



**DEVIANTS**



**SINNERS**



**AND REBELS**

SEXUALITY STUDIES  
IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

**BOOK OF  
ABSTRACTS**

**ESA RN23 Sexuality Mid-Term Conference**  
*Palermo, Italy, 11-12 September 2025*



**Università  
degli Studi  
di Palermo**

• Dipartimento  
Culture e  
Società



• LABORATORIO  
INTERDISCIPLINARE  
DI RICERCA SU CORPI,  
DIRITTI, CONFLITTI



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AboutGender  
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**A01 – P1**

**JÓZSEF ÁGOSTON, IVETT SZALMA, & JUDIT TAKÁCS**  
*Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary*

**EXPLORING CONSENSUAL NON-MONOGRAMY IN  
 FAMILY CONTEXTS: A SCOPING REVIEW.**

This study examines the landscape of consensual non-monogamy (CNM), focusing on its prevalence among LGBTQ+ and heterosexual populations, with particular attention to families and parenthood. Through a systematic scoping review, we identified 2,079 unique articles from SCOPUS and Web of Science searches and analysed a selected subset to assess the extent to which existing research explores CNM family structures and parenting patterns. A PRISMA flow diagram was used to document the article selection process, ensuring a transparent and systematic approach to data inclusion. Findings indicate that while CNM is more widely accepted within LGBTQ+ communities, studies addressing CNM in the context of family life remain relatively limited. The analysis identifies key themes, including relationship quality, social perceptions of CNM families, and potential challenges in parenting within non-monogamous relationships. This article contributes to science as it systematically maps an underexplored area, offering insights into the complexities of non-traditional family structures and identifying gaps for future research. The study also provides a comprehensive overview that challenges conventional narratives about family and relationships, promoting a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of how diverse relationship models can shape family dynamics and parenting practices.

***Consensual Non-Monogamy  
 LGBTQ+  
 Heterosexual  
 Parenting and Non-Monogamy  
 Families***

**G03 – P120**

**MARIA PILAR ALBERTIN CARBO(1), NÚRIA SADURNÍ-  
 BALCELLS(1), & GIACOMO VIGGIANI(2)**  
*(1) Universitat de Girona, Spain & (2) University of  
 Brescia, Italy*

**HATE CRIMES AGAINST LGBTQI+ PEOPLE. ACCESS TO  
 SUPPORT SERVICES IN SIX EUROPEAN NATIONS.**

The presentation details the findings of the comparative study, which was conducted in six European nations: Hungary, Greece, Italy, Spain, Lithuania, and Slovenia within the framework of the ENACT project (Enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations to support victims of anti-LGBTQI hate crimes, 2024-2026). The objective of the study was to understand the capacities of CSOs to provide support services to individuals who suffered from anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination and hate crimes. The findings of our study suggest that there are gaps in the professional development of various individuals who are involved in providing support services to LGBTQI+ individuals, and they need to be filled in order to effectively address their needs.

The presentation will cover the perspectives of survivors of hate crimes and discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals. It also explores the roles played by professionals in helping them.

The presentation's first section will focus on the experiences of individuals who were victims of discrimination and hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people. It will explore how institutional and societal factors influence these individuals' perspectives. Particular attention will be paid to the intersectionality of identities and how it affects access to support services. The presentation will highlight the psychological, emotional, and social consequences of hate crimes, shedding light on the need for trauma-informed care and tailored interventions for survivors.

Part two of the presentation will investigate the experiences of professionals who assist survivors, such as lawyers, social workers, activists, and psychologists. They often in fact talk about the various challenges they encounter when it comes to providing adequate support, such as limited

resources and the lack of training regarding LGBTQI+ issues.

The presentation's concluding part will provide recommendations on how CSOs can help victims of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ individuals. These include training for both the professionals and the survivors, as well as establishing a more inclusive environment for the community.

*anti-LGTQI+  
experiences of hate crimes  
support services  
inclusive environment*

### **E03 – P87**

**INES ANTILA**

*Independent researcher, Sweden*

#### **THE INTERSECTION OF CONVERSION PRACTICES TARGETING LGBTQ+ AND SEX WORKER BODIES**

Conversion practices have traditionally been examined within the sociology of sexualities as ideologically driven and controversial attempts primarily aimed at changing sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual, despite historically targeting broader queer identities. Today, most European Union member states officially condemn practices to “cure” sexual orientations or gender identities deviating from hetero- and cisnormativity, classifying such practices as violations of fundamental human rights. Political attention within the EU often targets countries like Hungary and Poland, where conversion practices continue openly. Paradoxically, however, even in progressive EU states like Sweden, analogous conversion approaches persist through institutionalized requirements that sex workers stop selling sexual services.

This paper provides a behind conversion practices targeting LGBTQ+ individuals and sex workers. Drawing on critical sexuality studies and sociological literature on deviance, the paper conceptually explores how two distinct yet intersecting forms of institutionalized conversion operate. Both groups face ideological interventions designed to erase identities (e.g., queer, sex worker) and suppress behaviors (e.g., same-gender sexual activity, selling sex) considered socially deviant. Underpinning these interventions is the moral assumption that an improved and “better” life requires abandoning stigmatized identities and practices.

Pressure and coercion are intrinsic to these conversion efforts, enforced by threats of withdrawing crucial support from established systems involving health and social care professionals, representatives of faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and family or community networks. By integrating typically separate debates about LGBTQ+ identities and sex work in relation to conversion practices, this theoretical comparison highlights overlooked parallels in institutionalized social control

mechanisms. Ultimately, the analysis underscores how resistance against coercive practices challenges dominant normative frameworks, offering new opportunities for solidarity across marginalized groups during times of rising anti-gender politics.

*comparative theoretical analysis of the ideological foundations and institutional logics*

**F02 – P98**

**LYNZI ARMSTRONG**

*Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

**SEX WORK LAWS AND THE VECTORS OF STIGMA:  
UNPACKING THE ORIGINS OF STATE-SANCTIONED  
INJUSTICE.**

Sex work laws have long been subject to polarised debates, which have intensified in recent years as several countries have embarked on legal reform. Debates regarding sex work and related laws are imbued with stigma, through the influence of competing moral and ideological standpoints on the sale and purchase of sex. Different approaches to sex work laws have variable motivations and outcomes, and it is well documented that various forms of criminalisation lend themselves to a myriad of negative outcomes for sex workers, including the exacerbation of stigma. In this paper I explore the interplay between stigma, sex work policy making, and the injustices sex workers manage. I examine the mechanisms that coalesce to maintain and reproduce sex work stigma and the role played by diverse forms of legislation within this. I argue that stigma, in its various guises, serves to enable and legitimise sustained state sanctioned injustice and that stigma is manipulated and weaponised by those in positions of power, serving as a fundamental barrier to the creation of policies that tangibly improve sex workers' lives.

**Sex work  
Stigma  
Feminism**

### B03 – P29

**ELISABET MARCO AROCAS, JOAN TORRES PALOMARES, ARANTXA GRAU I MUÑOZ, LUIS ROBLEDÓ DIAZ, & ASSUMPTA JOVER LEAL**  
*Universitat de València, Spain*

#### **REBELS OR SINNERS: GENDER AND SEXUALITY DISPUTES ON INSTAGRAM.**

This paper explores how Instagram becomes a space of struggle in the definition of gender and sexuality regimes. We focus on the staging of practices that subvert the traditional sexual regime, particularly on the analysis of audiovisual content in which individuals socially read as women and youth display expressions of desire, pleasure, and agency that actively challenge normative gender and sexuality scripts. The interest lies in how this break with the normative gender choreography provokes a response of male frustration that translates into a reactionary ideological positioning that categorizes these young women as ‘sinners’ who deviate from sexual ‘normality’ while delegitimizing their agency. A response that evidences the mechanisms of resistance and identity reaffirmation that are activated when the privileges historically associated with masculinity are questioned. In our view, this reaction recovers and (re)articulates disciplinary strategies and misogynistic shaming that were already present in previous gender regimes. This research examines how these forms of symbolic and discursive sanction are inscribed within biopolitical control devices that limit sexual freedom and diversity.

Through a qualitative methodology, we selected a sample of 930 digital pieces, classified according to their impact - measured in number of likes- and subjected the comments (the first 30 of each audiovisual piece) to analysis. Atlas.ti and artificial intelligence tools are used to code these comments, following an analytical model designed to understand discursive responses to the sexual subversion of traditional femininity. The results allow us to map the logics of the contemporary reactionary discursive system in response to the destabilization of traditional structures of gender, age, and sexuality.

This paper is part of the research project Sexualities Online: Challenges for Youth Policies (Project

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*Sexuality  
social media  
agency  
Misogyny  
Reactionary discourse*

## E04 – P91

**ZEYNEP SELEN ARTAN**

*Marmara University – Istanbul, Turkey*

### **‘HEROES AND WANTONS’: HOW TURKISH MEDIA FRAMED LABOR MIGRANTS IN EUROPE.**

As part of its five-year development plan, Turkey signed labor agreements with several Western European countries in the 1960s, facilitating large-scale labor migration. While early waves were predominantly male, the number of female migrants grew over time. Initially overlooked, women’s transborder mobility became a subject of intense public scrutiny, particularly as Turkish newspapers began reporting on their romantic and sexual relationships with foreign men. By the mid-1960s, these reports sparked a moral panic, leading to parliamentary debates where politicians proposed restricting women’s migration or subjecting them to ‘morality’ screenings before departure. At the heart of these debates was a broader concern over female sexuality, national identity, and the perceived threat that migrant women posed to Turkey’s social fabric. While studies of migrant media representations often focus on how host societies portray incoming migrants, this research shifts the lens to how home-country media constructs narratives around outgoing migrants and shapes their experiences abroad. Using discourse analysis of four major Turkish newspapers of the time (namely, *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, and *Tercüman*), this study argues that Turkish labor migration was gendered from its inception, as the media attached different symbolic meanings to male and female migrants. While men, regardless of their sexual relations and violent behavior, were celebrated as ‘national heroes,’ women were cast as a moral and national liability, framed as ‘national wantons,’ and subjected to physical, psychological, and symbolic violence that extended beyond national borders. By highlighting how home-country discourse impacts migrants’ experiences even after departure, this study contributes to broader discussions on migration, gender, and social exclusion. It reveals how anxieties surrounding migrant women were not merely about morality but reflected deeper struggles over patriarchal power relations, demonstrating the enduring influence of media narratives on migration processes.

*migration  
gender  
sexuality  
newspaper  
framing*

## B02 – P25

**SOFIE AVERY & RYLAN VERLOOY**

*University of Antwerp, Belgium*

### **DEPARTING FROM DEVIANCE: CHALLENGING THE IDEAL SUBJECT IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY RESEARCH.**

Contemporary sociological literature on intersectionality has well documented the reduction of intersectionality in European academic research to what Sirma Bilge (2020) calls “gender+: taking gender as the mandatory starting point and looking at its selected intersections with class, race, ethnicity, ability, age, and so on.” From our own experiences working in European research consortia on sexual harassment and anti-gender movements, we try to navigate European academia’s tendency to engage with intersectionality in a superficial manner (Bilge 2013; Bilge 2014; Tomlinson 2018). The ‘gender+’ approach adopted (in different degrees) in our research contexts, influences our research design, process, and results. It hinders the possibilities for intersectional methodologies and thus threatens to reproduce interlocking regimes of oppression.

This paper seeks to provide an auto-ethnographic reflection on the mechanisms underlying the reduction of intersectionality to gender+ in European gender and sexuality studies. Combining these theoretical insights with our lived experiences, we will discuss three mechanisms that currently trouble intersectional research. Firstly, the presumption of an ideal subject as the beneficiary of gender equality measures is imagined as a cisgender, straight, white woman. Participants and researchers that occupy (multiply) marginalized positions deviate from this ideal subject position and are made to “embody diversity” (Ahmed 2009). Secondly, there is a lack of knowledge of intersectional methodologies and strategies to operationalize intersectionality. Lastly, as a result of the previous mechanisms, and despite attempts and intents to integrate intersectional methodologies, interventions and research framed as intersectional can still fail to implement intersectionality beyond the gender+ approach. This engagement often remains superficial and thereby reproduces those not living up to the ideal subject position as “deviants.” In providing these reflections,

we aim to invite scholars to reflect on how gender and sexuality studies can engage with intersectionality without re-assigning marginalized groups to this “deviant” position.

*intersectionality*  
*auto-ethnography*  
*sexual harassment*  
*gender equality*

### C03 – P48

**RUTH BALDACCHINO**

*University College Dublin, Ireland*

#### **INSURGENT GOVERNANCE: DECOLONIAL FEMINIST QUEER RESISTANCE IN THE REGULATION OF LGBTQI MOVEMENTS.**

In an era of intensifying anti-gender backlash, the governance of LGBTQI+ organisations has become a contested terrain where radical aspirations are disciplined into institutional legibility. Governance, often framed as a neutral or technical function, is in fact a powerful site where normativity, compliance and resistance are negotiated - shaping which actors, practices and agendas are deemed legitimate within queer and trans movements, and which are excluded. This paper offers a conceptual intervention, developing the notion of Decolonial Feminist Queer Governance as a theoretical and political tool to resist the regulatory capture of LGBTQI+ activism by neoliberal, colonial and cisheteropatriarchal forces. Drawing from decolonial feminist (Lugones, Tlostanova, Mohanty), queer (Cohen, Puar, Butler), and sociological (Foucault, Spade, Fraser) frameworks, I argue that governance is not merely an administrative function but a field of power that fundamentally shapes the contours of dissent and co-optation. The theoretical and methodological approaches in my current doctoral research draw on over two decades of experience in global feminist and LGBTQI+ policy advocacy, movement-building, and philanthropy. I draw conceptually from embodied insights and activist knowledge to interrogate how, often, governance mechanisms - such as funding structures, institutional metrics, and NGO logics - reinforce racial capitalism, coloniality and respectability politics. Rather than treating institutionalisation as an inevitable or desirable marker of progress, I explore alternative practices of queer and feminist organising in collectivity, care, refusal and autonomy. These insurgent forms of governance disrupt dominant narratives of sustainability and legitimacy, inviting us to reimagine governance itself as a generative space of resistance. In dialogue with the conference’s call to revisit deviance and rebellion in troubled times, this paper insists that the governance of resistance must itself be resistant – unruly, subversive, and radically committed to freedom.

*Decolonial feminism*  
*Queer Theories*  
*Governance and Power*  
*LGBTQI Movements*  
*Anti-Gender Backlash*

## C01 – P37

**OSCAR BANNING**

EHESS – IRIS, France

### **DISTINCTION THROUGH SEXUAL SCRIPTS. HOW UPPER-CLASS GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM PORNOGRAPHY, THE TOP/BOTTOM SEXUAL SCRIPT, AND THOSE WHO CONFORM TO IT.**

In male same-sex sexuality, the structuring of sexual scenarios around asymmetrical roles—“top” or “bottom”—appears to be fundamental, even unavoidable, both in pornography and on dating apps (Fouet, 2022; Banning, 2023). However, the “top/bottom” sexual script is met with significant criticism from homo and bisexual men. Drawing on the results of a qualitative interview-based study (n = 12) conducted in Villeurbanne (France) in 2023, my presentation will focus on the ambiguity of the “top/bottom” sexual script (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Kippax & Smith, 2001; Hoppe, 2011), which is considered omnipresent in pornography and on dating apps, yet is widely criticized and distanced from by the interviewees. More specifically, I will examine how this distancing from the “top/bottom” script—perceived as a *pornographic and digital hegemony*—is a common experience. Four registers of critique articulated by the participants will be identified: the perception of the script as boring, lacking tenderness, violent, and/or heteronormative. Furthermore, I will show that this distancing is not only widespread, but also expected. Far from the idea of pornography shaping its consumers, the norm for the white, urban, gay and bisexual men interviewed is, on the contrary, to distinguish themselves from it and from the sexual scripts associated with it. Groups identified as too conforming to the “top/bottom” script are subject to judgment regarding their sexual desires and practices. I will argue that this *process of distinction—through sexual scripts and through the relationship to pornography*—follows lines of class, race, and age, thereby underlining the need to incorporate the lens of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1979) into the study of pornography’s social uses.

*Sexual scripts*  
*gay cultures*  
*pornography*  
*dating apps*  
*social distinction*

## E04 – P92

**ERIKA BERNACCHI & ANTONIO RAIMONDO DI GRIGOLI**

Pegaso Telematic University, Italy & University of Siena, Italy

### **QUEER MIGRANT MASCULINITIES AND THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY: STIGMA ACROSS SPACES OF BELONGING.**

The intervention aims to focus on the discrimination experienced by migrant people who identify as men and queer in relation to the spaces of belonging they occupy, namely: their country of origin, their country of arrival, their ethnic community, and the LGBTQIA+ community in the country of arrival.

The presentation is based on a theoretical framework that examines the intersections of Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM), queer and decolonial studies focusing on the interaction between marginalized and hegemonic masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2018; Wojnicka, Nowicka, 2022; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2023). In line with the theoretical framework of the research, the methodology involves collecting the life stories (through in-depth interviews) of a group of migrant people who identify as men and queer in Italy. Special attention will be paid to investigating how these men relate, articulate and possibly reconcile with the stigma faced in their countries of origin and country of arrival in relation to their sexual orientation and gender identity at the intersections of homophobia, transphobia and racism. (Goffman, 1959)

Through the in-depth interviews, the link between masculinity, sexuality and psychosocial well-being of the interviewees will also be analysed in relation to possible processes of marginalization experienced in their spaces of belonging. In addition, given the very high percentage of minority stress levels among queer migrant people (Rosati et al., 2021), the interviews will also aim to identify the needs of the group of migrant queer men in order to develop best practices for training practitioners working in migrant services taking into account a queer and decolonial perspective.

*Queer*  
*critical studies on men and masculinities*  
*Migration*  
*Sexuality*  
*Decolonial gaze*

## DO2 – P62

**VITTORIA BERNARDINI(1), RAFFAELLA MAIULLO(2),  
COSIMO MARCO SCARCELLI(1), FRANCESCA  
COMUNELLO(2), & LORENZA PARISI(2)**

*(1) University of Padova, Italy & (2) Sapienza University  
of Rome, Italy*

### **FILLING THE GAPS IN SEX EDUCATION: ITALIAN TEENAGERS' FRAGMENTED LEARNING THROUGH DIGITAL AND INFORMAL SOURCES.**

Young people acquire information about sex and relationships from diverse sources, including formal education in schools, informal conversations with peers and family, and increasingly through digital media (Albury, 2015). Given the growing complexity of young people's sexual cultures (Attwood & Smith, 2014), we aim to explore the fragmented landscape of sexual learning among Italian teenagers, following Albury & Hendy's (2022) suggestion to move beyond the binary of sexual learning as merely "a process of 'information seeking' and 'information transmission'".

As part of a larger study on digital intimacies, we conducted 68 semi-structured interviews with teenagers aged 16-18 from 12 Italian cities. Using a participatory approach, the interview guide was co-constructed with a group of teenagers. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis and results were validated with two new groups of teenagers.

Results show how teenagers engage in complex processes involving both online and offline sources, and both intentional and unintentional learning. Participants report scarce, delayed experiences of school-based sex education, perceived as medical rather than relational, and heteronormative. Limited formal guidance compels teenagers to rely on informal sources such as peers, family, and digital media, and on combinations of intentional (e.g. advice-seeking) and unintentional learning (e.g. peer talk).

Participants' daily digital practices often involve unintentional sexual learning through incidental, algorithmically-driven encounters with sex education content on social media (Lim et al., 2024), and express mixed judgements about its usefulness. This intersects with participants' intentional information-

seeking across diverse platforms, including under-explored channels such as TikTok and ChatGPT. Despite adult moral panics, participants also demonstrate critical attitudes in evaluating online content, including pornography (Byron, 2024).

Overall, results show that teenagers engage in complex processes for accessing and evaluating information about sexual relationships and sexual health (Fraser et al., 2021), while calling for more comprehensive sex education that includes school-based and digital interventions.

