

Methodological Innovations in Gender Research: Public Lecture Series

The importance of creativity in methods and representation in qualitative research

Dr. Sarah Wilson (PhD 2003 University of Edinburgh) is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology in the Faculty of Social Science, University of Stirling, Scotland.) Her work has focused on young people in difficult family circumstances. Recent work explores the representation of qualitative data and what sociologists can learn from visual artists. She is also involved on work on migration to/from Armenia in the current context of regional insecurity.



Public Guest Lecture:

Dr. Sarah Wilson

Date: April 20th, 2023

Time: 10:00

Location: online

Register online:

<https://soziologie.uni-graz.at/en/sociology-of-gender/research/current-projects/public-lecture-series/registration-elf-wilson-online/>

Working with children and young people who live in difficult family circumstances raises many ethical issues. Significant concerns relating to consent and confidentiality dominate the discussions of ethics committees. The potential uses of research findings are a further important worry, particularly in the UK where tabloid journalists and politicians have reinforced reductive, negative imaginations of children and young people with experience of (state) care. This stigmatisation remains strong even in Scotland where policy discourse is more supportive. This lecture focuses on two related issues drawn from my own research experience. First the importance of methods that allow for participants to communicate the complexity of their lives, and their own (creative) agency within very difficult circumstances including visual and creative methods. Second, I consider the disadvantages of conventional academic representations of findings in doing justice to complex (affective) data and to research participants themselves. I argue that sociologists can learn from the practices of visual artists in relation to both data collection and the representation of findings. These considerations also relate to broader contemporary interrogations of modernist conceptions of scientific practice and presentation that reflect ontologies of connection, affinity and juxtaposition, rather than categorisation and abstraction.