



Co-Designing Research Opportunities and Challenges for Collaborative Projects

Chaired by Mónica Degen (Brunel University London) and Sarita Malik (Brunel University London)

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Seminari de Filosofia

Faculty of Geography and History, University of Barcelona

c/ Montalegre, 6, 08001-Barcelona

Co-Designing Research

Opportunities and Challenges for Collaborative Projects

In this workshop we aim to bring together academics and non-University collaborators to discuss the opportunities and challenges of working together. How can research projects be designed and developed in mutually beneficial ways, and with outputs and legacies that are useful for academic and wider knowledge?

Over the last 10 years, there has been a shift in the UK to integrate public engagement outputs in funded research projects. More widely across Europe, there has been a longer history of collaboration between academic, private and public sectors. This workshop provides an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, as well as to discuss the 'politics' of such collaborations. What are the ethics involved when Universities work with non-academic partners? How do we deal with issues of legacy and responsibility? What are academics' responsibilities when it comes to objectivity and impartiality, specifically when partnering up with other non-academic institutions?

Schedule

16.00: Introduction by Marta Contijoch (social anthropologist, University of Barcelona).

16.15: Keynote: Prof. Sarita Malik: *Connecting Communities: Reflections on building research with marginalised 'communities'*.

16.45: Questions.

17.00: Keynote: Dr. Mónica Degen: *Co-production of knowledge: mediating the sensory city as a common good*.

17.30: Questions.

17:45: BREAK

18.00: Open Dialogue

- Carlos Delclós (sociologist, writer, gestor cultural CCCB)
- Marc Dalmau (moviments socials de Sants)
- Carme Gual (directora Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament)
- Sarita Malik (media sociologist, Brunel University London)
- Mónica Degen (cultural sociologist, Brunel University London)

More speakers TBC. For more information, please contact martacontijoch@ub.edu

Connecting Communities: Reflections on building research with marginalised 'communities'

Prof. Sarita Malik, Brunel University London

There has been a recent shift within academic research towards designing projects with non-University collaborators. The UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council for example has, since 2010, supported over 300 projects that combine university and university expertise through its Connected Communities Programme. This collaborative session asks what we can learn about social change within and between diverse communities by co-producing and co-designing research with those outside the academy?

The session draws on the insights and experiences of Malik, who has worked as a Principal Investigator on several Connected Communities project, with a specific focus on ethnic minorities' experiences of and production of creative work. It will draw on the work of the Black activist, A. Sivanandan, and in particular his notion of 'lived theory'. For Sivanandan, 'lived theory' emerges from a reorientation to people's actual experiences and unfolding struggles for equality. This approach calls for a break with academic orthodoxies about race, immigration and class by foregrounding the experiential and the subject's authority.

Malik will discuss how she is attempting to apply this idea of 'lived theory' within her research by taking the perspectives and actual experiences of diverse research collaborators and participants as a starting point. She will also discuss how this has the potential to link with the ambition of devising a decolonised methodology that, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) explains, centres the concerns of those who have been colonised in order to understand theory and research from their perspective.

Keywords: Co-production, creativity, race and ethnicity, communities, decolonisation

Biography:

Sarita Malik is Professor of Media, Culture and Communications at Brunel University London. Her research explores issues of social change, inequality, communities, and cultural representation. She has been the Principal Investigator on several funded projects related to these themes, and worked in collaboration with cultural organisations, academics and community partners. Sarita is currently leading 'Creative Interruptions', a large international research project funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project examines how the arts, media and creativity are used to challenge marginalisation. She has previously worked on projects exploring the relationship between cultural organisations and Diasporic audiences (2012-13) and on how community filmmaking intersects with cultural diversity (2013-14). Sarita previously worked in broadcast journalism, research development and arts management.

Co-production of knowledge: mediating the sensory city as a common good

Dr. Mónica Degen, Brunel University London

The aim of this session is to think about and explore how academics, community groups and urban professionals (from museum curators to urban planners or branding experts) can work together to capture, mediate and research the particularities of place through sensory and digital engagements.

Drawing on experiences from the research network Sensory Cities www.sensorycities.com which has created a platform for dialogue across academic disciplines, professions and national borders to discuss how to research urban experiences I would like to reflect on a series of issues. Firstly, in what ways the 'soft infrastructures' of the city such as culture, the senses or emotions might offer a relatable entry point for a variety of users and stakeholders in the city to discuss a series of social, political and economic issues. Secondly, how urban research can be co-produced amongst different stakeholders in urban environments and some of the challenges in such a process. Lastly, drawing on my most recent project with the Museum of London on "The changing 'feel' of Smithfields Market area: exploring sensory and temporal flows": www.sensorysmithfield.com , and taking as a starting point the 'uniqueness of place' and its embeddedness in everyday embodied experience, I want to explore what happens when we try and make academic research available to broader audiences through digital devices. What happens when sensations of place, memory and the sense of community are mediated for local and global digital audience through a digital device? What are the possibilities for interconnectedness and empowerment on the one side but also of exclusion and invisibility when we try and mediate sensory experiences of place through research, digital devices or curation?

Keywords: co-production; senses; cities; experience and digital mediation

Biography:

Mónica Degen is a Reader in Cultural Sociology in the Political and Social Sciences Department at Brunel University London. Her research focuses on the politics of space with a particular interest in the ways sensory, temporal and emotional dimensions underpin urban culture and politics. She worked recently on the project 'Sensory Cities' (www.sensorycities.com) and is thinking about how to develop this further. In 2016 she was awarded a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship to research 'Timescapes of Urban Change' (www.sensescitiescultures.com) where she explored how different perceptions of time converge or conflict in urban regeneration processes to produce a particular sense of place. Her most recent project with the Museum of London is exploring the ways in which place atmospheres change over time and how this is linked broader processes in society and power relations. Monica has published a range of books such as *Sensing Cities* (Routledge 2008) and *La Metaciudad Barcelona* (Anthropos 2008).