*digital intimacies  
sexual learning  
sex education*

## C04 – P52

**ANNA LEA BERNHARD VON SCHLECHTLEITNER**

*Eurac Research – Bolzano, Italy*

### OUT OF THE MARGINS?

While some European states have long embraced marriage equality, others still offer no legal recognition to LGBT+ couples, thereby excluding them and their families from a wide range of associated rights. Within this fragmented legal landscape, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has emerged as a court of last resort for LGBT+ families and a central actor in defining minimum standards of legal recognition across Europe.

This role was significantly reinforced in *Fedotova and Others v. Russia* (2021), where the Court, for the first time, established a clear positive obligation on states to provide legal recognition for same-sex couples.

Although *Fedotova* represents a major milestone in the Court's jurisprudence, it arguably marks yet another symbolic high point after years of stagnation — echoing the earlier *Oliari–Fedotova* cycle. But where is the *Fedotova* for marriage equality, or for parenting rights?

Through doctrinal analysis of key case law on registered partnerships, marriage, adoption, and surrogacy, this paper assesses the extent to which the Court has delivered concrete, enforceable rights for same-sex families. It argues that the time has come for the Court to move beyond its incrementalist approach — a shift that is both necessary and long overdue.

**LGBT+ Human Rights**

**European Convention on Human Rights**

**European Court of Human Rights**

**Marriage Equality**

**LGBT+ Family Law**

## C04 – P54

**MARI SAMANTHA BERSALDO & ROANNA BEA CUISIA**

*De La Salle University, Philippines*

### OEDIPUS' LAMENT: ON CONSENT, KINSHIP, AND THE ILLEGIBILITY OF INTIMACY

This paper examines how incestuous relationships between consenting adults are regulated across diverse legal and cultural contexts, foregrounding the tensions between sexual autonomy, normative kinship, and the state's role in moral governance. While the incest taboo is a near-universal norm, legal responses vary, ranging from criminalisation based on public morality to permissive frameworks grounded in individual rights. Through comparative analysis of legal systems in Germany, Spain, the United States, and the Philippines, this study interrogates how cultural values shape the legal treatment of incest, often casting such relationships as incompatible with social cohesion and collective identity.

It critically engages with the concept of consent, not merely as a legal threshold but as a culturally and historically constructed notion. Within kinship structures, consent is frequently problematised through symbolic associations with impurity and degeneracy rather than empirical evidence of harm. Incest is thus excluded from the domain of legitimate intimacy, not because of violence, but because it threatens deeply held moral imaginaries.

The regulatory logic at play—one that frames care and protection as justifications for criminalisation—recalls the moral panics surrounding same-sex relationships prior to *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003). While that decision marked a victory for sexual rights, it also catalysed a sustained conservative backlash. Today, anti-gender movements and retraditionalist ideologies are reasserting control over intimate life under the guise of protecting family values.

This paper argues that incest regulation illustrates the limits of liberal frameworks that presume consent alone ensures autonomy. It asks: What desires are rendered unintelligible in the name of order? What intimacies are punished as deviant? By lingering with what the law refuses to name, this paper treats incest not as pathology but as a fault line, where cultural

boundaries of care, legitimacy, and sexual freedom are re-examined and contested.

*Incest Regulation*  
*Family Law*  
*Sexual Autonomy*  
*Moral Governance*  
*Social Normativity*

## **A01 – P5**

**BO BLANKSMA & EVA MIDDEN**

*Utrecht University, The Netherlands*

### **NON/MONO GAMY, ASEXUALITY, AND NORMATIVITY: THE ROLE OF SEX IN INFIDELITY**

The term monogamy is often used to refer to sexual exclusiveness in a relationship, which is then seen as a criterium of trust (Giddens, 146). Even though discussions about the naturalness or even desirability of monogamy often return, in most western societies it is still the norm. This does not mean however that it is uncontested or that people do not have different ideas about what it should involve. For example, the meaning of the term monogamy has changed (during the last century) from being something that entailed the idea of having only one person to share your life with, to something that referred to being only with one person at a time (Perel, 20017, p 41). Unfaithfulness in a monogamous relationship can take many different forms but is generally described as something one does against the will of a partner, or against the agreement of a couple to only be sexually active within the relationship. One could say that sex and sexuality play an essential role in our understanding of both monogamy and infidelity. This raises the question of what these concepts mean in the context of asexuality. How do people who do not feel sexual attraction look at the role of sex in infidelity, and is this different from normative, allosexual people in romantic relationships? How does having one or more asexual person(s) in a romantic relationship change the definition of infidelity to the people involved? In this presentation we compare interview results surrounding infidelity, from both allosexual and asexual perspectives, and touch on the questions above. We focus on how society influences both asexual and allosexual people's views on (in) fidelity and romantic relationships. At the end, we will formulate an answer to our main question: what is infidelity and what is the role of sex in infidelity?

*infidelity*  
*asexuality*  
*monogamy*  
*normativity*  
*sex*

## DO1 – P59

**KIAN L BOCHMANN**

*University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

### **LEAKY TRANS-ING: APPROACHING GENDER TRANSITIONS AS MORE-THAN-HUMAN PHENOMENA.**

Building on trans scholars' extensive critiques of the wrong body imaginary, my PhD research examines gender transitions and trans embodiment in their temporal and material-discursive dimensions. Drawing on trans studies, critical disability studies, and new materialisms, the project seeks to understand the affective flows and capacities produced through transitioning and the (micro-)politics of becoming trans. Based on a non-representational ethnography and creative in-depth interviews with trans people in Berlin and Edinburgh, gender transitions present as bumpy, incoherent, and messy undertakings unfolding in diverse and non-linear temporalities. Participants' accounts highlight transitions as labour-intensive, emotional, sensory, and experimental processes both contingent on and enmeshed with their respective materio-discursive contexts. In light of this, I explore transitioning beyond the divides of non-human/human, self/other, and body/non-body, among others. Building on recent work interrogating the notion of a core gender identity (Saketopoulou and Pellegrini 2023), I offer preliminary suggestions for a relational perspective on becoming trans and embodying gender that considers these as contextually contingent and more-than-human processes.

### **References**

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*trans embodiment  
gender transitions  
more-than-human  
creative methods*

## A01 – P2

**NICOLE (NIC) BRAIDA**

*Università di Torino, Italy*

### **UNDOING LOVE: NOTES FROM A LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON POLYAMORY.**

In recent decades, polyamory has gained increasing attention as perhaps the most popular model of Consensual Non-Monogamy, sparking growing interest within academic literature as well. This paper draws on findings from a qualitative longitudinal study on polyamorous theories and practices conducted in Italy, based on two waves of research five years apart (2017–2018 and 2023). I adopt a performative approach, looking at the meaning of intimate/affective relationships as something that people construct doing, beyond essentialist and reified interpretations of intimate or family relationships.

Amid a global political climate marked by authoritarian and conservative shifts—often targeting gender and sexuality studies and promoting a re-traditionalization of family and relational models—it becomes even more crucial to foreground narratives and imaginaries that advocate for a radical rethinking of these models.

This contribution critically examines the internal positionings within the polyamorous community, which remains heterogeneous and partially depoliticized, in order to highlight the potentialities to question the monogamous heterosexual model. By following the narratives of ten participants—particularly regarding changes in their relationship configurations, in their conceptualizations of love and intimacy, in their relational practices, and in their understandings of sexual/affective orientation and gender identity—the presentation explores how they challenge various social normativities surrounding gender, sexuality, and intimacy. These include heteronormativity, amatonormativity, mononormativity, monosexism, allonormativity, the relationship escalator, and chrononormativity.

Despite enduring structural limitations in the broader social context, polyamorous theory and the discursive exchange within polyamorous networks appear to open space for relational configurations that go

beyond the mere multiplication of romantic dyads. From this perspective, the polyamorous discourse can be understood as a tool for reimagining models of intimacy and care, moving beyond individualistic, neoliberal, and assimilationist approaches to polyamory toward a “promiscuous” collectivization of care.

*polyamory*  
*intimacy*  
*love*  
*care*  
*consensual non-monogamies*

### **F03 – P104**

**JOANA BRILHANTE**

*Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra, Portugal*

#### **“EVERYTHING HAS TO BE DONE IN MODERATION”: EXPLORING THE LIFE HISTORIES OF OLDER QUEER WOMEN IN MALTA.**

Ageism, cis-heteronormativity and sexism are just some of the lines that stitch the veil of invisibility covering older queer women in our societies. As such, their life experiences, their stories of resistance, of love, of change, have been gravely underrepresented in academic scholarship, social policy and even activism. The troubling times of fast and harsh backlash that we are currently facing -transversal to the East to the West -demand a strong, organised and academically sustained resistance. Although contemporary, the process of pushing diversity to the outskirts of society is not new. Fortunately, we still have many people whose embodied memories are precious in showing us how it was to resist, to persist and to outlive this marginalisation and persecution. Their experiences are treasured knowledge, which must be collected, registered, cherished, and ultimately used as a stronghold from where we stand, inspired by their courage and resilience while preserving the paths they opened for us to follow. Using a qualitative, multi-method approach, this paper explores the experiences of older queer women in the country known for being, during last decade, the bastion of LGBTQ rights- Malta. We conducted 17 interviews, 7 semi-structured with Maltese stakeholders and 10 BNIM interviews with queer Maltese women. Our initial findings highlight the great invisibility of this cohort, shared experiences of solitude, nostalgia of the “old days” while at the same time, pride for their country’s legal progression and acknowledgement of their rights. These preliminary findings allow us to imagine the past, critically look at the present and project the future, supported by the legacy of these living archives that we are called to preserve, carry forward and celebrate.

*Queer women*  
*ageing*  
*Malta*

CO1 – 41

**MÉLAINE BUSTOS**

*Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium*

**FEMINIST VALUES AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE IN WOMEN'S PORN CONSUMPTION: AN EXPLORATION**

Nowadays the increased accessibility of online porn has generated a lot of debate. While definitions of porn vary across social contexts and individual interpretations, contemporary research concentrates on porn videos, the most consumed form.

Feminist perspectives remain divided between seeing porn as an violent and oppressive medium toward women, while others emphasize its potential for sexual expression and women's empowerment. Despite historical perceptions of pornography as a male-dominated domain, recent research highlights increasing female consumption. In 2006, 20% of women reported viewing pornography "often" or "sometimes" (Bozon, 2008), with rates rising continually (Smith, 2007; Pornhub, 2021).

Regardless, they can experience discomfort with the ethical aspects, including the portrayal of non-consensual acts, gender stereotypes, and the exploitation of performers (MacKinnon, 1987 ; Williams, 1989 ; Bridges et al., 2010 ; Mass et Dewey, 2018). As a result, several women report actively seeking alternative forms of sexual media, such as ethical/feminist pornography, literature or audio platforms, which they perceive as more aligned with their values (Smith et al., 2015 ; Solano et al., 2020 ; Chesser et al., 2018 ; Macleod, 2020). This shift highlights the concept of cognitive dissonance: the psychological discomfort experienced when an individual holds contradictory beliefs, values, or attitudes simultaneously (Festinger, 1957).

This communication is based on an exploratory research realised during an university certification in clinical sexology. Based on literature review and qualitative online questionnaire, we investigated how women deal with potential dissonance related to porn use. Although markers of cognitive dissonance were observed, no clear link was found between feminist beliefs and dissonance related to porn use. After reviewing research on women's porn use (Chesser

et al., 2018 ; McKeown et al., 2018 ; Ashton et al., 2018 and 2019) this communication will examine the strategies women use in order to reduce porn-related dissonance, and question the links between feminist beliefs and dissonance intensity.

*pornography  
feminism  
women's sexuality  
cognitive dissonance  
intimate practices*

**DO1 – P56****PAKO CHALKIDIS***Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra,  
Portugal***TRANS PHARMA EXPERIMENTATIONS: PROSTATE  
CANCER HORMONAL TREATS AND TRICKS.**

In this presentation, I will examine experimental practices with pharmaceutical substances in the last decades of the 20th century, drawing on life story interviews with trans women over 60 years old living in Greece in the context of the ERC funded project TRACE – Queer Citizenship Over Time. In gathering the life stories, the method used was BNIM – Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method and the interviews were conducted in 2024.

More specifically, in this paper I offer an assessment of the impact of experimental practices with pharmaceutical substances on trans bodies and sexual socialities through a queer ageing lens.

For Lynn Segal, ageing is a longitudinal process, ‘not just linear, nor ... a simple discrete process’ (Segal, 2014: 554), while for Juana Maria Rodriguez, as we age, physical markers of the racialised economy of state abandonment begin to show, and our bodies reveal the traces of histories without healthcare or respite from the mental wages of poverty (Rodriguez, 2015: 65).

The chronic unprescribed use of hormones to treat prostate cancer emerges in the biographies of older transwomen as one of the most common experimental practices with pharmaceutical substances because of its side effects, i.e. gynecomastia. In other words, the side effects of experimenting with hormones to treat prostate cancer became a resource for expanding the boundaries of gender intelligibility and a place where a trans future became possible. At the same time, the stigma attached to belonging to both the trans and sex worker communities, especially in Greece in the 1980s and 90s, created a regime of informal drug-sharing networks rather than engagement with the organised health care system, leaving trans women uninformed about other long-term side effects associated with depressed mood, depression and suicidal thoughts. Therefore, in my presentation I will explore possible answers to the research question:

how have these experimental practices affected older trans women and shaped the transgender community in Greece?

**References**

Rodríguez, J. M. (2014). *Sexual Futures, Queer Gestures, and Other Latina Longings*. New York: NYU Press.

Segal, L. (2014). *Out of Time. The Pleasures and Perils of Ageing*. London: Verso.

**Trans healthcare****Pharmaceutical substances****Experimental practices****Gender-affirming hormone therapy**

**F02 – P100****CHRISTINA CHIOTAKI***Utrecht University, The Netherlands***THE WHORE CLAUSE OF CONSENT: SEX WORK AND THE LIMITS OF FEMINIST SEXUAL POLITICS.**

Mainstream contemporary feminist discourses on consent are structured around a binary logic: yes or no, empowered or exploited, agent or victim. Nowhere is consent more intensely policed than in debates on sex work. This paper argues that sex work functions as a moral and political fault line where consent becomes hyper-visible, obsessively scrutinised, and ultimately weaponised. Feminist frameworks, from neoliberal “choice feminism” to radical feminist perspectives, often rely on essentialist binaries that position sex workers as either free, sometimes misled, agents in neoliberal patriarchy, or passive victims of male violence. In both cases, the figure of the sex worker becomes the site through which the limits of feminist consent politics are negotiated.

Using the Spanish “Only Yes Means Yes” law (*Ley de Garantía Integral de la Libertad Sexual*, 2022) and policy debates in Greece under the SYRIZA government (2015-2019) as case studies, this paper explores how even progressive, leftist governments reproduce carceral and moralising approaches to sex work, revealing the persistent influence of essentialist gender binaries in shaping sexual politics. Connecting this legislation with feminist discourse and theory on consent, I argue that sex work is not merely one site among many in the politics of consent, but the exception that defines the rule. To meaningfully challenge hegemonic understandings of consent, particularly within progressive and leftist circles, we must confront how consent and sex work are discursively entangled.

Drawing on queer, anti-carceral, and sex worker-led feminist perspectives, this paper calls for a reframing of both consent and sex work - not as exceptions or problems to be solved, but as key sites for rethinking agency, gender, and sexuality. In times of growing authoritarianism and retraditionalisation, disrupting consent’s binary logic is not just a theoretical imperative, but a political one.

*Sex Work  
Consent  
Binaries  
Morality Politics  
Feminist Theory*

**A02 – P6****SONIA DALLA COSTA MONTANARI***ISCPS-Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal***CONTESTED SPACES: SCHOOL RESTROOMS AND THE BACKLASH AGAINST LGBTQIA+ INCLUSIVITY POLICIES IN PORTUGAL.**

How have public restrooms been strategically used in Portugal’s political discourse to justify anti-gender policies and limit LGBTQIA+ protection? On February 28, 2025, the Portuguese parliament voted on two motions promoted by PSD, CDS, and Chega, concerning inclusivity in schools. The first motion entailed the complete removal of the guide “O direito a ser”, which came into effect in June 2023. This guide aimed to promote inclusion in schools for LGBTQIA+ students, encouraged active school involvement in combating bullying and discrimination not only within school premises, and required schools to report any cases of abuse to the authorities once they became aware of them. The second motion called for the complete and total elimination of gender-neutral bathrooms and prohibits students from choosing which facilities to use. The issue of bathrooms was central to conservative opposition, with a petition launched in April 2023 rejecting gender-neutral restrooms for all students. The vote took place just days before the fall of Luis Montenegro’s (PSD) government, making it one of his last directives—similar to what the UK government under Sunak did in 2024 with the suspension of puberty blockers in the country.

The objective is:

Outline the history of the fight against the guide, from its inception to its abolition.

Analyze how the symbolic image of public restrooms is weaponized to justify the rollback of protections against abuse and the denial of students’ right to self-identification. The primary source will be *Renaçença* (a Catholic newspaper), which was the most active in covering this issue. Articles from the past two years will be analyzed to examine how right-wing discourse was constructed. Additionally, perspectives from LGBTQIA+ organizations and legal experts will be considered to assess the broader implications of these policies.

*Inclusivity Policies  
Portugal  
Anti-Gender Discourse  
LGBTQIA+ Youth  
Schools*

### F03 – P103

**VALERIE DE CRAENE**

*Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium*

#### **INTERRUPTED DESIRES: AGEING, INTIMACY, AND THE REGULATED HOME.**

Sexuality in later life remains deeply entangled with regimes of normativity that desexualize older adults and render their intimate lives invisible, especially in contexts of care. This paper explores how the spatial politics of ageing—particularly in institutional settings and in ageing-in-place scenarios with formal or informal caregivers—reshape the possibilities for sexual expression and intimacy. Drawing from a multi-method research project involving in-depth interviews, auto-driven photo elicitation, and relief maps, I examine how the home becomes a contested terrain: no longer a private refuge for desire, but a semi-public space under moral and institutional surveillance. By focusing on the materialities, emotions, and relational dynamics within the ‘home’ environment, this research considers how ageist and ableist discourses work alongside heteronormative assumptions to transform older people into ‘unsexual’ or ‘asexual’ subjects. Yet, older adults engage in practices of home-making, bodily negotiation, and intimate expression that challenge these silencing structures. From rejecting institutional timetables to repurposing medical aids, these acts can be read as micro-resistances—forms of sexual and spatial rebellion that disrupt normative scripts of ageing and intimacy. These findings highlight how intimate and sexual practices in later life are deeply spatial, shaped by the ways in which domestic environments are organized, regulated, and inhabited. The paper considers how the boundaries between public and private, care and control, are negotiated through everyday acts that may appear mundane but carry significant affective and political weight. Whether it’s an older couple timing intimacy around care staff schedules, or individuals adapting their use of space and objects to maintain a sense of privacy and desire, such practices reveal the home not as a neutral setting but as a dynamic and contested site where intimacy is both constrained and reimagined.

*ageing  
sexualities and intimacies  
home-making*

### E01 – P79

**KATRIEN DE GRAEVE & GIULIA NAZZARO**

*Ghent University, Belgium*

#### **TROUBLING UNRULINESS: NON-MONO GAMY AND WOMEN’S LATER LIFE.**

Although non-monogamies research is deeply invested in challenging normative structures around relationships and sexuality, ageing as a normative process remains notably absent from its core discussions. This paper addresses this critical gap by focusing on womxn’s experiences of non-monogamy in late midlife and old age. Late midlife can be a time of mental and physical trouble for womxn, intersecting with cultural narratives that frame ageing womxn’s sexual and relational lives as either deficient or excessive, deviant or unruly. The few studies that have explored this dynamic have largely focused on women in traditional relationship constellations. As a result, the ways in which sexist and ageist discourses, together with other oppressive structures, shape womxn’s experiences of non-monogamy have been largely overlooked. Drawing on (auto)ethnographic research within Belgian polyamory communities (2016 to 2019) and interviews from the Later-in-Life Intimacies project (2020 to 2026), this paper explores how non-monogamous constellations can open up new relational and sexual possibilities for older womxn. At the same time, non-monogamy can also involve loss, particularly in later life: of relationships, sexual intimacy, or partner commitment. This often prompts womxn to renegotiate and reinvent their (sexual) lives and identities. This study not only fills an empirical gap but also offers a theoretical contribution by challenging dominant understandings of relational and sexual unruliness. The narratives of older womxn reveal that unruliness cannot be simply equated with resistance or liberation; rather, it emerges as a complex and often ambivalent process shaped by structural inequalities. Reframing unruliness through the lens of ageing and non-monogamy reveals new tensions between agency and vulnerability, offering a more nuanced perspective on relational and sexual dissent in later life.

