputra et al., 2022). Based on the desk study on six capital city projects, it is found that the marginalization started from exclusive planning, a repressive process, and ended up with the dispossession of land and property of native inhabitants.

A thematic analysis of Indonesian informal workers' perception about the Matching Defined Contribution (MDC) pension program – *Pipin Prasetyono*

Countries worldwide are grappling with a significant demographic shift towards an ageing population. In response, governments are strengthening their pension systems to accommodate the growing number of older adults and expanding coverage. A central focus of these efforts is extending pension benefits to informal sector workers, as widespread informality in labour markets often leads to low pension system coverage. Indonesia, a developing country with a large informal workforce, has long faced challenges in expanding its pension system coverage. The pressure from an ageing population has prompted the Indonesian government to prioritise this issue, moving to the agenda-setting stage of the public policy process. The government is now committed to developing a public pension program specifically tailored for informal sector workers. This program, known as the Matching Defined Contributions (MDC), is an ex-ante intervention that provides subsidies to match participants' contributions, thereby encouraging participation.

This study frames the MDC as a social innovation, aiming to understand informal workers' intentions to adopt the MDC and identify the key factors influencing their decisions. Guided by constructs from innovation theories, the study explores five perceived factors through interviews: relative advantage, effort expectancy, social influence, compatibility, and the cost of the MDC program. The research question guiding this study is: What factors do informal workers consider important when deciding whether to participate in an MDC pension program?

To answer this question, interviews were conducted with 48 informal workers across various regions of Indonesia. The findings reveal positive behavioural intentions toward the MDC, with two main categories of influencing factors: individual needs and motivations, and innovation attributes. The individual needs and motivations category includes themes such as the need to participate in a retirement program, trust in government, and the demonstration effect. The innovation attributes category refers to the perceived characteristics of the innovation, including policy amenability, simplicity of participation, extensive flexibility, and the provision of incentives.

Fourth Session - Place and Ecologies

3:40pm – Terrace Room

The Liminal Place: Exploring the experiences of residents in a rural Australian border community during the COVID-19 pandemic – *Joseph Kneipp*

This study investigates how people's sense of identity, place, and ontological security, were impacted by government border restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic (from March 2020 - January 2022). The site of inquiry, Goondiwindi QLD, is located on the Queensland-New South Wales border, 400kms west of the state capital (Brisbane). Participants completed 45-minute, in-person interviews in Goondiwindi throughout 2024. Preliminary results indicate that there were varied impacts to residents' self-concepts of place and identity, and an aggregate reduction in feelings of ontological security. The implication of lower levels of ontological security in communities like Goondiwindi is corresponding dissatisfaction and despondency within those communities with regard to government interventions. These extend beyond those enacted in the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how to foster ontological security is critical for future governments, who require trust and co-operation with these communities for broader governmental function. Additionally, interpersonal impacts to identity and place have implications within communities like Goondiwindi, as previously stable shared meanings are made and remade, creating potential for intra-community friction.

Place, Ethics and the Coloniality of Space – *Mitch Gilligan*

Often place can be misunderstood; the instances are varied. However, one particularly common misunderstanding (which is arguably definitive of modernity and, indeed, coloniality) takes place to be a subordinate of space, i.e. place is just space plus meaning or, as is often the case with political and/or social thought, place is merely a site within an all-expansive space delineated by somewhat arbitrarily and malleably drawn territorial boundaries. Such a position – and its counter – might be seen as having its basis in technical and/or metaphysical arguments seemingly too abstract to have any tangible effect on our everyday experiences of and within place. Hence, when it comes to the domain of the ethical – which is surely central to any genuine conception of decoloniality – any importance attributed to an understanding of place as such can go by the wayside.

However, if one can concede to anything like the Aristotelian axiom that 'to be is to be placed' – that any sort of appearance, event, or indeed, encounter, necessarily takes place within place and, in so doing, inevitably invokes and involves place in its very happening – then one should readily appreciate that having a proper understanding of place as such (as *sui generis*) is not only an ethical imperative generally, but is particularly crucial in the context of coloniality where issues and histories of place are central. Here I would like to try, firstly, lay out a position which identifies spatialised (mis)understandings of place as being central to coloniality and, secondly, offer a conception of place as *sui generis,* arguing that such an understanding of place is essential to any properly ethical conception of decoloniality.

Can the Subaltern Design? Historic-ethnographic approaches to Participatory Design in Australian Indigenous Architecture – *Ricardo Labra Mocarquer*

Involving future users of what is being designed in a design process, or 'Participatory Design,' is an approach celebrated by various disciplines. However, the term "participation" remains ambiguous, encompassing a variety of meanings and practices. Despite this ambiguity, most participatory methodologies carry conceptions associated with the tradition of Western liberal thought. These assumptions do not always fit Indigenous contexts, where participation may include non-human entities (such as spirits and natural elements),

communal and interconnected thought, established hierarchies, and cultural taboos.

I will present my PhD research progress on how participatory design is understood within Australian professional architecture for Indigenous people and how this understanding channels the materialization of cultural difference. Drawing from primary and secondary bibliographic sources and interviews with architects, I will present predominant discourses on the potential for including the 'Indigenous user' in architectural design. I will discuss a perceived emphasis on oral interactions over material or experimental methods often employed in design studies and practices. Additionally, I will address theoretical and methodological complexities of potential fieldwork (ethnography of participation).

Ultimately, I am interested in discussing the condition of possibilities for negotiating and projecting the built environment in societies striving for an intercultural future through an anthropology of (co-)design.