*non-monogamies  
ageing gender  
sexuality  
ethnographic research*

## F02 – P101

**HANNAH DELACEY & ISOTTA ROSSONI**

*Leiden University, The Netherlands*

### **TO WHAT EXTENT DOES ONLINE SEX WORK OFFER A SPACE TO EXPLORE SEXUAL PLEASURE AND BUILD INTIMACY?**

Despite enduring societal stigma surrounding sexuality, pornography, and sex work—often amplified by anti-sex work movements (Bernstein, 2007; Weitzer, 2010)—digital sex workers’ lived experiences reveal more complex narratives. This paper explores the extent to which online sex work creates spaces for the exploration of sexual pleasure and the cultivation of intimacy (Jones, 2020; Smith & Attwood, 2014). This paper is based on semi-structured interviews with 30 online sex workers and focuses on their reflections on their interactions with clients to illuminate how online spaces can foster connection, intimacy, and the exploration of marginalized or “deviant” sexual desires (Campbell & Sanders, 2020). While acknowledging the ongoing experiences of harassment and structural stigma encountered by online sex workers (Blunt & Wolf, 2020; Mac & Smith, 2018), this study also highlights the opportunities for sex workers and their clients to experience genuine intimacy and erotic pleasure (Jones, 2020; McKee, 2016). It further examines how technological mediation specifically enables and shapes these forms of connection across digital spaces (Albury & Byron, 2016; Henry & Powell, 2021). Building on existing literature around digital intimacy and mediated sexual practices (Attwood et al., 2018; Race, 2015), the discussion challenges the discourse of perversion as the antithesis of intimacy and pleasure (McKee, 2016). The findings assert that online sex work is not merely transactional but can be profoundly relational, offering moments of vulnerability, connection, and sexual self-exploration (Jones, 2020; Sanders et al., 2018). Ultimately, this paper calls for a reframing of sex work discourse toward one that recognizes the humanity, agency, and rights of sex workers, and prioritizes the improvement of their working conditions and wellbeing over continued moral panic and criminalization (Benoit et al., 2017; Platt et al., 2018).

*Webcamming  
Sex work  
Intimacy  
Sexual pleasure*

## D02 – P63

**SHARI DERKSEN**

*California Institute of Integral Studies, USA*

### **CONCEPTUALIZING SEXUALITY BEYOND THE CHILD/ADULT DUALISM: NORMATIVE PREPUBESCENT SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH PEERS AS PART OF ONE’S LIFE-LONG SEXUALITY ASSEMBLAGE.**

Child sexuality is under researched, and normative (not associated with abuse) childhood sexual experiences with peers (CSEP) under age 13, even more so. CSEP are common and a part of many, if not most, children’s experience as they grapple with understanding genital arousal, feelings of attraction, and curiosity about the bodies of others. The aim of this study was to give voice to silent stories to counter oppressive metanarratives that deny children under 13 as sexual citizens. Through a narrative inquiry process, this study demonstrates the significance of prepubescent sexual behaviour via autobiographical writing and semi-structured interviews with adults recalling childhood sexual experiences with peers ages 6-12 inquiring about their responses to the events: what they learned about their bodies, pleasure, and eroticism from those experiences, and what aspects of those experiences have been part of their erotic repertoire and sexual expression or inhibition in adulthood. From a new materialist perspective that emphasizes the relations between all materialities (including thoughts, desires, and feelings) of an event and future events as a part of social production, relations between childhood sexual experiences with peers and adult erotic desires and sexual expression can be examined as all part of the same sexuality-assemblage of a human subject. In this digitized and media-based world where fragments of sexual information (often inaccurate or unrealistic) can be readily accessed, young “biomediated” bodies are vulnerable to lasting effects of early mind arousal vs sensual arousal as they discover sexual body responses alone and in collaboration with trusted peers. Accurate sexual information omission in childhood seems to create tensions and complexities in sexual expression in adulthood, especially for females and queer children as they grapple with authentic desires and body responses that counter heteronormative assumptions.

*Children’s sexuality  
Childhood sexual experiences with peers  
Children’s sexual citizenship  
Narrative Inquiry*

## B04 – P33

**CHRISTIAN DI CARLO**

*University of Palermo, Italy*

### MASCULINITY AND DRUGS.

Masculinity is a multifaceted and socially constructed concept, shaped by societal expectations regarding appropriate male behavior. The relationship between masculinity and psychoactive substance use has garnered growing attention within sociological debate. This paper presents a literature review aimed at exploring how gender norms influence substance use practices. Recent studies highlight that adherence to traditional models of masculinity—often requiring the suppression of emotionality and vulnerability—can have direct negative impacts on men’s health, promoting risky behaviors such as binge drinking or the rejection of self-care practices, perceived as “feminine” (Marcos et al., 2013). The review examines theoretical contributions from various socio-cultural contexts, with specific attention to the local constructions and performances of masculinity (Rinaldi, 2018). Preliminary findings suggest that some substances—such as alcohol and cocaine—are more strongly associated with masculine identities compared to others, such as benzodiazepines or barbiturates, influencing the social legitimacy of their use (Measham, 2002). Furthermore, men are often encouraged to affirm their masculinity through risk-taking behaviors, including the public and collective consumption of substances. Drawing on the concept of gender as situated action (West and Zimmerman, 1987), the review shows how consumption practices within (homo)social contexts intertwine with gender norms, becoming integral to processes of male identity construction. Within these spaces, drug use serves both as a social glue, strengthening group belonging, and as a tool for competition and the reinforcement of male hierarchies (Darcy, 2020). It may also allow access to an “intermediate space” where emotional intimacy can coexist with the affirmation of masculinity. This analysis highlights the profound influence of gender expectations on health behaviors and substance use practices, stressing the need for further research and for the development of culturally sensitive and gender-aware prevention strategies.

**Masculinity**

**Substances**

**Gender norms Health**

## D04 – P73

**ADRIANO DINACCI**

*University of Turin, Italy*

### QUEERING THE PENIS: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE NORMATIVE PENIS AND THE MEDICALIZATION OF ITS DEVIATIONS.

The presentation will focus on the social and medical construction of the “normative penis”, exploring the imperatives to which the penis responds: not only the functional ones, but also the aesthetic, morphological, normative and symbolic ones. What happens to curved penises, micropenises or penises with phimosis or hypospadias? Is there a social discourse that distinguishes “straight” penises - aligned with the imperatives of functionality (PIV sex) and morphological aesthetics - from “queer” penises that cannot or do not want to meet these imperatives? What happens if we apply queerness to the penis, bringing non-normative gender and sexual morphologies and practices into dialogue?

Drawing on Queer Theory, Crip Theory, Critical Masculinity Studies, Viagra Studies, and Intersex Studies, and within a deconstructivist framework, the presentation will analyze how both social and medical discourses contribute to the creation of the “normative penis”: the presentation will examine the role of medical knowledge-power in distinguishing between normative penises and those considered anomalies - which are then medicalized pharmacologically or surgically - by exploring how urologists and andrologists, as key actors in these constructions, operate within what might be described as ‘penis repair factories’ (the operating rooms), while also considering how public and media representations shape perceptions of male genitalia, and by investigating the co-construction between medical discourses (and practices) and the social ones in the creation of this genitalia normativity.

This research aims to bridge the fields of sociology and urology, fostering dialogue between these disciplines in order to influence medical practices. It also seeks to expand masculinity studies by shifting the focus from what the penis “should do” (as explored in Viagra Studies) to how the penis “should be.” In the context of public sociology, this research highlights

the lack of body-positivity regarding the penis, proposing a foundation for ““dick-positivity”” that encourages dialogue between sociologist academia, medical field and the activism world.

*medicalization of male sexuality*  
*normative penis*  
*queer penis*  
*Queer Theory*  
*Masculinity studies*

#### **DO4 – P72**

**ANNA DOLCE**

*University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy*

#### **VEILED DISOBEDIENCES: GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND DISSONANT CITIZENSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN PUBLIC SPHERE.**

In contemporary Europe, the visibility of Muslim women’s bodies—particularly through hijab, niqab, and abaya—has become a critical site of conflict within the politics of sexuality, secularism, and gender normativity. This paper examines how the legal-political regulation of Islamic veiling, with a specific focus on the French context as a paradigmatic case, while situating the analysis within broader European dynamics and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, functions as a mechanism of sexual and cultural regulation, situating veiled subjects within frameworks of deviance, hypervisibility, and exclusion.

Drawing on the notion of dissonant citizenship—here understood as a critical response to secular and normative constructions of belonging—this paper explores how gendered Islamophobia operates as a sexualized regime of governance, policing racialized religious difference under the guise of universalist values such as neutrality, emancipation, and public conformity. Far from being passive recipients of repression, many veiled Muslim women assert their presence in public space through collective actions, associative mobilizations, artistic practices, and legal claims, enacting epistemic and political disobedience that redefines hegemonic categories of femininity, secular belonging, and legitimate sexuality.

The paper situates this analysis within the broader rise of anti-gender ideologies and the increasing securitization of religion, showing how liberal discourses of liberation are often mobilized to reinforce nationalist and patriarchal structures. Engaging with European Islamic feminisms through an intersectional and decolonial lens, the contribution reimagines the veiled body as a figure of strategic deviance and as an agent of resistance to secular and sexual hegemonies that structure the public sphere.

Special attention is given to the material and symbolic

consequences of these dynamics for racialized and marginalized subjects—such as young Muslim women, regardless of location, facing systemic exclusion from education, sports, and employment due to their non-conformity to dominant gendered and visible norms

*Dissonant citizenship*  
*Gendered Islamophobia*  
*Strategic deviance*  
*Islamic feminisms*  
*Secularism*

## F02 – P99

**BARBORA DOLEŽALOVÁ**

Charles University, Czech Republic

### **WHORES AND OTHER PARASITES: SEX WORK IN THE SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA.**

The aim of this study is to explore the potential for social justice for sex workers in post-socialist Europe, focusing on the Czech Republic. Czechoslovak state socialism criminalized ‘social parasites’, be it people who were not working, or their work was not recognized as “‘honest work’”. This policy led to the imprisonment of sex workers. The secret police also used certain sex workers as their agents. While most of the feminist approaches in Czechoslovakia have struggled to redefine rigid sexual and labour norms that state socialism imposed on society (Lišková, 2008), this study analyses sex work through the lens of anti-work theories (Weeks, 2011; Berg, 2021) as well as abolitionist feminism and its critique of prison-industrial complex (see Smith & Mac, 2020; Davis et al., 2022).

While sex work is neither explicitly legal nor illegal in the Czech Republic today, sex workers are not recognized as “‘working citizens’”, dialectically lack their civil rights; and any kind of community building, activism or unionizing is perceived very negatively. While we acknowledge the benefits of decriminalization of sex work and being recognized as a worker, this is not a goal of our imagination in neoliberal capitalism. The slogan “‘sex work is work’” has long been a rallying cry in sex work activism—but do we want to liberate ourselves through work or rather from it? How can we use this on-going evidence of violence to build communities that are not dependent on law, border control, forced labour or policing?

By critically engaging with these questions, our aim is to enrich usually Western theories with the perspective of Eastern Europeans and examine social justice from the perspective of sex workers themselves, while consciously avoiding the pitfalls of white saviour feminism, tokenism and acknowledging the ongoing hierarchies between Eastern and Western Europe. The methodology includes feminist

critical discourse analysis of local pre-1989 socialist and post-transition capitalist media, as well as in-depth interviews with sex workers as participative action method (Baum et al, 2006).

*sex work*

*Czech Republic*

*anti-work theories*

*participative action methods*    *community building*

## **F02 – P102**

**MARTA LIDIA DUBEL**

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS: BALANCING INNOVATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY.**

This study investigates the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies on the rights, safety, and autonomy of sex workers, focusing on the deployment of surveillance tools such as facial recognition systems, algorithmic profiling, and data aggregation practices. Law enforcement agencies and technology companies increasingly employ AI-driven models to monitor online sex work advertisements, identify sex workers through facial recognition, and infer personal connections via data aggregation across social media platforms. These practices have raised significant human rights concerns, particularly for sex workers from marginalized groups, including racialized, migrant, and transgender individuals, who are disproportionately targeted and harmed by such technologies. The ambiguous nature of AI policing models, combined with the absence of sex worker consultation in their design and deployment, exacerbates the risk of misidentification, privacy violations, and unjust criminalization. Moreover, many sex workers depend on maintaining distinct online and offline identities to safeguard themselves against violence, discrimination, and social ostracism. AI tools—such as Facebook’s “People You May Know” algorithm—can inadvertently collapse these identity boundaries by linking separate accounts based on shared metadata, thereby exposing sex workers’ real-world identities to clients, acquaintances, or the general public. This unintended doxxing endangers the individual and erodes trust in digital platforms. This paper argues that current implementations of AI technologies reinforce structural inequities and contribute to the systemic surveillance and policing of vulnerable communities. It calls for the integration of sex workers’ voices into technological governance processes and advocates for the development of AI systems rooted in human rights frameworks, transparency, and accountability. Without these safeguards, AI may continue to function as an instrument of digital oppression, rather than as a

tool for equitable social progress.

*Artificial Intelligence  
Sex Workers' Rights  
Discrimination*

**C04 – P55**

**CHLOË EDWARDS**

*University of Exeter, United Kingdom*

**“HIT THAT PERFECT BEAT, BOY”: QUEER DANCE, HI-NRG, AND EPHEMERALITY IN THE AIDS CRISIS IN THATCHER’S BRITAIN.**

Frankie Goes to Hollywood are perhaps among the most reminiscent of artists bringing gay masculinities into mainstream popular music during the AIDS crisis in Britain. As electronic music continued to flourish into new subgenres such as Hi-NRG and house, the musical successors of disco continued its legacy of danceability. This paper offers a queer reading of experiences of the emerging Hi-NRG subgenre in Britain in the 1980s and contends that the physical significance of the autonomous dancing queer body, often associated with the emergence of disco, remains radically symbolic at this point, and critical in a period in which queer bodies, specifically those of gay men, were too often discriminately depicted in the context of anxiety and infection. As well as considering artistic influences and regionality, significantly, the increasing adoption of synth-pop and Hi-NRG in the middle of the Thatcher era permits a scholarly investigation that considers the criticism of both queerness and assessments of electronic music as constructed, highlighting instead the vitality of queer voices in mainstream popular music that are themselves self-actualised and crafted. Furthermore, illuminated by the ideas of queer theorists (José Esteban Muñoz) and musicologists (Judith A. Peraino), this paper considers the ways in which queer dance and articulations of gay masculinities within Hi-NRG gesture towards spectrality and queer utopia in the early AIDS years in Britain. This paper also studies the urban spaces in which this music was essential, such as the nightclub, where life-affirming memories of finding community and chosen family could also be soundtracked amidst invaluable moments of joy, unity, and release.

**1980s  
Britain  
queer masculinities  
dance HIV/AIDS**

**C03 – P50****INÈS FERREIRA DE ALMEIDA***IHC - NOVA University Lisbon, Portugal***FAILING FEMININITY? WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE TO THE PORTUGUESE DICTATORSHIP.**

Transgender women, as well as cisgender women, face issues regarding the perception of their appearance (as exemplified by the controversy surrounding Imane Khelif in the Olympic Games) and, consequently, the spaces they are allowed to occupy (the ongoing debates over bathrooms, as theorized by Jack Halberstam in *Female Masculinity*). This is yet another stage in the constant surveillance necessary to maintain the «natural» order of gender from previous centuries, albeit in a different form. Until fifty years ago, within the dictatorial context of the Portuguese Estado Novo (1926-1974), the political police also constantly accused female political resisters of being «bad» women – social outcasts who did not adhere to sexual modesty, the ultimate goal of motherhood, or the confinement to the home that was intended for them. These accusations reflect a notion of intersecting «deviations»: the politically active woman with the prostitute or the idea of the non-woman – a mixture of breaches of the social order that does not attain masculinity, as it remains inaccessible to them as a space of privilege, but that denies them a place in society due to their transgressed femininity. Thus, this political repression has gendered aspects, condemning the audacity to engage in political activity – often in detriment of staying with their children and interacting with men outside the prescribed norms. Having failed their predestined mission, they must seek the path of repentance and reintegration, forgetting their aspirations for behavior outside the norm. In this presentation, I would like to analyze the verbal and physical treatment within the prison context by the PIDE/DGS, which sought to reject the possibility of women being political Subjects. By not fulfilling patriarchal expectations, these women rebel against the gender stereotypes imposed on them, creating new possibilities of behavior within the resistance world, which are also worthy of reflection.

*Political Bodies  
Failed Femininity  
Performance  
Police Oppression*

**A04 – P17****RAFFAELLA FERRERO CAMOLETTO & FEDERICA MANFREDI***University of Turin, Italy***VULVODYNIA AS A BATTLEGROUND. MEDICALIZATION, CONTESTED ILLNESS & DIAGNOSTIC COMPROMISE.**

The paper offers a socio-anthropological exploration of the medicalisation of vulvar pain in Italy, focusing on the contested condition of vulvodynia. Drawing on Peter Conrad's tripartite framework of medicalisation—definitional, jurisdictional, and relational—the authors analyse how sufferers, clinicians, and activists negotiate the authority of biomedicine in diagnosis and treatment. Using a mixed-method ethnography—including 28 in-depth interviews, participant observation, and an arts-based creative workshop—the study traces the experiences of cisgender women affected by vulvar pain, examining the tensions between medical endorsement and resistance. The research reveals how medical gaslighting, diagnostic delays, and the invisibility of vulvodynia contribute to epistemic injustice and healthcare disparities, particularly within a gendered and patriarchal clinical landscape.

The findings demonstrate that patients are not passive recipients of biomedical authority. Instead, they actively construct illness narratives, engage in diagnostic nomadism, and participate in online communities where they exchange knowledge and co-create therapeutic strategies. These digital and embodied practices often position patients at the intersection of medical resistance and necessity, where self-experimentation and advocacy become crucial survival tools. The study also illustrates the fragility of the therapeutic alliance and the ways in which medical paternalism erodes trust in doctor–patient relationships. By foregrounding the political dimension of illness recognition and the embodied expertise of sufferers, the article calls for a reconceptualization of medical power as a relational and negotiated process.

*Vulvar pain  
Medicalization  
Medical gaslighting  
Contestation  
Patient activism*

## GO4 – P127

**ANTÓNIO PEDRO FIDALGO**

*Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra,  
Portugal*

### **THE NEED TO FLEE AND THE WILL TO COME BACK: AN AGROQUEER AUTOBIOGRAPHY.**

Queer migration studies have identified a pattern of rural-to-urban movements among LGBTQIA+ people. While the queer rural exodus is well-described in the literature, little attention has been paid to rural queer people's life stories, especially in the Portuguese context. Much of the existing literature is marked by metronormativity: queer culture, studies, and policies have taken the figuration of the urban queer as the norm to conceptualise and represent queer people, leaving queer rural lives marginalised within law, policy, representation, and discourse. Queer rural people face significantly different struggles compared to their urban counterparts, as their experiences are marked by the oppressions of hetero-cisnormativity but also by ruralism, a form of structural discrimination towards rural people. This paper departs from positionality and autobiography to provide a sociological commentary exploring the experience of living as a queer and rural person - an agroqueer - undergoing a process of internal migration in Portugal. It is methodologically rooted in the autobiography of the author's experience of moving to the city and seeking to reconnect with their rural village's identity, culture, and practices. The autobiographical accounts are introduced as brief textual pieces, interpreted in dialogue with queer studies, rural queer studies, and queer migration studies. These accounts shed light on the complex interplay between deeply personal and emotional narratives and broader sociopolitical dynamics. The text is divided into two parts: "The Need to Flee" and "The Will to Come Back". By valuing lived experience and life writing as a method to produce sociological knowledge this paper contributes to expanding the field of rural queer studies from an innermost perspective, while at the same time expanding the understanding of the role of positionality in scientific research and queer research, in particular.

**Agroqueer**  
**Rural**  
**Queer**  
**Autobiography**  
**Positionality**

## DO4 – P71

**SABINE FLICK**

*University of Education, Freiburg, Germany*

### **“WHAT I’M DOING HERE IS ACTUALLY REPROGRAMMING”: ON THE PARADOXICAL PEDAGOGIZATION OF ‘DISABLED’ SEXUALITY.**

Based on empirical research with sexual assistants, I argue that claims of enabling sexual self-determination for people with disability experiences are fundamentally undermined through problematic pedagogization. Sexuality—including desire, pleasure, and idiosyncratic expressions of sexual behavior—continues to be declared as “deviant” or at least burdensome behavior in most disability support facilities, with institutional staff consistently avoiding responsibility for addressing these needs. Sexual assistants strategically position themselves to fill this responsibility gap. The unfulfilled sexual participation of people with disability experiences is thus individualized and delegated to so-called sexual assistance. These practitioners claim to enable sexual self-determination through empowerment discourses while asserting jurisdiction (cf. Abbott 1988) over sex with disabled people, thus claiming professional authority over sexuality as a central dimension of life conduct.

The SeXistenz project, from which the title quote originates, thoroughly investigated sexual assistants' motives, self-understandings, and client perceptions. Results reveal their self-conception as “mediators of sexuality knowledge”—what I describe as pedagogization of ‘disabled’ sexuality. Unlike institutional sexual education focusing on contraception, assault protection, and sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assistance's pedagogical approach specifically targets self-transformation, new body awareness, and learning one's own sexuality through intimate guidance and intervention.

This approach problematically portrays clients' sexuality as underdeveloped, deficient, or non-existent, thus dependent on sexual assistants' intervention for successful transformation. Through this pedagogization process, ‘disabled’ sexuality becomes specifically marked as ‘disabled’ in ways that reinforce difference rather than inclusion.

The contradiction between emancipatory claims and pedagogical practice reproduces rather than transforms existing power relations—a pattern consistently found across various contexts of sexuality control among marginalized groups. My critical analysis demonstrates how sexual ‘normality’ is constructed and maintained in supposedly emancipatory contexts, ultimately reinforcing rather than challenging existing power dynamics surrounding disability and sexuality.

**Sexual Assistance**  
**Pedagogization**  
**Disability**  
*sexual self-determination*  
*sexual norms*

## **A02 – P8**

**LEON FREUDE & UXIA REBOIRO DEL RIO**  
*Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain*

### **FROM ANTI-GENDER EXPERIENCES IN CATALONIA AND THE BASQUE COUNTRY TO THE PROPOSAL OF ANTI-GENDER AS POLITICAL VIOLENCE.**

In recent years, Spain has made significant legislative strides in feminist and LGBTI rights, with landmark laws such as the ‘Trans Law’ and the ‘Solo Sí Es Sí’ law advancing protections and redefining sexual consent. However, these gains have been met with growing opposition from far-right movements that espouse nationalist, anti-immigration, anti-feminist, and anti-LGBTI ideologies. This paper explores the lived experiences of individuals and collectives targeted by ‘anti-gender’ politics, drawing on data from 33 participants through twelve interviews and four focus groups. Our findings reveal that ‘anti-gender’ attacks are not isolated acts of discrimination but constitute a deliberate form of political violence aimed at halting or reversing feminist and LGBTI-affirmative advances. These attacks—frequently aggressive and enacted both online and offline—target public feminist figures but also extend to broader civil society, disproportionately affecting those in marginalised positions. They are shaped by intersecting axes of oppression, including racism, national minorisation, and fatphobia, creating a continuum of violence that undermines civic participation and social cohesion. The emotional and behavioural consequences are severe: fear, self-censorship, withdrawal from public spaces, and the formation of isolating protective circles. Nevertheless, the response is not one of total retreat. Activists engage in diverse resistance strategies, from digital self-defence and campaign boycotts to political monitoring and dialogue initiatives aimed at countering ‘anti-gender’ narratives. Despite the hostile environment, some continue to harness their visibility as a tool of resistance, reaffirming their commitment to social justice. This study underscores both the pervasive impact of anti-gender politics and the resilience of those who confront them.

*‘Anti-gender’ politics*  
*emotional dimension*  
*self-censorship*  
*digital harassment*  
*political violence*

**E04 – P90****CALOGERO GIAMETTA***University of Leicester, United Kingdom***QUEER MIGRATIONS AMID ANTI-GENDER AND ANTI-MIGRANT MOVEMENTS: CONCEPTS AND METHODS.**

Amid intensifying anti-migrant and anti-gender mobilisations across Western Europe, this presentation explores the entangled histories and present-day realities of queer individuals who have faced criminalisation, resisted systemic oppression, and migrated across borders. Against the backdrop of violent anti-migrant riots in the UK and increasingly restrictive migration regimes in Italy, the research challenges dominant narratives propagated by far-right, conservative, and religious actors that misrepresent queer lives and migratory experiences.

This presentation centres on the often-overlooked experiences of ageing LGBTQ migrants, offering a nuanced understanding of how migration, criminalisation, and ageing intersect—an intersection largely absent from mainstream migration and sexuality scholarship. Drawing on archival research and in-depth interviews, the presentation foregrounds the voices of those who have navigated both internal and international displacements. It highlights how queer communities have historically adapted to, and resisted, state-sanctioned repression across various socio-political contexts.

Particular attention is paid to the informal queer care networks that have emerged as critical sites of solidarity and survival. These intergenerational and intra-community support systems illustrate the evolving strategies LGBTQ individuals have developed in response to contemporary challenges such as criminalisation and intensified border controls. By focusing on these creative forms of care and resistance, this research offers new insights into the resilience and transformation of queer mobilities in the face of rising hostility.

*LGBTQ migration  
ageing criminalisation  
anti-gender*

**G03 – P119****HANS GOERDTEN***Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany***SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN – AN EXPLORATION.**

Sexual violence remains an issue that pervasively shapes gender relations. Yet, its role in the lives of gay and bisexual men and thus their specific entanglement within gender relations has received limited scholarly attention. This presentation explores the part that sexual violence may play in gay and bisexual masculinities and life courses. This investigation promises unique insights into broader questions of gender relations and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative studies, this presentation reviews the state of existing research while introducing preliminary findings from a dissertation project based on biographical interviews with gay and bisexual men. Early results suggest a heightened vulnerability to sexual violence at critical points in life, particularly around the time of coming out, first interactions with other gay men, and initial sexual experiences. They will be presented in the form of short case studies, which demonstrate that the experiences of discrimination and concealment during youth and adolescence exacerbate this vulnerability, making young men more susceptible to predatory behavior.

By examining these biographical trajectories, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how sexual violence impacts gay and bisexual men and sheds light on how heteronormativity entangles violence, gender, and sexuality.

*Sexual Violence  
Vulnerability Biography  
Gay and Bisexual Men*

### G03 – P122

**ANA BEATRIZ GONÇALVES ROSA**

*CIEG/ISCSP – Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal*

**NOT YOUR CRIMINALS TO PUNISH, NOT YOUR VICTIMS TO SAVE: COLLECTIVE RESISTANCE OF SEX WORKERS AMID LEGAL DISREGARD IN THE IBERIAN CONTEXT.**

Across Europe, there have been transformations in the legal frameworks regarding sex work (Weitzer, 2012; Pitcher, 2015; Ward & Wylie, 2017; Oliveira et al., 2023). We are witnessing a trend that reflects a choice to reinforce criminalization, where sex workers' (SW) practices are increasingly controlled by law enforcement mechanisms. This directly affects the lives of those engaged in the activity, as well as their modes of political action.

In this study, I explore how these legal frameworks impact social, labor, and economic rights, and outline the forms of political action, dissent and resistance among SW movements in Portugal and Spain.

This research is part of my ongoing doctoral thesis, that adopts a transdisciplinary and multi-methodological strategy, combining media analysis, legal studies, ethnographic fieldwork within SW organizations, and in-depth interviews. This work is being developed through an embedded approach within these collectives, grounded in practices of reciprocity and mutual contribution, aiming to actively counter the risks of academic extractivism.

For this conference, the focus will be on the historical and legal dimensions of the Portuguese and Spanish contexts, while also presenting some preliminary findings from the fieldwork and interviews. Early results suggest that (neo-)abolitionist paradigms have had predominantly negative effects on those who engage in sex work. These legal frameworks often fail to recognize the agency and autonomy of SW, placing them in a liminal space between victims and criminals. Therefore, structures of exclusion and stigma are reinforced, ultimately disregarding the claims demanded by those who live their own realities firsthand.

At the same time, I argue that sex worker-led movements in both countries are increasingly asserting their presence, developing new forms

of labor organization, and gaining visibility. These developments highlight moments of political tension and contestation that empirically display how times of trouble are also times of resistance.

*Sex work  
Social movements  
Resistance  
Agency*

## C02 – P43

**THEA GRAHAM-COOPER**

*Utrecht University, The Netherlands*

### **REPRODUCTIVE WARFARE AND THE BIOPOLITICAL STAKES OF SETTLER FUTURITY: POST-MORTEM SPERM RETRIEVAL IN ISRAEL POST-OCTOBER 7TH.**

“Commercial sex parties, often held at sex clubs, are events where the organising function is to facilitate sexual interactions. Sex parties enable transgressive sexual experiences, breaching heteronormative expectations of monogamous, private, and reproductive sex. By facilitating what Gayle Rubin famously defined as ‘bad’ sex, sex parties may provide opportunities for the experience of heteroerotics which transcend heteronormativity. Based on their capacity for this subversion, sex parties will be read as carnivalesque spaces where alternative female sexual autonomies may be cultivated. This paper will question the implications and extent to which the erotic practices sex parties facilitate are transgressive, and whether such transgression supports or undermines the dominant production of sexuality. There is currently a dearth of research on heterosexual sex parties, and specifically their implications for feminist analyses of sex and sexuality. While there is a wealth of research on men who have sex with men, such research predominantly approaches such environments from the paradigm of public health risk. In response to this absence, this paper will utilise materialist and Black feminist frameworks alongside a critical narrative overview to bring together ethnographic research carried out in heterosexual sex parties in the UK, North America, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands. Sex parties will be used to examine the heterogeneity of sexual autonomy and its embedment in historically rooted power relations and material reality, problematising both the notion of carnivalesque freedom and political frameworks premised on transgression. Concluding that the enactment of subversive heteroerotics at sex parties is inseparable from the reproduction of racial homogeneity amongst participants, where the transgression they facilitate is dependent on the stratification of other systems of power.

*Sexual transgression*  
*Sex parties*  
*Heteroeroticism*  
*Sexual autonomy*  
*Carnavalesque*

## G02 – P116

**ARANTXA GRAU I MUÑOZ**

*Universitat de València, Spain*

### **NON-BINARY BISEXUALITIES: A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS? RETHINKING THE SEXUAL CATEGORY OF ‘BISEXUALITY’ AMONG NONBINARY YOUTH.**

The historical construction of cultural concepts surrounding sexuality and subjectivity brings us to a crucial framework in which, on the one hand, sexuality is acknowledged as having motivations beyond reproduction, and on the other, erotic desire is understood as inherently linked to the gender of the subjects involved (Rust, 2000). While static gender categories have been critically interrogated through the lens of queer studies, dominant understandings of desire as monosexual, and of sexual practices as intrinsically gendered, have largely gone unchallenged (Rodriguez, 2016). As a result, bisexuality remains constrained within a sexual order structured by monosexuality and a binary conception of gender. This helps explain the rejection of the term “bisexuality” as a sexual category, particularly among individuals who challenge the binary gender order. However, as we have discussed elsewhere (Grau & Faus, 2025), a segment of Spanish youth is in the process of redefining this category, imbuing it with new meanings. This is also true in the case of non-binary individuals.

Is non-binary bisexuality a contradiction in terms? This presentation aims to explore that question. Through a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with a sample of 25 non-binary individuals in the city of Valencia, Spain, we examine the meanings that shape non-binary bisexualities and enable their emergence.

Our findings point to what we have termed bisexuality as a political project. We observe that the bisexual category operates within a non-binary sexual order in which binary notions of corporeality, desirable subjectivity, materiality, and monogamy—among others—are challenged. In conclusion, what is particularly striking is that, rather than adopting more disruptive labels such as pansexual, these individuals reclaim a term that is already established—and supposedly outdated—in order to expand its cultural boundaries.

*Bisexuality*  
*Non-binary*  
*Gender*  
*Sexual category*

## A01 – P3

**ARANTXA GRAU MUÑOZ, ELISABET MARCO AROCAS,  
LUIS ROBLEDO DIAZ, JOAN TORRES PALOMARES, &  
ASSUMPTA JOVER LEAL**

*Universitat de València (Spain), Spain*

### **(NON) “MONOGAMY OR BULLET”: NEGOTIATIONS OF NON-MONOGAMIES WITHIN THE DOMINANT CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE MONOGAMOUS COUPLE.**

“Monogamy or bullet” is a phrase that has gained visibility on X, and especially on TikTok and Instagram among young adults. It carries strong symbolic weight, as it asserts a reaffirmation of monogamy without leaving room for negotiation. In fact, the reference to the “bullet” as part of decision-making evokes the well-known phrase attributed to Pablo Escobar. While not meant literally, the “bullet” acts as a metaphor for the narrow space allowed for negotiating emotional and sexual relationship models. But what about young people who embrace non-monogamous forms of relationships? This presentation focuses on those who, in some way, dodge the bullet—though they do not escape the shot.

This presentation draws on results from the research «Sexualities Online: Challenges for Youth Policies» (Project Code:PID2023-152504NA-100) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. Using a qualitative methodology based on seven focus groups with young people in the País Valencià (Spain), we explore how non-monogamous forms of bonding are articulated within a context where monogamy remains the dominant emotional/sexual relationship model. What emerges is a renewed proposal that, as an exploratory attempt, seeks to move away from the constraints and limitations of the monogamous couple. However, our findings suggest that the connections between both models cannot be ignored. These ties become evident in: a) the definition of the model — non-monogamies are ontologically framed as a negation of monogamy; b) the sexual script — the sexual script of non-monogamies is being constructed in opposition to the monogamous one; and c) the redefinition of fidelity — although non-monogamies reject exclusivity, the expectation of fidelity remains, albeit in a reconfigured form.

In conclusion, at this current stage in the articulation of the umbrella term “non-monogamies,” these forms of relationship must negotiate their existence within the framework of dissonance with monogamy, without yet constituting a fully new model.

#### *Non-monogamies*

*Young adults*

*Fidelity*

*Sexual Script*

**D03 – P70****NICOLETTA GUGLIEMELLI & SOFIA FIORE***University of Genoa, Italy & University of Salerno, Italy***SUBVERTING MASCULINITY: VIOLENCE, VULNERABILITY, EMOTIONS, AND THE PROMISE OF TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE.**

This work investigates the entanglements between cisgender masculinity, violence, and emotional repression through the lens of transformative justice (TJ). Harm is reframed not as individual pathology, but as a relational manifestation of threatened privilege within heterocispaternalist and neoliberal systems (Ahmed, 2006; Butler, 1990; Davis, 2003). Rather than reinforcing carceral logics or essentialising male vulnerability, we explore how accountability can become a collective and politicised practice of care and refusal (hooks, 2000; Kaba, 2021; Kim, 2020). Grounded in abolitionist feminism, queer theory, and critical phenomenology (Ahmed, 2006; Guenther, 2013; hooks, 2020), we conceptualise masculinity as a relational practice of power that governs emotion, visibility, and legitimacy. Drawing on practices such as the Challenging Male Supremacy Project and GenerationFive (CMSP, 2015; Hunter, 2020; INCITE!, 2020), we highlight collective approaches that politicise male suffering without centring it, and transform emotion into a tool for dismantling domination (hooks, 2004; Sedgwick, 1985). In a landscape marked by authoritarian populism, anti-gender backlash, and the re-traditionalisation of sexual norms, we advocate for a feminist approach that links masculinity and sexuality, questioning how such norms are internalised and reproduced through male socialisation. Rejecting neoliberal narratives of “healthy” masculinity, we approach masculinity as a contested terrain to be collectively dismantled—within and against the deviance/guilt dichotomy imposed by penal systems. In light of these tensions, we argue that TJ offers a mycelial politics of accountability—emerging from below, sustained through affective ties (brown, 2020; Piepzn-Samarasinha, 2018). It refuses punishment, resists moral binaries, and builds alternative masculinities not through reform, but through relational rupture (hooks, 2020; Davis, 2003; Ahmed, 2017).

**Critical Masculinities Studies****Transfeminist theories****Transformative Justice****Embodiment****Abolitionist Feminism****D03 – P67****MARIA LOUISE HANSEN***University of Oslo, Norway***WHO IS ‘RAPEABLE’? HETEROSEXUAL MEN, CASUAL SEX AND THE ILLEGIBILITY OF RAPE.**

This paper investigates how the genderedness of rape influence heterosexual men’s ability to recognize and label non-consensual sex as such. Drawing on interviews with 11 Norwegian men, I explore how heterosexual dynamics and constructions of masculinity contribute make male experiences of non-consensual sex ambiguous. Understanding the harm of rape as harm to the victim’s sexual agency and self-determination, and drawing on Butler’s concept of “legibility,” this paper explores how the genderedness of rape influence whose non-consensual sexual experiences that can be legible as rape. The paper suggests that gendered perceptions of vulnerability, consent, and responsibility may obscure experiences of non-consensual sex as violations for men in heterosexual dynamics. These perceptions may in turn affect how men and women understand sexual ethics and agency, and has implications for the ability to recognize heterosexual men as someone who may harm others or be harmed by non-consensual sex.

**Sexual violations****Male grey-area rape****Respectable nordic heteromascularity****sexual ethics Heterosexual matrix**

**A02 – P9****LUDMILA JANION***University of Warsaw, Poland***DEVIANT, SINNER, REBEL: JOHN MONEY IN POLISH ANTI-GENDER DISCOURSE.**

Anti-gender journalism combines two traditions of the term “gender” – the feminist one, in which gender means culturally imposed inequality, and the sexological one, in which it refers to a neutral identity difference. The result is a paradox: on the one hand, gender is considered innate, hardwired in the brain and unchangeable, on the other, it requires constant monitoring and discipline, because, as anti-gender pundits explain, sex education or inappropriate choice of a toy can distort it irrevocably in a child. To deal with this contradiction, anti-gender publicists refer to a narrative about American sexologist and psychologist John Money (1921–2006), who in their rhetoric is considered to be the “father of genderism,” the “propagator of gender ideology,” or “the first genderist.” In the paper, I examine the uses of “John Money” in Polish journalism and scholarly publications (2009–2022). I show that the image of the sexologist – uncorroborated by his writings and biographies – serves to construct a theoretical connection between feminism and trans issues and to present both as definitively falsified by scientific methods, and even more: maintained against common sense, by force, to maintain social control. This transfers the responsibility for Money’s mistakes into so-called gender ideology, covering up the conservative rationale behind his work. Moreover, a noticeable feature of the studied discourse is the reproduction of unverified information without citing sources. Tracing the reoccurring but false claims about Money makes it possible to establish that the image of the sexologist disseminated in Poland originated in Germany, and then infiltrated Polish anti-gender discourse, scholarly publications, and finally liberal discourse. Money himself remains unread in Poland and his output is unknown. The paper thus asks about the potential to nuance the legacy of John Money – an uncompromising “bad gay” (Lemmey & Miller), a sexual rebel, a demonized conservative.

*anti-gender  
“gender ideology”  
sexology  
discourse  
deviance*

**E02 – P83****IASMIN JORDÃO & JOANA MARTA-SIMÕES***Instituto Superior Miguel Torga, Portugal***BEYOND STATISTICAL NORMS: COGNITIVE FUSION AND POSITIVE BODY IMAGE IN A LGBTQ+ LUSO-BRAZILIAN SUBSAMPLE.**

Body image research has historically focused on cisgender heterosexual women through pathological frameworks, neglecting the experiences of gender-diverse individuals. This study, derived from an ongoing Master’s thesis, examines cognitive fusion with body image among Portuguese-speaking individuals assigned female at birth (cisgender heterosexual and non-heterosexual women, trans men, and non-binary people). Using a mixed-methods approach, we distributed a quantitative questionnaire assessing cognitive fusion as a mediator between body talk, body appreciation, and body functionality appreciation, alongside an open-ended qualitative question exploring lived experiences. While data collection and analysis are still in progress (target N=287), this study aims to address critical gaps in Euro-American body image research by centering LGBTQ+ perspectives. Preliminary engagement suggests strong participation from bisexual and trans communities, groups typically underrepresented in literature. The research seeks to challenge binary and deficit-focused paradigms by revealing how cognitive fusion manifests differently across gender identities and how functionality appreciation may serve as a protective factor. The study’s design bridges neuropsychological mechanisms (cognitive fusion) with sociocultural factors (minority stress theory), aligning with contemporary calls for more inclusive body image models. Findings are expected to contribute to gender-affirming clinical practices without reinforcing pathologizing narratives. By combining quantitative trends with qualitative narratives, this work offers both empirical and phenomenological insights into embodiment experiences at the intersection of gender identity and mental health. This presentation will discuss the study’s theoretical framework, methodological innovations in culturally adapting assessment tools, and preliminary observations from the Portuguese-speaking LGBTQ+ context. The research represents

a timely effort to decolonize body image research by giving voice to underrepresented people and questioning universalist assumptions in psychological research.

**LGBTQ+ health  
cognitive fusion  
Body image**

### **E03 – P85**

**EVELINA JUCHNEVICIUTE**

*Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania*

### **RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE IN THE ADOPTION OF INCLUSIVE INTIMATE CITIZENSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM THE LITHUANIAN PARLIAMENT.**

The dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s marked the re-emergence of religion as a prominent force in Lithuania’s public life. Despite its constitutional status as a secular state, the influence of religion has become increasingly evident in recent debates on women’s and LGBTQ+ rights. Lithuania has not ratified the so-called Istanbul Convention and remains one of the last EU jurisdictions without any legal recognition for same-sex relationships. These initiatives have triggered ideological clashes between progressive and conservative actors, with the latter invoking Lithuania’s Catholic cultural heritage. This opposition is reinforced by the instrumentalization of stripped-down and reinterpreted religious values, anti-gender rhetoric, and informal cooperation between politicians and the Lithuanian Catholic Church.

This paper aims to explore the ways in which religion shapes the political discourse around the implementation of more inclusive intimate citizenship, focusing on women’s and LGBTQ+ rights initiatives in Lithuania. It is based on PhD research involving expert interviews with members of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (Seimas) and a critical analysis of parliamentary debates on various women’s and LGBTQ+ rights initiatives. Set within the broader context of rising anti-gender and neo-conservative ideologies in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, the paper contributes to a deeper academic understanding of the interplay between politics, religion and gender in post-communist societies. It also challenges conventional secularisation narratives by highlighting the persistence and adaptation of religion in contemporary societies.

*intimate citizenship  
political discourse  
religious influence  
Catholic church  
Lithuania*

**G02 – P117****JOE JUKES & DANIEL NEWTON***Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom & University of Bristol, United Kingdom***“I REALLY WANT TO FEEL” - QUEER ARCHAEOLOGIES AND BISEXUAL FUTURES IN A BRISTOL PUBLIC TOILET.**

In a hilltop park in the centre of Bristol, UK sits a grotty, graffiti-filled, un/desirable public toilet known locally as a cruising spot. In this public toilet, one finds drawings, phone numbers, and explicit details of the authors' desires. These coat the walls in layers using multicoloured inks or physically etching directly into the paint, and some have faded into illegibility.

Cruising, a sex practice that locates the erotic encounter in the public rather than the private sphere, can be positioned as deviancy in action. Yet we also seek to challenge assumptions that engaging in cruising is 'inherently' radical or subversive. Perhaps cruising spaces gratify and sustain us in ways that exceed their 'use' as locations of sexual encounter (Florencio and Rosenfeld, 2025); and perhaps cruising practices express social desires proximate to the normative. Hence, to engage with the public toilet, or 'cottage', is to consider its complexities and passions as one of many sites archiving queer histories from below, where queer presence is repeatedly asserted through spatial use and customisation, or 'queering'.

We explore the public toilet as a site of affective and erotic potential, tracing both queer histories and futures through an archaeology of the graffiti. Stepping aside Berlant and Warner's (1998) queer counterpublics, we note the frequency of the bisexual label across the graphic accounts on the walls and unpack this through Clare Hemming's (2002) understanding of bisexual space to understand what invoking bisexuality in this space affords in terms of queer presence and proximity. Thinking with the 'grotty' atmosphere, we build an affective archive of the public toilet using images, sensations, sounds, and silences to ask: what does the dark record that the pen cannot? What deviant desires guide us in our search for queer satisfactions?

*cruising  
space  
temporality  
affect  
bisexual*

**B04 – P35****ALI IHSAN KARADENIZ & DUHA CEYLAN***Independent researcher, Belgium & Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium***FETISHIZED AND FEARED: MENA QUEER MASCULINITIES BETWEEN HYPER-VISIBILITY AND ERASURE.**

This paper examines dominant Western discourses that portray Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) masculinities as inherently violent, hyper-masculine, and aggressive. Rooted in colonial Orientalist histories, MENA men—regardless of ethnicity or religion—are routinely racialized as “barbaric others” through media representations and institutional practices. While scholarship often centers the victimization of Muslim women (who are themselves racialized), this paper shifts focus to how MENA masculinities are constructed, negotiated, and contested by gay men from these regions. Through examples such as the French slur *beur* or German immigration narratives framing Muslim men as oppressors, the paper traces how state and media discourse render MENA masculinities as threats. Simultaneously, in Western gay media—particularly in porn—these same racialized traits are commodified as erotic, exotic, and dominant, creating a contradictory logic of simultaneous denigration and fetishization. Based on semi-structured interviews, this study explores how gay MENA men navigate the social and sexual terrains of Western queer spaces. Participants reveal being routinely fetishized for their perceived dominance and virility, while also experiencing racialized exclusion and suspicion. These dynamics manifest most clearly in sexual encounters but extend into dating, friendships, and everyday interactions. The paper adopts an intersectional lens, attending to the specificities of migration, language, and cultural capital. It argues that MENA gay men are caught in a double bind: hyper-visible through racialized desire, yet persistently dehumanized. Rather than flattening these experiences, the paper highlights the varied strategies men use to resist, play with, or subvert imposed labels. Ultimately, this study calls for deeper attention to how queerness, race, and migration intersect in the construction of masculinity—and challenges dominant frameworks that either vilify or exoticize MENA men without listening to their lived experiences.

*MENA Masculinities  
Racialized desire  
Queer Migration  
Fetishization  
Orientalism*

## GO4 – P125

**GAYLE KAUFMAN(1), TANJA VUCKOVIC JUROS(2),  
D’LANE COMPTON(3), & LUKA MADER(2)**

*(1) Davidson College, USA, (2) University of Zagreb,  
Croatia, (3) University of New Orleans, USA*

### **PERCEPTIONS OF MARRIAGE EQUALITY AND LEGAL RIGHTS IN THE CROATIAN AND US LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY.**

As of 2025, 38 countries have legalized marriage between same-sex couples. A Supreme Court ruling in the United States legalized same-sex marriage in 2015, and public approval of these rights has continued to increase over the past decade. In Croatia, the Life Partnership Act provides most legal rights for same-sex couples since 2014 but falls short of full marriage equality. This study seeks to compare views of legal rights surrounding marriage equality among LGBTQ+ individuals in Croatia and the US. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 72 people in Croatia (22) and the US (50) between 2022 and 2024. Questions focused on attitudes toward marriage, legalization of marriage, and perceived impacts of marriage equality. In the US, most participants vividly recalled the momentous ruling that institutionalized marriage equality, whether that involved celebrating with friends or scrolling through social media. While older individuals expressed joy in gaining LGBTQ+ rights, they often felt that marriage was not necessary to mark a committed relationship. Younger individuals often grappled with the meaning of the ruling along with their own identity formation and coming out. Legalization impacted some people in more personal ways while others saw a broader impact of legal rights and broader visibility on the LGBTQ+ community. In Croatia, the Life Partnership Act was passed in the aftermath of the constitutional change reserving the term ‘marriage’ for heterosexual unions. This is reflected in the participants’ narratives, as they are well-aware of conservative and religious influences on society and the institution of marriage. For some, life partnership is a meaningful step forward – both for their relationships and for the society, but for others, a painful reminder of inequality. Overall, most participants, regardless of age, express a positive stance towards marriage and life partnership with hope that one day they will become the same.

**Marriage equality  
LGBTQ+ rights  
Croatia  
United States**

## F04 – P110

**NEVIEN KERK**

*Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany*

### **LOVING AI IN THIS ECONOMY? DEVIANT INTIMACIES WITHOUT ANOTHER IN DIGITAL CAPITALISM.**

My research explores intimate relationships with AI-powered companions as a critical site for understanding how love, sex, and emotional connection are reconfigured within digital capitalism. Millions of AI companionship app users describe their relationships with their AI partners as romantic, sexual, or intimate. Those relationships are often constrained by social conditions, such as economic precarity, social isolation, emotional alienation, and the com-modification of care and reproductive labor. At the same time, it’s worth investigating to which extent these evolving relationships forms and understandings unsettle normative relationships scripts or are a reproduction of dominant, even violent understandings of gender, sex, and relationships. In the context of digital capitalism (Nick Srnicek), the commodification of emotions (Eva Illouz), and the ongoing platformization of sexuality, these processes significantly contribute to our understanding of AI-mediated sexuality. By framing these interactions as “deviant intimacy” given the societal stigma and scrutiny that relationships lacking a sentient counterpart often face, I can analyze the emerging forms of intimate connection within digital capitalism. As part of my doctoral research, I will investigate these themes using a qualitative design based on constructivist grounded theory. Exploratory interviews with users of AI companionship apps and perform a qualitative analysis of online posts and discussions (e.g., on Reddit) will generate data that will guide ongoing theoretical development and refine my methodological focus. In line with the conference theme, this study argues that AI relationships are not merely pathological or futuristic curiosities but mirror structural transformations in intimacy. As conservative and anti-gender movements seek to reassert control over sexuality and relational norms, AI relationships emerge as both a reflection of a crisis and a provocation: sex with-out another, care without reciprocity, and love without recognition.

**digital intimacy  
AI companions  
sexuality  
digital capitalism  
deviance**

### B03 – P28

**BOGNA KIETLIŃSKA-RADWAŃSKA**

*University of Warsaw, Poland*

#### **INHERITING SILENCE: SEXUAL (NON)KNOWLEDGE AND GENDERED SOCIALIZATION IN POST-TRANSFORMATION POLAND.**

This presentation draws on fifty in-depth interviews with women who came of age in Poland during the 1990s—a period of profound social and cultural change following the fall of communism. The research explores how sexual and gender norms were communicated, hidden, or repressed within family and peer settings, in a context shaped by the collision of Catholic traditionalism, emerging globalized pop culture, and a lack of comprehensive sexual education. Framed within the sociology of knowledge and sexuality studies, the paper investigates how women inherited silence, shame, and fragmented information about the body, desire, and boundaries. I propose the notion of “genealogies of (non)knowledge” to describe how womanhood and sexuality were socially constructed through intergenerational transmissions, often implicit, emotionally charged, and embedded in everyday micro-practices.

The presentation addresses how this inherited (non) knowledge shaped women’s intimate lives and relationships, often leading to difficulties in expressing needs, experiencing pleasure or setting boundaries. It also asks how women today reinterpret these early socializations and, through narrative reflection, attempt to reclaim agency over their own intimate lives. By engaging with contemporary sexological and sociological frameworks, this study contributes to discussions on the long-term effects of sexual silence and taboo, particularly in the context of current anti-gender discourses and re-traditionalizing pressures in Eastern Europe. It highlights the importance of analyzing sexual socialization not only through its content, but through its forms, omissions, and emotional dynamics and calls for recognizing narrative as a form of both personal healing and subtle resistance.

*socialization*

*Intergenerational transmission*

*(Non)knowledge*

*Embodied knowledge womanhood*

### A01 – P4

**CHRISTIAN KLESSE & ANTONIO CERDEIRA PILÃO**

*Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom*

#### **QUEERING KINSHIP: BISEXUALITIES, GENDER, AND NON-MONOGAMIES IN THE UK AND BRAZIL.**

This paper explores kinship practices emerging from Consensual Non-Monogamies (CNMs), such as open relationships, polyamory, and relationship anarchy, drawing on data generated in the project Families and Kinships in the Margins of the State: Consensual Non-Monogamies and Multi-Parenthood in the United Kingdom and Brazil (FAKIM-CNM), funded by UKRI through the MSCA-Horizon Europe guarantee scheme.

While CNM studies have established themselves as an expanding research field, multi-parenting (MP) remains largely underexplored in academia, legally non-intelligible, and socially marginalised (M. Cammu 2020).

With rare exceptions, monogamous conjugality remains the sole juridically recognised form of legal recognition in Europe and the Americas. There is legal recognition for multi-parenthood in Brazil, while the UK’s strictly adherence to dyadic parenting norms. The research employs “legal consciousness” (S. Silbey 2008) as a tool to show how meanings of law circulate within social relations, resisting ideas about the causal effects of legislation on well-being and family formation. It shows how CNM parents exercise agency by interpreting and navigating legal constraints and the (lack of) access to resources, mobilizing, circumventing, and resisting harm and discrimination. Rather than portraying CNM and MP practitioners as passive victims of legal and institutional prejudices, this paper focuses on the voices of bisexual women within CNM and MP constellations to show how they shape family and kinship practices through complex processes of negotiation and adaptation. It reveals the protagonism of women who present their bisexuality as a matter that requires negotiation of relational arrangements to better conform to their emotional and sexual wishes and demands. Consequently, bisexual women in CNM and MP constellations do not only transcend normative ‘conjugality’, but transform

relational dynamics by creating relationships of care and affection among multiple adults and children that challenge assumptions regarding dyadic parenthood.

*Consensual Non-monogamies  
Multi-Parenting  
bisexual women  
kinship legal consciousness*

**E03 – P86**

**PETRA KLUG**

*University of Bremen, Germany*

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF SIN. DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION AND PATRIARCHY.**

Non-normative sexual practices, ways of life, and identities are constructed as deviant in relation to a prevailing normative model. To be an agent of change, the sociological study of sexualities and gender relations must examine not only the rebels, but also how the norms are constructed and sustained.

It is no coincidence that sexual deviance is often linked to the religious label of “sin.” Religion has significantly shaped gender relations: from religious creation myths with Eve tempting Adam into sin, to the image of women as either saints or sinners; the persecution of witches; the exclusion of women from religious offices; the cult of virginity; the confinement of women to motherhood; the prohibition of divorce; the duty of obedience to the husband; and the heteronormative patriarchy of most traditions – the examples are numerous and form a central part of traditional gender roles.

Moreover, the current re-traditionalization of gender relations is primarily driven by religious conservatives. The rampant demonization of queer and trans sexualities, as well as of reproductive rights, in the American Project 2025 is just the most obvious example.

This paper examines the ways in which religious discourse provides the ideological foundation for conservative movements opposing sexual liberation, focusing on theology, institutions, and collective dynamics. Having a background in feminist sociology and the study of religion, I combine findings from two of my empirical research projects – one on the construction of unbelief in the U.S., and the other on the ideological foundations of gender-based violence in Europe.

*Sin  
Religion  
Patriarchy and sexual violence  
sexual norms and normativities  
re-traditionalization of gender norms*

## A02 – P7

**ALEXANDER KONDAKOV**

*University College Dublin, Ireland*

### **THE POLITICISATION OF ANTI-LGBTQ+ HATE.**

This presentation explores the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ hate in Europe and its impact on sexuality studies. This trend of politicisation of anti-LGBTQ+ hate has manifested through discriminatory policies, often employed as populist strategies to consolidate political support. The presentation investigates the socio-historical trajectory of this phenomenon, highlighting the ways political rhetoric against LGBTQ+ communities has frequently translated into physical violence, censorship, and migration patterns. While the roots of such politicisation are longstanding, its modern forms are distinguished by enhanced visibility due to digital media and institutional hate crime frameworks, which simultaneously expose and amplify anti-LGBTQ+ hostilities. The presentation examines research that shows how anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric serves political actors as a divisive tool, fuelling fears of cultural erosion. This social manipulation taps into grievances such as perceived loss of privilege and distrust in conventional forms of governance, often provoking societal polarisation. The study highlights how digital technologies are being used to proliferate these hostilities, creating echo chambers that serve to accelerate the spread of hate speech. The vociferous reactions voiced by various far-right and right-wing political figures to liberal policies illustrate the enduring tension between progressive change and conservative resistance to sexual orientation and gender identity “difference”. The analysis underscores the urgent need for bridging societal divides, suggesting that addressing both the structural roots and modern expressions of anti-LGBTQ+ hate is essential to mitigating its impact.

**LGBTQ+**

**Hate Anti-gender movement**

**Politicisation**

**Queer Methodology**

## F04 – P111

**ANNA KUBOVSKI, YELA LAHAV-RAZ, & DANA KAPLAN**

### **MEN’S EROTIC ATTENTION IN DIGITAL SEX.**

Sex is a social interaction, and digital technologies have significantly transformed individuals’ sexual interactions, including “erotic attention”. Erotic attention, defined as the perceptual and affective focus on another as sexually or romantically desirable, is shaped by cultural frameworks, aesthetic hierarchies, and cognitive schemas that organize perception and desire. While previous research has examined erotic attention in face-to-face, embodied interactions, there is still a gap in understanding how these dynamics manifest in digital environments.

Gender significantly structures erotic attention. Theories of objectification and compulsory heterosexuality emphasize how attention is unevenly distributed across bodies, often positioning women as passive recipients of active male desire. Erotic attention thus functions as a political practice, determining which bodies are deemed desirable, whose pleasure is prioritized, and which desires are legitimized. This politicization of desire creates complex power dynamics that require ethical negotiation between participants, particularly in digital contexts where traditional social cues may be absent or transformed.

These dynamics of erotic attention are further complicated in digital environments. Digital platforms reshape how erotic attention is signaled, perceived, and reciprocated. Online interactions raise critical questions about where attention is directed and who is rendered in/visible.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews with men engaging in digital sex across various platforms, this study explores participants’ narratives. The objective is to identify patterns in how they conceptualize and practice erotic attention. Participants described navigating the tension between being perceived as desirable and performing desirability, as well as balancing agency with externally-imposed hyper-masculine expectations. Erotic attention was portrayed as intentional and shaped through a combination of textual, visual, and vocal cues. Findings suggest

that erotic attention in digital spaces is marked by ambiguity, and individuals simultaneously occupy positions of subject and object. Erotic attention thus emerges as a relational, ethical, and technologically mediated process, contributing to our understanding of digital intimacy.

*Digital Sex*  
*Erotic Attention*  
*Sexual ethics*  
*Men's sexuality*

**DO2 – P65**

**SILJA KUKKA**

*University of Oulu, Finland*

**SEEKING SAFETY IN PORNOGRAPHY: ASEXUAL FANS' RELATIONSHIP TO SEXUALLY EXPLICIT FAN FICTION.**

The study of human sexuality in its infinite variables and shades of gray has long been of special interest to countless researchers from various fields of study, from sociology to fandom studies. What has not been studied nearly as much are asexual people, or people who experience little or no sexual and/or romantic attraction. In my Doctoral thesis (Kukka, 2022) I discovered that erotic fan fiction may help especially women and queer fans to come to terms with their own sexuality, learn about desire in its many forms, and even help fans to deal with their traumatic experiences regarding sex. In my proposed paper I wish to offer some preliminary results of my post-doc research project concerning erotic fan fiction reading and writing among asexual individuals. Together with my research partner, we gathered survey data (n = 70) among people on the asexuality spectrum who read or write erotic fan fiction. The data was collected at the end of 2024 and has been analyzed using the Qualitative Content Analysis method. The main research question is how do people on the asexuality spectrum view erotic or pornographic content in fan fiction, and what kinds of relationships do they form with said material. We discovered that one of the main reasons behind reading or writing erotic fan fiction lies in the safety it offers asexual fans. Fantasizing or reading about fictional characters offers many a much-needed distance from the acts being depicted and themselves, as well as a feeling of being in control. The proposed paper sheds light on a seldom discussed sexual identity. It argues that porn may offer asexual people a safe venue for the discussion of sexual traumas, identities, and self-discovery. Kukka, S. (2022). Exploring desire : sexual and gender identities in fan fiction communities. University of Oulu.

*Asexuality*  
*Fan fiction studies*  
*Erotica Survey data*  
*Qualitative content analysis*

**C03 – P49****KAY LALOR***Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom***RESISTING RIGHTS: QUEER ABOLITIONISM AND THE LIMITS OF THE SEXUAL STATE.**

While increased legal protections of LGBTQI+/SOGI have secured significant gains for many queer communities, those same rights protections fall short of affirming more radical forms of queer justice and inclusion. Rights have operated as modes of governmentality by which queer identities, bodies and emotions are increasingly subject to forms of state regulation and control. More recently, rights protections have been deployed against queer communities in the name of protecting freedom of expression or ‘balancing’ the rights of supposedly opposed communities. Inevitably, whether rights are deployed for and against SOGI communities, their invocation also involves the exposure of SOGI communities to the formal and informal coercive powers of the state. This paper takes seriously the question of whether and how we can resist this coercive power of the sexual state, even in situations where the state seeks to protect SOGI groups and individuals. To do this the paper turns to feminist and queer abolitionist literatures, as well as to critical and decolonial human rights scholarship, to imagine how we might resist the governmental, coercive and potentially alienating power of rights, asking whether SOGI rights must inevitably be shaped, limited, enforced or ignored by coercive regimes of state and international governance. It seeks to imagine how rights might operate with more contingency and flexibility; dependent on the struggles within which they are embedded rather than solely upon pre-existing legal and political structures. In so doing, the paper explores the scope of imagining queer futures that resist the neoliberal politics of rights, in which there is the possibility for action and organising beyond the coercive state.

***Queer abolitionism***  
***LGBT Rights***  
***Queer Resistance***

**A04 – P15****MIKE LAUFENBERG***Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany***BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE AND AUTHORITARIAN NEOLIBERALISM: HOW TO THEORIZE LATE-FASCIST SEXUAL POLITICS?**

The presentation offers reflections on the following question: How can the far-right politicization of queer sexuality and transness be theorized within the current conjuncture of authoritarianism and fascization in late-neoliberal societies?

The process-oriented concept of fascization rejects the common-sense idea of a radical break between bourgeois democracy and fascism. Instead, it emphasizes the fluid transitions between the two and highlights the molecular proliferation and convergence of fascist ideologemes within bourgeois-democratic societies. This concept resonates with Critical Theory, the Black Radical Tradition, abolitionism, and New Left fascism debates – all of which trace the preconditions and afterlives of fascist tendencies beyond historical European fascism. Building on this, Alberto Toscano (2023) proposes understanding today’s authoritarian and restorative restructuring of democracies and social life forms as manifestations of a “late-fascist” conjuncture.

Against this backdrop, the presentation explores the concept of fascization with regard to the current rise of anti-queer and anti-trans sentiment as constitutive elements of a late-fascist sexual politics. The presentation is divided into three parts:

1. First, it outlines key elements of today’s authoritarian transformations as responses to the multiple crises of global capitalism, emphasizing sexuality and gender as central battlegrounds of social conflict and mobilization.
2. Second, it argues that concepts like hetero- and homonormativity (Duggan, Eng, Warner) and homonationalism (Puar), although once very influential in queer theory, fall short in explaining contemporary fascization processes regarding sexuality and gender, as they primarily emerged as critiques of the shortcomings of ‘progressive neoliberalism’ (Fraser).

3. Third, it sketches out three queer and trans theoretical perspectives rooted in materialist social theory that appear more promising for understanding today's conflicts around queer and trans existence in the context of authoritarian and fascist transformations: queer/trans perspectives of social reproduction; theories of the reification of sexuality and gender in late capitalism; and Marxist queer/trans of color approaches.

*authoritarianism  
fascization  
sexual politics*

## **B02 – P26**

**MAYA LAVIE-AJAYI, DANA KAPLAN, & SHACHAR TIMOR-SHLEVIN**

### **HOW TO SUPERVISE AND SUPPORT STUDENTS TO RESEARCH SEX AND SEXUALITY IN A SAFE AND PLEASURABLE WAY.**

In times of rising conservatism, political polarization, gender backlash, and academic precarity, sexuality research often becomes both more urgent and more dangerous. Students engaging with sexual subjectivity, intimacy, or deviance in their research frequently encounter affective, ethical, and embodied challenges, often with minimal institutional or supervisory support. This paper examines how research supervision can become a site of either silencing or solidarity for students navigating the “troubled waters” of sexuality studies.

Drawing on higher education supervision literature, feminist epistemologies, and queer critiques, we explore the supervisory neglect surrounding research on sex and sexuality: from the emotional risks of secondary trauma to the gendered dynamics of fieldwork sexualization, to the silencing of researcher desire under the guise of objectivity. Despite growing attention to doctoral well-being, most supervision frameworks remain technocratic and sanitized, failing to acknowledge the embodied, affective, and politicized labor involved in sexuality research. This paper argues for a radical reimagining of supervisory practices, beyond compliance and completion rates, to create spaces of trust, reflexivity, and care. We propose a model of supervision workshop that legitimizes emotional processing, affirms researcher's sexual subjectivity, and challenges academic norms that devalue “dirty work.” In doing so, we position supervision as a potential act of resistance: a place to center vulnerability, complexity, and feminist pedagogy in the face of institutional and societal constraints.

*sex research  
supervision  
feminist pedagogy  
critical sexual studies*

## E01 – P77

**MAYA LAVIE-AJAYI, LARISA SHPAKOVSKAYA(1), & ANNA TEMKINA**

*(1) University of Helsinki, Finland*

### **“70 IS NOT THE LIMIT”: ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES ON AGING SEXUALITY IN WOMEN’S STORIES IN FINLAND, RUSSIA AND ISRAEL.**

Although aging sexuality has become less stigmatized and more visible, the primary discourses available to women continue to be binary, focusing on either natural decline or anti-decline, youth-oriented sexuality. In this paper, we will explore alternative possibilities for constructing sexuality and desirability in later life, using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). The term “affirmative” is used to indicate an alternative (Sandberg), but we will show a more nuanced differentiation of alternative discourses. Such discourses do not appear as coherent ones; women are influenced by various cultural norms and sexual scripts, even as they expand their boundaries. They create a variety of descriptions of their experiences, using different tools to do so. Following FDA, we explore how the available discourses on aging sexuality shape different practices, subjectivities, positioning, and opportunities. We found three discourses: the progress discourse, which portrays sexuality as improving with age, enriched by experience, knowledge, self-awareness, and relationships; the acceptance discourse, which views aging sexuality as different rather than better or worse; and the critical discourse, which emphasizes the influence of cultural forces such as patriarchy and ageism. Our analysis is based on 62 semi-structured interviews with women aged 50 and older who use dating apps from Russia, Finland, and Israel, including both immigrants and locals. We focus on those women who are seeking sexual partners on dating apps, as these women in their post-reproductive age have significant experience of expression of their desire and needs. The geographical diversity of our dataset, along with our attention to context, allows us to offer an understanding of shared global discourses with local variations. We argue that while the sexuality of reproductive-aged women is under social policing, women in post-reproductive age may have more degrees of freedom.

*Sexual subjectivity  
Aging sexuality  
Discourse  
Dating apps*

## G02 – P118

**SAM LAWTON-WESTERLAND**

*University of Glasgow, United Kingdom*

### **IS BISEXUALITY QUEER?**

This paper seeks to add to the discussion of how bisexuality fits into the queer umbrella, positioning bisexuality between discourses of heteronormative and homonormative sexual citizenship regimes. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with bisexual, pansexual and queer identified men and their partners, this paper will examine how these participants negotiate their relationship to queer identities, relationships and social relations. Ultimately, I will argue that bisexuality’s troubling of heteronormative and monosexual relationship expectations marks bisexuality a queer, deviant force, especially as bisexuals identification with bisexuality (regardless of whether or not they personally identify themselves or bisexuality as queer) marks them out as deviating from the standard heteronormative life course, albeit with the possibility of somewhat aligning with heterosexual expectations and relationships formations.

*Bisexuality  
Heteronormativity  
Queerness  
Homonormativity*

## D03 – P69

**RACHEL LEVI HERZ & DANA KAPLAN**

### **BOTH THEIR ATTACKERS AND THEIR DEFENDERS: YOUNG WOMEN'S VULNERABLE SEXUAL SUBJECTIVITY IN TIMES OF WAR IN ISRAEL.**

Young women's sexuality research has faced the challenge of dealing with neoliberal discourses that promote sexual empowerment as opposed to vulnerability and risks. The current political and security instability in Israel heightens this challenge. First, the rise of the far right and the promotion of regime reform intensified the backlash against women and gender minorities. Second, the outbreak of the Israel-Gaza war restored traditional gender roles as young men were called to the front. It also led to intense exposure of sexual violence, emphasizing the victimization of young women (Klar-Chalamish, 2024). In this climate, it is necessary to rethink the available epistemic frameworks to conceptualize these tensions. This paper addresses these challenges to examine young women's sexual subjectivity at times of war and violence. Drawing on theories of vulnerability that dispute neoliberal dichotomies to conceptualize subjectivity and agency alongside vulnerability and feminine victimization (Bergoffen, 2009; Gilson, 2016, 2022; Kreft & Schulz, 2022), it analyzes 25 semi-structured interviews with young Israeli Jewish women (aged 20-30) that were held after the break of the war. The findings show how young women face conflictual expectations while emerging as sexual subjects. On the one hand, they look for stability, security, and protection in the form of long-term heterosexual relationships. They also express sexual desire and fantasy for combat soldiers who represent potential protection. On the other hand, they face collective trauma, resulting from the intense exposure to sexual violence, but also from the nationalization of women victims of this violence. These contradictions result in the restoration of young men as both attackers and defenders of young women. Nevertheless, young women navigate these conflictual expectations and gender roles to express their sexual wishes, resulting in the emergence of vulnerable sexual subjectivity.

*young women's sexual subjectivity  
vulnerability  
war  
sexual violence*

## C02 – P42

**ANTONINA LEWANDOWSKA**  
*University of Warsaw, Poland*

### **WHERE THE STATE DOES NOT REACH. THE STRATEGIES OF POLISH ABORTION SEEKERS.**

After the 2020 near-total ban on abortion was imposed in Poland, an underground self-help network emerged, soon becoming a crucial element of the country's abortion reality. In this presentation, I will present and analyse the strategies employed by Polish abortion seekers within these informal networks, analysing them through the lens of James C. Scott's theoretical approach towards disobedience and resistance. By focusing on grassroots-organized strategies, I aim to highlight how individuals navigate social, political, and legal obstacles to access abortion.

The presentation is rooted in my academic research, including my ongoing PhD project in the sociology of abortion experiences, as well as in my observations as an abortion rights advocate. This dual perspective allows me to examine aspects often invisible to the outsider's eye. In the presentation, I will discuss how activists and abortion seekers create alternative infrastructures of care, utilizing tactics such as informal networks, coded communication, and cross-border collaborations to circumvent barriers they face.

My main focus will be on presenting the infrapolitics of people affected directly by the Polish abortion ban. By applying Scott's framework, I will argue that these forms of resistance challenge state power through decentralised acts of defiance, deliberately avoiding direct confrontation with the system. The presentation will also reflect on the implications of these strategies for broader sociological discussions on reproductive justice, medicalization, and resistance in politically, socially, and legally restrictive contexts.

*Abortion  
Infrapolitics  
Self-help  
Grassroots*

**DO1 – P57****LUKA MADER***University of Zagreb, Croatia***HOW DO MEMBERS OF THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY PERCEIVE EVERYDAY LIVES OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE IN CROATIA.**

The quality of life of transgender individuals is significantly influenced by the broader social context (public perception and awareness of gender issues) as well as the internal acceptance of the LGBTQ community. The last few decades have marked the rise of anti-gender movements, which have resulted in a social environment in which everyone has a stance on trans identities, which significantly affects and complicates the daily lives of transgender individuals. When we mix in the lack of literature, both local and international, that addresses the acceptance of transgender identities within the community, we find ourselves in a position to pose the question: How do members of the LGBTQ community perceive the daily lives of transgender individuals in Croatia?

In 2023 and 2024, 22 interviews were conducted with members of the Croatian LGBTQ community. The focus was on answering three main questions: (1) How do members of the LGBTQ community perceive transgender individuals and their daily lives; (2) How do members of the LGBTQ community perceive social and media representation of transgender identities; and (3) What is the experience of transgender individuals in presenting their gender identity in Croatian society and community. This research aimed to critically examine the homogeneity of experiences and opinions within the LGBTQ community and the complexity of everyday social interactions of transgender individuals. The findings presented here will provide insight into the experience of being transgender in Croatia from the perspective of those who identify as such, as well as other members of the community, to paint a picture of the current state of this marginalized group in Croatia.

*transgender people  
internal acceptance  
quality of life  
Croatia*

**DO4 – P74****AYANTIKA MAJUMDAR***Utrecht University, The Netherlands***HETERONORMATIVE MATRIX AND BODY NON-NORMATIVITY IN RELATION TO VIRGINITY.**

Trans performance art has emerged as a vital medium for disrupting dominant narratives of gender, embodiment, and visibility. By centering bodily non-normativity and fluidity, trans artists challenge the constraints of cis-heteronormative aesthetics and expand the possibilities of self-representation. The fluidity and resistance inherent in trans performance art not only subvert traditional gender norms and expectations but also create space for new forms of expression and identity that escape the confines of institutional regulation. By performing “beyond normativity,” trans artists push the boundaries of what is socially and politically imaginable, expanding the possibilities for understanding and experiencing embodiment. Artists such as Cassils, Del LaGrace Volcano, and Genesis Breyer P-Orridge illustrate how performance art subverts binary understandings of gender by embracing ever-evolving forms of embodiment. Moreover, trans performance art can be seen as a site of negotiation between visibility and vulnerability. While the visibility of trans bodies in artistic spaces can expose performers to the risk of hyper-surveillance, it also allows for the redefinition of what constitutes an authentic or legitimate body. In this sense, these performances don't merely conform to the dominant cultural narratives that marginalize non-normative identities but also they actively disrupt and reframe them, creating alternative spaces for resistance. Through its aesthetic transgression, this art not only challenges the commodification of bodies within neoliberal diversity frameworks but also offers new ways to imagine and experience embodiment. This imaginative disruption opens up political possibilities for non-normative identities, offering a more expansive understanding of what it means to live outside the constraints of traditional identity categories and social expectations.

This paper examines how trans performance art resists medicalized and pathologized representations while negotiating the politics of visibility and hyper-

surveillance (Foucault, 1977). By analyzing key performances, this paper attempts to argue that trans performance art serves as both a site of resistance and a space of vulnerability, where visibility is a double-edged sword (Straube, 2024). It further explores how trans performance art negotiates institutionalized power structures, expanding the realm of political possibility through fluidity, resistance, and aesthetic transgression (Mepschen et al., 2010). The question at hand invites a nuanced analysis of how trans performance art interrogates and resists the commodification of non-normative bodies, particularly in the context of neoliberal diversity and inclusion frameworks.

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*Trans performance art*  
*Aesthetic transgression*  
*politics of visibility*  
*Bodily non-normativity*  
*hyper-surveillance*

### F03 – P105

**IRENE MASSA**

*Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra, Portugal*

#### **THE INVISIBILITY TRIANGLE: BEING QUEER, OLDER AND ISLANDER IN ITALY.**

In Italy the greatest recognition for LGBTQI+ rights has been the Civil Union (law no. 76/2016), which allowed for the recognition of same-sex, but which did not guarantee the same rights as marriage. The achievement of such a goal, however long pursued, represents only a part of the demands of the LGBTQI+ movement, which remain mostly unheard (Santos, 2013). Its acceptance also falls once again within a strategy of distancing LGBTQI+ people from discussions related to affection and procreation, creating an ad hoc law that was regarded as innocuous in relation to the canons of the Catholic heteronormative family (Serri and Lasio, 2016). For people over 60, this milestone also came at a later stage in life, which means that older queers have lived most of their relationships in a context of legal invisibility. In other words, their bonds have been unnamed and unintelligible for a long time, due to the lack of legitimacy (Franchi and Selmi, 2020). Despite the fact that being LGBTQI+ is not criminalised in Italy, such meagre legal framework does not challenge the climate of secrecy in which people were – and still are – forced to live (Santos, 2013; 2016) and above all does not enable full access to citizenship rights (Weeks, 1995). In order to shed light on the stories of those who have experienced changes over time and who have undergone a process of invisibilization over the years, my research aims at highlighting the embodied knowledge of their narratives (Halberstam, 2005; Ilmonen et al., 2017; Love, 2007). This paper draws on preliminary analysis of biographical interviews conducted in Sardinia and in Sicily, using the BNIM method, as part of the project TRACE - tracing queer citizenship over time, whose goal is to tell the stories of LGBTQI+ people over 60 in Southern Europe, with a particular interest in insular Italy.

*Queer*  
*Italian Islands*  
*Ageing*

## A04 – P16

**KRYSTYNA MAZUR**

*University of Warsaw, Poland*

### **SOCIALITY BEYOND THE HUMAN: QUEER RESISTANCE TO ECOSYSTEM COLLAPSE.**

Among today's greatest challenges are threats to our climate and environment. The need for radical rethinking of our relationship to the non-human environments are recognized by many queer activists and scholars, who move beyond single-issue politics (in the true radical spirit of the early 1990s queer organizing). I want to look at a site-specific case, namely Poland's recent far-right government's devastating practices of logging in Polish forests (including those protected as natural preserves) and at resistance to those performed from queer positions by a queer-identified group of activists. Wilczyce ["female wolves"] came together to prevent logging in Carpathian Mountains. For 580 days they "squatted" the forest, effectively blocking the loggers' access to the trees. In the summer, they organized art workshops, proceeds from which were used to sustain them on their post for yet another season. In the winters, they used mountain climbing gear to scale trees, where they created "pods" for sleeping in. Despite the obvious physical challenges, this queer occupation has proven to be the site of artistic and intellectual creativity. Wilczyce see the exploitation of the natural forest ecosystems by the State as intimately related to other forms of exploitation by human, heteronormative, patriarchal capitalism. Self-identified as nonheteronormative subjects they argue for the solidarity with all those "Othered": be it trees, animals, or refugees on the Polish-Belorussian border. Wilczyce work from post-humanist, post-anthropocentric positions. Their anti-speciesist queer perspective exposes capitalism, heteronormativity, white patriarchy, and Eurocentric humanism as interlinked systems of oppression. Queer resistance is mobilized to critique "the human" as a violent fiction that isolates and polices "Others"—animal, female, queer, Black, migrant, disabled (used exchangeably as scapegoats). This position rejects human supremacy, challenges the human-animal binary, and demands solidarity with non-human life. Queer politics in times of trouble must necessarily engage with our non-human "others."

*queer  
interspecies  
activism  
environmental degradation*

## C02 – P46

**RAMONA MIHAILA**

*Dimitrie Cantemir Christian University – Bucharest, Romania*

### **GENDER DYNAMICS IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE: THE INTERSECTIONS OF VIOLENCE, EARLY MOTHERHOOD, AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES.**

This article critically examines the policies related to gender-based violence against women, early motherhood, and domestic violence within the context of Southeastern Europe, focusing on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, and Kosovo. Gender-based violence (GBV) is understood as a significant social, political, and economic mechanism that perpetuates the subordinate status of women in relation to men, reinforcing traditional gender roles. Drawing from the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)'s General Recommendation No. 35 (2017), the article underscores that GBV constitutes a substantial barrier to the attainment of substantive gender equality, infringing upon women's human rights and freedoms as established by international frameworks, particularly the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011).

The analysis further emphasizes the multifaceted nature of GBV, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, as well as the societal and institutional structures that enable its perpetuation. The article delves into the significant challenges posed by GBV in educational environments, where violence undermines women's right to education and exacerbates gender inequalities. Special attention is given to the impact of gender-based violence in schools, which serves as a key impediment to achieving gender parity in education across the region.

Moreover, the article explores the development of gender studies in the region, addressing two pivotal dimensions: the evolving dynamics of gender equality and gender relations within academic spaces, and the substantial hurdles faced by gender studies over

the last three decades. The analysis considers the political, social, and cultural challenges encountered in Southeastern Europe in the wake of the collapse of communism, particularly in the context of deeply entrenched conservative norms that continue to shape public discourse and institutional policies on gender equality.

*Gender-based violence*  
*Early motherhood*  
*Educational inequality*  
*Southeastern Europe*  
*Gender studies*

## **E01 – P76**

**JOANNA MIZIELIŃSKA & AGATA STASIŃSKA**  
*Collegium Civitas, Poland*

### **COPING TACTICS AND QUEER FUTURES: RETHINKING KINSHIP IN LGBTQ+ AGING.**

In the presentation we will explore how LGBTQ+ elders in Poland navigate aging and relational practices in a socio-political context marked by anti-gender rhetoric, homophobic policies, and increasing socio-economic precarity. Drawing on qualitative data collected in the *Imagining Queer Aging Futures* project—a comparative study of LGBTQ+ aging in Estonia, Poland, and Sweden—we focus on the role of kinship practices, both biological and chosen, as key coping tactics that enable survival and the creation of liveable lives (Butler, 2009). We introduce the concept of coping tactics alongside the metaphor of communicating vessels (Mizielńska 2022) to examine how family practices and relational strategies function as interconnected responses to precarious conditions. How do LGBTQ+ people aged 50 and over create networks of care and intimacy that provide comfort and continuity in later life? How are these practices shaped by the specific local context of Poland, where global discourses on sexuality and aging intersect with entrenched familial norms and anti-LGBTQ+ politics? What differences emerge between the experiences of cis and trans participants, and how do gender dynamics shape the building and sustaining of these networks of care and support? Rather than focusing on overt forms of resistance, we examine subtle, relational tactics and everyday practices. These include quiet negotiations of care, the formation of intergenerational ties, and efforts to ensure relational safety. Such practices offer alternative ways of imagining queer aging and sustaining “liveable lives” within a hostile social and political environment. Our analysis queers the concept of agency, moving beyond liberal understandings of autonomy and heroic resistance. We argue that these coping tactics are crucial for understanding how LGBTQ+ people in Poland craft possible futures in the face of systemic exclusion.

*coping tactics & communicating vessels*  
*queer aging*  
*kinship livable lives*  
*anti-LGBTQ politics*

### G03 – P123

**SABINA MOMPÓ TORIBIO**

*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain*

#### **RAPE AS A ‘WEAPON OF WAR’? PERSPECTIVES AND DEBATES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.**

This paper will first address the contentious issue of wartime rape, understood as the systematic use of sexual violence by male soldiers against women during armed conflict. It will then situate this phenomenon within the context of the Spanish Civil War, engaging with the ongoing historiographical debates surrounding its occurrence and interpretation in Spain. While sexual violence in war is as old as conflict itself, it has long remained on the margins of historical inquiry. Only in the 1970s feminist scholars began to highlight its use as a means of terror, with Susan Brownmiller notably characterizing rape as a “weapon” of war. Despite these early interventions, sexual violence continued to be viewed largely as an unfortunate byproduct of war rather than as a deliberate military practice—receiving little attention from national or international legal institutions. It was not until the mass atrocities committed in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–1995) that the international community began to recognize wartime rape as a crime against humanity and a form of genocide, thus shifting the framework of analysis. Since the late 1990s, scholarship has undergone a significant paradigm shift. Historians and legal scholars increasingly interpret sexual violence in armed conflict not merely as incidental, but as potentially strategic—a tactic or weapon employed deliberately. At the same time, some authors have emphasized the importance of context-specific analysis, questioning the broad application of terms like “weapon” or “strategy” and calling for more nuanced understandings of the functions and meanings of sexual violence in war. This paper will outline the main historiographical approaches to sexual violence in armed conflict, before turning to the Spanish Civil War. Drawing on the previous works and thesis for the Spanish case, it will ask: Can rape be considered a weapon of war in the Spanish context? And what specific forms will it take during the conflict?

*Sexual Violence*

*Rape*

*Weapon of War*

*Spanish Civil War*

*Francoism*

### F04 – P107

**DORON MOSENZON & DANA KAPLAN**

#### **BENT, BROKEN, BLURRED: DISCURSIVE-AFFECTIVE PRACTICES OF HETEROSEXUAL DOUBT.**

In our contemporary moment, the boundaries of normative heterosexuality are constantly being questioned and renegotiated – from the mediation of sexuality and the #MeToo movement, to the growing visibility of LGBT+ struggles and neoliberal ideals of sexual optimization. But how do these changes affect the lived experience of heterosexuality, especially for those who find themselves on its outskirts? This paper is based on an analysis of 200 posts expressing doubt and anxiety regarding heterosexual identity from r/sex, a large internet forum on the social media site Reddit focusing on advice-seeking regarding sexuality. Each describes sexual experiences presented as disrupting or arising doubt regarding one’s heterosexuality. Examining the posts as discursive-affective practices of negotiating the authors’ understanding of themselves, I will show how they manifest broad contemporary frictions regarding the borders of heterosexuality and the meaning of sexual identity itself. Analyzing linguistic and narrative structures shows how the authors draw on various meaning-making resources to interpret their experiences, often exhibiting contradictory logics regarding identity labels, the in/stability of desire, and self-knowledge. These competing interpretive repertoires are rooted in broader cultural constructions of sexuality, identity, and selfhood which do not remain abstract intellectualizations but rather shape their affective and embodied experiences. As certain sexual practices become infused with heterosexual anxiety, doubt, and confusion when they touch the fault line of heterosexuality’s borders, they are imbued with a potential to destabilize, reveal, or recreate one’s sexuality. These disturbing affects prompt seeking advice to reestablish coherence and stability to one’s sexual subjectivity and identity. The feeling of uncertainty and the need to negotiate these boundaries is tightly connected to political debates regarding sexuality, as progressive social movements are under attack for blurring the lines of normality. Understanding the dynamics of heterosexual doubt is crucial to understating the contemporary battlefield of sexuality.

*Heterosexuality*

*Sexual Identity*

*Affect and Sexuality*

## C04 – P53

DANIELA SOFIA NETO

University of Coimbra, Portugal

**REPRESENTATIONS OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA REGARDING SEXUALITY DURING THE ESTADO NOVO.**

This paper seeks to understand how sexuality was perceived by students at the University of Coimbra in the 1960s, within the socio-political context of the Estado Novo dictatorial regime, which ruled Portugal for 48 years (1926-1974). During this time, the environment was particularly inhospitable to the emergence of feminist themes and the debate around sexuality, while the second wave of the feminist movement flourished across Europe. The study explores the intersection of the progressive feminization of higher education and the strong influence of the regime's moralistic and repressive ideology. The paper examines documentary sources (such as student press) and semi-structured interviews with students from the University of Coimbra in the 1960s. The analysis reveals a deeply entrenched conservatism, alongside significant instances of contestation regarding sexuality, which clashed with the moral corset imposed by the regime. These tensions provoked repressive reactions and, in turn, contributed to a broader opening of understandings that led to social changes in subsequent decades. The triangulation of discourses from documentary sources—often aligned with the regime's values and shaped by censorship—and the testimonies gathered in the interviews helps to elucidate how sexuality functioned as an instrument for maintaining the social order, reinforcing idealized gender archetypes: femininity was associated with morality, motherhood, and submission; masculinity with power, virility, and family authority. The analysis further reveals how progressive discourses emerged within the student community, challenging the dominant moralistic conceptions and aligning with a wider desire for social and political transformation. This movement was driven not only by political groups opposing the regime but also by clandestine cultural influences. This paper is particularly pertinent to analyze today, when democracy is in jeopardy and, with it, the achievements and progress in the field of sexuality that impact the way femininities and masculinities are defined.

*Sexuality**Social Representations**Dictatorship*

## G04 – P126

BENGISU ÖTEN

Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey

**DEVIANCE AND DEFIANCE: QUEER NIGHTLIFE IN ISTANBUL UNDER AUTHORITARIAN RE-TRADITIONALIZATION.**

This article investigates the socio-legal dynamics under Turkey's intensifying anti-gender political climate, where queer nightlife venues in Istanbul are being targeted. Following withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, the establishment of the Family Institute, and the declaration of 2025 as the "Family Year" a neo-traditionalist agenda has been developed that frames LGBTI+ and queer existence as both morally deviant and a formation that threatens the nation. This agenda has intensified with a new draft law proposed in parliament to expand categories such as "obscenity" and "indecent behavior," which are already controversial provisions in the current constitution. In this context, queer venues—which are vital in the politics of sexual identity, communities, and belonging—are caught in a constricted spatial narrative and face the law and discursive violence of the state as pressures mount. Focusing on two of the few remaining queer entertainment venues in Istanbul—Bigudi and Mecra—this study seeks to understand how spaces that have been embedded in the community and urban/social memory as sites of queer resilience are transforming into components of political resistance amid shifting political conditions. At the end of 2024, Bigudi was raided by the police and temporarily shut down under charges of obscenity. Following this, in 2025, Mecra had to shut down the nightclub part due to economic and police pressure. These two incidents show us the growing state intervention, but they also indicate new focal points of resistance. This study approaches nightlife venues not merely as entertainment spaces but as political infrastructures. By doing so, it situates them at the intersection of identity-discourse, law-spatiality, and repression-resistance. In a time when anti-gender discourses are beginning to be seen in every domain, as the boundaries of legitimate existence shrink, these venues become sites where resilience turns into resistance. The research aims to understand this transformation through discourse analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and narrative interviews.

*Anti-Gender Politics**Queer Spatiality**Resistance and Resilience*

### B03 – P31

**SEMRA ÖZKAN, HANDAN KARAKAYA, & NURSERDA YILDIZ**

*Firat University, Turkey*

#### **INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN SEXUAL ADDICTION AND SOCIAL NORMS.**

Addiction can be defined as an uncontrollable urge that an individual feels toward an object, behavior, or substance, the inability to cope with this urge, and the subsequent negative impact on daily life. While individuals may develop addictions to alcohol or substance, they may also experience behavioral addictions such as gambling, eating, or sexuality.

The aim of this study is to explore the problems experienced by individuals who define themselves as “sexual addicts,” and how these problems intersect with and are shaped by gender norms. In many societies, sexuality is still considered a taboo subject, and sexual thoughts and behaviors are often subjected to moral judgment. This makes it difficult to access accurate information about those who experience sexual addiction. Furthermore, the classification of sexual thoughts and behaviors along a “normal” versus “deviant” binary complicates the visibility and social understanding of these individuals’ experiences and often leads to stigma and social isolation.

Based on these concerns, this qualitative research will focus on individuals over the age of 18 who have defined themselves as “sexual addicts” and are currently engaged in individual psychotherapy. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. The collected narratives will be analyzed through descriptive analysis methods to understand how these individuals make sense of their experiences within the framework of social norms.

*Sexual addiction  
gender  
gender norms deviance  
stigma*

### D01 – P60

**MUSTAFA OZTURK**

*Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom*

#### **BEYOND INCLUSION: THE AFFECTIVE LABOUR OF TRANS\* RESISTANCE IN ORGANISATIONAL LIFE.**

This paper explores the affective labour involved in queer and trans\* resistance within organisational contexts, critically interrogating how efforts to advance gender and sexual diversity are sustained, constrained, and often emotionally exhausted by the institutions they seek to transform. While diversity and inclusion policies are often cast as the primary means of progressive change in organisations, they frequently depoliticise activism and obscure the emotional and embodied labour demanded of those who are most marginalised. Centring the experiences of transgender and nonbinary individuals, who are also positioned within diverse sexualities, the paper foregrounds the entangled nature of gender identity and sexuality in activist work. Drawing on affect theory, the paper examines how emotional intensities such as anger, hope, exhaustion, and ambivalence circulate through activist encounters with institutional resistance and inertia. It mobilises Sara Ahmed’s concepts of affective economies and diversity work to illuminate how emotions “stick” to certain bodies and accumulate in space over time. Lauren Berlant’s notion of cruel optimism helps frame the attachments activists maintain to institutional promises of inclusion, even when such promises remain unfulfilled or extractive. Eve Sedgwick’s reparative reading informs a more generous, yet still critical, analysis of how activists hold space for both critique and care. These theoretical insights are brought into conversation with critical organisational sociology to argue that affective labour is not peripheral but central to how queer and trans\* change efforts are lived and resisted. This labour is unequally distributed, frequently unacknowledged, and often leads to burnout or withdrawal. By situating organisational activism within the politics of affect, the paper calls for more critically engaged approaches to inclusion, ones that recognise the costs of transformation and the radical potential of queer and trans\* resistance beyond institutional assimilation.

*Affect theory  
Transgender and non-binary activism  
Queer resistance  
Organisational change  
Diversity and inclusion*

**D04 – P75****CAMILLA PALM***Malmö University, Sweden***NAVIGATING VICTIMHOOD: WOMEN'S IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN THE SHADOW OF GLOBAL FGM DISCOURSES.**

In discourses surrounding female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), women are often framed as passive victims of gender-based cultural violence. However, my research, based on 16 qualitative interviews and 9 focus groups with Swedish-Somali women who have undergone FGM/C pre-migration, reveals a more complex negotiation of identity. Many participants reject the dominant victim narrative, positioning themselves as “wronged” but not “harmed” — asserting agency and resilience while still acknowledging injustice.

This presentation explores how these women navigate, contest, and reframe externally imposed identities, and considers the implications for professionals working across clinical, social, and policy domains. By centering women's own narratives, I argue for approaches that neither negate the reality of harm nor erase the autonomy of those affected - resisting simplification and remaining responsive to ambivalence and self-defined experiences.

In a world where identities are increasingly shaped by the interplay of global discourses and lived realities, there is a need for frameworks that support complexity, ambivalence, and empowerment without defaulting to pre-fabricated categories of victimhood.

*female genital mutilation/cutting  
global discourse  
migration  
victimhood  
identity construction*

**B03 – 30****DEBORA PIZZIMENTI & ASSUNTA PENNA***University of Messina, Italy***POST-FEMININE SUBJECTIVITIES AND DIGITAL DEVIANCE.**

This contribution examines the figure of the online girl, an ambivalent and fragmented subjectivity emerging among young women socialized within underground digital environments such as Reddit, 4chan, Tumblr, and Discord. These identities—including femcels, femtrolls, and e-girls - are united by communicative practices grounded in memes, cryptic jargon, and parodic aesthetics, through which they articulate a sharp critique of mainstream feminist discourses. Central feminist paradigms such as empowerment, body positivity, consent, and sexual liberation are openly rejected in favor of alternative, often reactionary frameworks. The analysis focuses on Crystalcafe, an international female imageboard created in opposition to the male-dominated forums of the manosphere. Owing to its anonymous structure, the platform encourages uninhibited expression, enabling users to articulate emotions and reflections without the constraints of identity or reputation. It has thus become a crucial discursive space for the negotiation of subjectivities associated with the online girl phenomenon. Drawing on a digital ethnography conducted on Crystalcafe, the study analyzes a corpus of 1,013 English-language comments collected over a twelve-month period and thematically coded using NVivo software. The qualitative analysis identifies six dominant discursive frames that structure the forum's communicative deviance: symbolic superiority and group elitism; identity essentialism; rhetoric of othering and dehumanization; affective polarization and enemy construction; dissemination of misinformation and conspiracy theories; and aestheticization of suffering, particularly through the lens of femcelcore, where celibacy and emotional distress are stylized as lifestyle choices. The proliferation of such digital spaces is interpreted not as a form of emancipatory dissent, but rather as an alignment with reactionary logics. Crystalcafe emerges as a liminal discursive space bridging two phases of the femcel phenomenon: on the one hand, it reproduces its original traits of isolation and fatalism; on the other, it reconfigures them into a digital aesthetic now circulating on mainstream platforms such as TikTok.

*Digital subcultures  
Femcel Digital ethnography  
Anonymous platforms*

## E02 – P80

**CHIARA (CHICHI) PERIN & GIULIA SELMI**

*University of Parma, Italy*

### **UNFORESEEN EXISTENCES: THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AND NON-BINARY\*/TRANS\* PEOPLE IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA. BETWEEN DYNAMICS OF DISCRIMINATION AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES OF CHANGE.**

For decades now, international literature highlights how LGBTQ+ individuals face persistent barriers in accessing social and healthcare services, as well as how those barriers are higher for trans\* and non-binary\* people (Mayer et.al. 2008; Zeeman et al. 2018, Lykens et. al. 2018; Lampe 2024). The term ‘barrier’ defines both the ‘structural cisheteronormativity’ underlying service design and implementation, and the ‘interactional cisheteronormativity’ concerning the behavior, mindset and language of professionals. Against this scenario, this paper presents the preliminary findings of a qualitative research study aimed at mapping the dynamics of interaction between public services and trans\* and/or non-binary\* individuals in the Emilia-Romagna region, in northern Italy. The study aims at identifying unmet needs and potential discriminatory dynamics, with the ultimate goal of outlining grassroots interventions, relationships, and services to be developed within a collective health framework, adopting an intersectional approach. Rather than solely making identities and needs visible, the research aims to lay the groundwork for the co-creation of care pathways and affirming practices that are non-pathologizing, non-stigmatizing, and non-exclusionary, in collaboration with social and healthcare professionals. This includes promoting the recognition and integration of the plurality and fluidity of needs expressed by subjectivities that fall outside the rigid heteronormative structures of medical knowledge, embodied experiences that are unforeseen and unaccounted for. This paper focuses on the initial phase of the research, which explores the experiences, needs, and strategies of resistance to stigma and barriers in accessing public health services of a sample of non-binary\* individuals aged 18 to 30 living in the region, collected through in-depth interviews.

**LGBTQI+**

**socio-health services**

**cisheteronormativity**

**health barriers**

**participatory research**

## E02 – P81

**MARA PIERI**

*Centre for Social Studies – University of Coimbra, Portugal*

### **REBEL ALLIANCES: THE EVERYDAY SILENT REVOLUTIONS OF LGBTQ+ HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.**

Studies on LGBTQ+ experiences in healthcare show that stigma against LGBTQ+ people is spread in healthcare contexts as in all the other sectors of society. However, the literature mostly focuses on the experiences of LGBTQ+ patients and less attention is dedicated to the experiences of LGBTQ+ healthcare providers (HPs). HPs generally face stigma, discrimination, and additional obstacles in their daily work. Healthcare environments are highly hierarchical, heteronormative and often resistant to non-medicalised forms of understanding LGBTQ+ experiences. This paper presents the results of the quantitative research “PULSAR – The role of LGBTQ+ professionals for inclusive healthcare”, conducted in 2025 in Portugal. A quantitative questionnaire reached out to LGBTQ+ HPs at different stages of career and in different sectors. The study focused on challenges and experiences of being LGBTQ+ and working as HPs. Results show that LGBTQ+ healthcare professionals are key figures to understand the politics of healthcare and crucial actors in promoting inclusive and welcoming healthcare practices. They also point to the structural and discursive barriers that exist and the consequences they cause on mental health and motivation in the profession. Data also offer cues to reflect on how to bridge the gap between patients and professionals, create best practices of collaboration with LGBTQ+ HPs and improve the quality of healthcare for LGBTQ+ people in general.

**healthcare**

**healthcare professionals**

**health**

**workplace**

**medicalisation**

### C03 – P51

**DEBORA PIZZIMENTI & FABRIZIA PASCIUTO**

*University of Messina*

#### **TRADWIFE AESTHETICS AND THE CRISIS OF FEMINIST AUTHORITY IN ONLINE COMMUNITIES**

In the context of the growing proliferation of online communities promoting conservative gender roles, this study examines the subreddit r/RedPillWomen, a digital space hosted on the Reddit platform where women discuss and adhere to traditional gender roles. Discussions within this community center on the rejection of gender equality and the importance of domestic duties and supporting their “alpha men”. Through a digital ethnography approach (Sumiala & Tikka, 2020), this research analyzes the narratives, advice, and self-representations shared within this community, with particular attention to the reference texts recommended to users by some of the group’s moderators. Among these, *Fascinating Womanhood* (Andelin, 1963) and *For Women Only* (Feldhahn, 2004) are synthesized and reinterpreted in the subreddit’s wiki, which functions as an ideological mediation device. The wiki, prominently displayed on the platform, organizes the content of these books into a chapter-based thematic structure, providing users with structured guidelines on how to embody the idealized role of a submissive and traditionally feminine wife.

The content analysis of these textual syntheses, conducted using the qualitative research software NVivo, highlights the role of digital platforms in the resurgence of patriarchal values (Banet-Weiser, 2018) and contributes to the broader debate on the retraditionalization of gender norms in the digital age (Gill, 2017). By examining how these textual summaries encode and transmit prescriptive gender norms, this study offers a critical reflection on the paradoxical nature of female participation in reactionary gender politics (McGurran, 2014; Kassian, 2017).

*Red pill women*  
*Traditional wife ideals*  
*Online communities*  
*Digital ethnography*

### C02 – P45

**DIANA PLANIDA**

*University of Bologna, Italy*

#### **PARENT ONE, PARENT TWO: MORAL PANIC AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL IN RUSSIAN TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD REALITY TV (PREGNANT AT 16, MOTHER AT 16).**

In the past decade, the Russian state has pursued an assertive ideological project to reinstitute “traditional values,” widely interpreted as a reactionary consolidation of moral order (Wilkinson 2014; Sperling 2015; Noble 2022). Existing research underscores the internal contradictions and strategic fluidity of this discourse (Laruelle 2022; Tolz 2023), while highlighting its role in legitimizing illiberal governance and deflecting from systemic crises (Noble 2022; Budraitskis 2023; Breuer 2022). Embedded within both domestic and foreign policy narratives, this turn reconfigures the moral fabric of citizenship, privileging heteronormativity and patriarchy under the guise of child protection and national security, and scapegoating cultural “others” to discipline dissent (Edenborg 2023; Hall 1979; de Kerf 2017). Building on moral-panic and sexual-panic paradigms (Furedi 2005; Hall et al. 1978; Fahs et al. 2013), gender-theoretical insights, and analyses of Russia’s “traditional values” discourse, this paper employs qualitative discourse analysis of a purposive sample of 30 episodes across nine seasons of the reality-TV series *Pregnant at 16* and *Mother at 16*. Episodes were selected for their pivotal portrayals of reproductive decision-making, and data coding focused on discursive markers of deviance and normative closure.

I identify three mechanisms of state-sponsored moral panic: (1) progressive elimination of abortion from the narrative, signalled by the title change from “Pregnant” to “Mother” in 2024; (2) superficial invocation but substantive non-condemnation of pedophilia, youth sexuality, and familial abuse, rendering abortion the sole taboo; and (3) celebratory depictions of motherhood that align with pronatalist measures designed to counteract demographic decline exacerbated by military losses. Situated within the legislative contexts of the 2013 anti-gay propaganda law and its 2024 expansion, these findings reveal how moral panic functions as

a strategic technology of authoritarian populism—diverting public attention from socio-economic crises and legitimizing illiberal governance.

By linking episodic media discourse to demographic policy and anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, the study delineates how popular culture sustains anti-Western, anti-liberal civilizational agendas in contemporary Russia.

*moral panic*  
*authoritarian populism*  
*reality television*  
*pronatalism*  
*Russia*  
*discourse analysis*

**E04 – P89**

**GINTARE POCE**

*Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania*

**SEARCHING FOR A SAFE PLACE: NARRATIVES OF QUEER MIGRANTS WHO HAVE LEFT AND ARRIVED IN LITHUANIA.**

Queer migration is undoubtedly a relevant topic especially linking European and Middle East migration studies and highlighting the essential specificities and motives of this type of migration. The complex geopolitical situation in East and Central Europe and the increasing labour migration encouraged discussion of the queer migration processes in Lithuania, an EU country which faces homophobic attitudes and issues in ensuring equal rights for LGBTIQ+ individuals. Therefore, this paper analysed how queer migrants perceive Lithuania as a safe country for LGBTIQ+ individuals regarding various political, cultural, and religious aspects. The article draws on theoretical insights on the link between heteronormativity and queer migration and the empirical data from semi-structured interviews with twenty queer migrants who left or arrived in Lithuania. The research showed that, in Lithuania, there is still a strong heteronormativity (supported by religion and right-wing politics) that influences the choices and experiences of both the queer individuals that left Lithuania for Western countries in search of a safer place and the experiences of queer individuals who have come to Lithuania as a safe country.

*Queer migration*  
*Heteronormativity*  
*Homophobia*  
*LGBTIQ+ in Lithuania*  
*Migration narratives*

## B02 – P24

**MEG POFF**

*City St. George's, University of London, United Kingdom*

### **DISOBEDIENT BODIES: REFLECTIONS ON DISCOMFORT AND TENSION IN QUEER AND TRANS FIELDWORK.**

There is an increasing consensus that ethnographic researchers co-create or co-generate knowledges along with participants in the fieldwork process, leading additional attention to be paid to researcher well-being and mental health, positionalities, desires, and discomforts within a field context. Several studies have contextualized these factors in relation to insider/outsider discourses, arguing that researchers who “belong” in some way to the same group as they are researching face unique fieldwork challenges, especially if this is a minoritized group or the subject matter of the research is sensitive. Queer and trans+ researchers working with(in) queer and trans+ populations, for example, have reported that their fieldwork stimulated new personal insights about gender and sexuality, as well as generated powerful emotional states from bearing witness to resonant stories of queer and trans+ life. Fewer studies, however, have explored how queer and trans+ researchers cope with the stresses they face in the field that arise from the overlapping nature of personal, political, and academic in fieldwork. This paper similarly situates the researcher’s body as a site of knowledge and aims to provide new insights into this question by providing reflections on various ways that a researcher’s body can be ‘disobedient’ during fieldwork and looks at dancing as a means through which these ‘deviant’ states of being can be filtered and coped with. I argue that going out to dance at clubs and other nightlife venues can act as sites through which the researcher both critically negotiates fieldwork relations and geographies and also provides an avenue for working through and expressing discontents and challenges in the research process.

*embodiment  
fieldwork  
ethnography*

## G03 – P121

**ANDREEA DIANA POP**

*Coventry University, United Kingdom*

### **THIRD-SECTOR ORGANISATIONS’ POSITIONS REGARDING THE NORDIC MODEL, SEX WORK DECRIMINALISATION AND THE MERLIN LAW.**

This research investigates how migrant sex work and human trafficking are portrayed and described by third-sector organisations in Italy. It examines their position regarding two policy models: 1) the Nordic model criminalising sex buyers adopted by Sweden, and 2) the sex work decriminalisation model considering sex work as work adopted by New Zealand. It interrogates how the international debate in favour of the Nordic or the sex work decriminalisation models takes place in the context of migrant sex work as well as human trafficking in this country. These objectives were achieved through a qualitative methodological approach including interviews, discourse analysis, and visual methods. I interviewed 15 staff members in 11 organisations including anti-trafficking organisations, anti-GBV and women’s rights associations, religious entities, and sex workers rights organisations. I conducted discourse analysis of website material from two organisations, a neo-abolitionist association and a sex workers collective. I analysed visual material such as images, videos and campaigns from 5 organisations. In this paper, I discuss the findings from interviews with staff members in third-sector organisations. 4 discourses were found. A discourse in favour of the sex work decriminalisation model focussing on sex work as work and promoting either partial or full decriminalisation. A discourse in favour of the Nordic model focussing on the unequal gender relations happening in prostitution and the role of sex buyers in driving the demand. A discourse in favour of the current abolitionist law, Merlin law, speaking against the criminalisation of “prostitutes”, and sex work as a profession. And a discourse of organisations claiming they do not have a public position regarding these policy models.

*Prostitution  
Sex work  
Third-sector organisations  
The Nordic model  
The sex work decriminalisation model*

**B01 – P21****NINA PERGER & ROMAN KUHAR***University of Ljubljana, Slovenia***SCIENTIFIC TRUTH OR IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION?  
THE STRATEGIC (MIS)USE OF SCIENCE IN ANTI-  
GENDER MESSAGES**

Research on anti-gender mobilizations has shown that these movements are engaged not only in struggles over political power but also in battles over epistemic authority. Anti-gender actors attempt to delegitimize established academic fields – particularly gender studies – by positioning themselves as defenders of “real” science. In doing so, they seek to establish an alternative epistemology, typically rooted in rigid biological essentialism, while simultaneously disregarding the established methodological and epistemological standards of scientific inquiry. This contestation over knowledge production is central to their efforts to reshape public discourse and influence education, family, and health policies.

In this paper, we analyze the Slovenian manual “Za otroke gre” (Children Are At Stake) for parents that claims to offer guidance on how to protect children in schools from so-called “gender ideology” and LGBT+ content. It was written by one of the key figures of the Slovenian anti-gender movement. While the manual heavily relies on scientific sources and language, it does so in misleading and contradictory ways. By invoking scientific authority – often through cherry-picked references, decontextualized findings, the strategic use of pseudo-scientific language, or outright misrepresentations – it seeks to frame its anti-gender message as rational, grounded in science and empirically confirmed. This case study illustrates how scientific discourse is appropriated to legitimize anti-gender narratives and obscure their ideological underpinnings. It contributes to the growing body of scholarship that documents the wide range of strategies used by anti-gender movements in their manipulation of science, including the promotion of “experts” without academic credentials – such as “social media scientists” – to shape public debate and discredit gender studies.

*anti-gender mobilization;  
epistemic power;  
gender ideology;  
science framing;  
Slovenia*

**B04 – P36****FABIO RANZOLIN***Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli, Italy***MACHO MODERN MUSEUM.**

This paper focuses on questioning the role of the modern Western museum, not just as a tool of imperialist and nationalist power, but also as a political, social, and cultural space shaped by heterosexual and patriarchal norms.

The museum became especially powerful in the 19th century, as part of Enlightenment thinking that was often sexist, racist, and classist. Museums were originally based on private collections, but they grew rapidly during colonial expeditions and imperial wars, through the work of soldiers, missionaries, explorers, and traders. In this way, museums gathered large amounts of objects, as well as human, animal, and plant remains. This process turned the museum into a vast and complex space, a kind of heterotopia [Foucault 1964], and a place that claimed to represent all of humanity.

The museum used its power over images and narratives to perform what Françoise Vergès (2023) calls a “rhetorical reversal”: it hid its violent and problematic origins and presented itself instead as a safe, neutral space that preserves the world’s heritage, organized and seemingly untouched by political conflict. The museum is one of the most illustrious devices for exercising a politics of representation, a sophisticated form of discriminatory egopolitics that turns aesthetics into a tool of domination [Clifford 1988, Price 2015].

The idea of the “universal museum” is deeply ideological. It helped to build a specific genealogy of knowledge [Foucault 1969], by creating taxonomies, setting rules for what counts as valuable, and deciding what stories, objects, and histories deserved to be remembered. This practice helped define the concept of “otherness” and is strongly based on male and heterosexual perspectives [Mulvey 1975; Berger 2007]. One of the main goals of the modern museum is to normalize its ways of organizing, displaying, and telling stories – especially around sexuality, feelings, and emotion – in accordance with the construction of

a new nation and a new class of population that had to be controlled and reproduced by a heterosexual regime [Wittig 1980, Mosse 1982]. So, the museum is not a neutral space, but a neutralizing one [Bennett 1995; Clifford 1997; Grechi 2021]. It is a metabolic space [Deliss 2020], shaped by a dominant, classist and heterosexual mindset [Zappino 2019, 2024]. It often silences or excludes non-normative sexualities in order to maintain a binary and dominant view of history [Hocquenghem 1972; Irigaray 1974; Connell 1995; Butler 1999].

At this point, the paper will examine contemporary examples that challenge the museum space through the work of artists, collectives, or curatorial processes. It will focus on experiences and practices that contribute to a re-signification of the museum space and of the bodies represented within it – of the experiences, pleasures, and affects of those historically rendered invisible by the institution. These examples demonstrate how all processes of historicization are ultimately partial interpretations, derived from documents and investigations that surface over time. Today, these critical processes must also include gender and queer politics, in order to claim new rights to representation and historical visibility.

**Museology**  
**Power**  
**Masculinity**  
**Genealogy**  
**Sexuality**

## **E02 – P84**

**LUIS ROBLEDO DÍAZ, ARANTXA GRAU I MUÑOZ, ELISABET MARCO AROCAS, JOAN TORRES PALOMARES, & ASSUMPTA JOVER LEAL**  
*Universitat de València, Spain*

### **PREVENTION, DESIRE, AND EXPOSURE: GAY SEXUALITY AND PREP IN DIGITAL CONTEXTS.**

This paper examines the dynamics involved in the construction of spaces of risk and safety within the gay community in the Valencian Community (Spain), with particular attention to experiences related to the exercise of sexualities in digital environments. The analysis focuses on interactions mediated through social networks and dating apps, considering their role in the contemporary configuration of relationships, bodies, and norms of intimacy.

Using a qualitative methodology based on focus group discussions, the study analyses the discourses, practices, and meanings participants attribute to their experiences within these virtual spaces. The research addresses the sociocultural implications of such experiences and how digital technologies influence identity construction, desire management, and risk reduction strategies.

The findings reveal that digital platforms function as mediating devices that reconfigure traditional forms of sociability, while also giving rise to new modes of encounter and representation. Within this framework, the study observes how apps contribute to the production of norms, codes, and hierarchies that shape subjectivities and the distribution of erotic and symbolic capital.

The paper also examines perceptions and discourses surrounding pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), highlighting circulating information in digital spaces in shaping opinions, attitudes, and practices. Narratives that legitimise this biomedical strategy are identified, alongside others that question or problematise it within moral, relational, or community-based frameworks.

The research underscores the ambivalence of digital environments as arenas in which processes of self-representation, the search for recognition, and the negotiation of boundaries between privacy

and exposure are articulated. Simultaneously, these spaces foster the emergence of community and solidarity forms, while reproducing logics of exclusion, stigmatisation, and inequality.

This paper is part of the research project Sexualities Online: Challenges for Youth Policies (Project Code: PID2023-152504NA-I00), which is funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation, and Universities under the Knowledge Generation Projects.

*Sexualities online*

*PrEP*

*Space of risk*

*Space of safety*

**D03 – P68**

**LEEHEE ROTHSCHILD**

*Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom*

**THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE – HETEROACTIVISM IN ISRAEL AND GENOCIDE IN GAZA.**

Issues in Therapy with Polyamory and Queer Utopias, were two conferences on gender and sexualities that had both occurred in Bar Ilan University in 2019 and triggered a wave of intense oppositions. The events surrounding the conferences marked a shift in the oppositions to sexual and gender equalities and freedoms in Israel, from the vilification and pathologization of LGBT subjects, towards the glorification of heteronormative identities as the foundations of social order. This transformation, which corresponds with the rise of neo-populist powers and anti-gender movements around the world, can be understood under the analytical framework of heteractivism. Heteractis’s describes a transnational move towards reinstatement of the heteronormative family as a crucial component of children’s well-being, adult happiness, and national security in the opposition to gender and sexual reforms. In this presentation, which is based on participatory observation and textual and visual analytical methodologies, I employ heteroactivism as a frame of analysis to examine the recent changes in the resistances to gender and sexual equalities in Israel. I examine the publications made on social media channels and websites, of the three organisations leading the oppositions to the conferences. These publications reveal how Israeli heteroactivist discourses invoke familism, pro-natalism, religious sentiments, nationalist and militarist narratives, and collective trauma, in their attempts to recentralise the heteronormative Jewish family. These three organisations are all affiliated with the Religious Zionist sector and the populist right in Israel and over the past six years they and the discourses they represent shifted from the margins to the centre of Israeli politics. In this presentation I also situate Israeli heteroactivism within the current events and demonstrate how their emphasis on the race and religion of the Jewish family can be easily incorporated into the genocidal Israeli politics.

*Heteroactivism*

*Homonationalism*

*Israel*

*Polyamory*

*Queer*

**E01 – P78****ANA-CRISTINA SANTOS***Centre for Social Studies - University of Coimbra,  
Portugal***AGEING INSIDE OUT: LESSONS ON SOLITUDE, JOY AND PRIDE FROM OLDER QUEERS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE.**

The dominant paradigm of cis-heteronormativity applied to research on ageing influenced a number of studies that look into older people as objects of care more than subjects of resistance, overshadowing significant aspects such as the empowering potential of solitude, joy and pride in old age. What this chapter aims to do is to turn the experience of ageing inside out to reveal aspects which remains unsaid or overshadowed by the dominant topics in this field. To accomplish this, we must start by looking back before looking forward. This paper stems from TRACE – Tracing Queer Citizenship Over Time, a 5-year research project under my coordination funded by the European Research Council, focused on queer ageing and memory in Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia. TRACE started in 2023 at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, in Portugal. During this time, we conducted over 100 biographic narrative interviews with older queer participants across Southern Europe. One of the most engaging aspects of this research is the ongoing dialogue between past and future stemming from the biographic narrative accounts. Part of the sociological work of tracing queer citizenship over time has been encouraging participants to share lessons for the future by imagining a conversation with a young queer person today based on their unique embodied experience as survivors who underwent successive challenges and arrived today as legitimate (although often unacknowledged) intimate citizens. A selection of these conversations constitutes the backbone of a documentary currently being produced by movie director Nuno Barbosa and myself. This paper starts with the screening of the trailer of the documentary, after which I share methodological challenges and analytical inputs. The paper ends by exploring the meanings of looking back to look forward, and its implications for research on LGBTQI+ ageing, memory and citizenship.

*LGBTQI ageing  
memory and archive  
intimate citizenship  
old queer joy and pride  
Portugal  
Southern Europe*

**F03 – P106****ANA LÚCIA SANTOS***Centre for Social Studies - University of Coimbra,  
Portugal***UN-TEMPORALIZED LIVES: NARRATIVES OF QUEER AGEING IN PORTUGAL.**

Ageing as an LGBTQ+ person in contemporary Portugal takes place within a unique historical and social context, shaped by the achievement of significant legal rights and the legacy of a prolonged dictatorial regime. This historical context influences how older individuals perceive their later years concerning non-normative sexual orientation or gender identity. Drawing on P. Preciado's concept of the "somatheque", this presentation examines life stories of older LGBTQ people, positioning their experiences as a living political archive. As Preciado conceptualizes the somatheque as the body itself – a living archive of political and social inscriptions rather than private biological property – we consider how the ageing queer body carries the marks of past and regulatory norms while also resisting and re-signifying them. Through a series of biographical interviews conducted with LGBTQ+ people aged over 60 years old in Portugal, this study recovers life stories that while diverse and complex, reveal common themes, including the legacy of a repressive past, the tension between visibility and invisibility, and social isolation. Yet, they also reflect personal journeys of self-discovery, gender authenticity, gender euphoria and resilience. Concepts such as normative temporality and chrononormativity help us understand how cultural scripts regarding time attempt to shape bodies and synchronize an entire population during the ageing process. The queer ageing body thus emerges as an untemporalized political archive of systemic oppression, survival, and reconfiguration.

*Ageing LGBTQ+  
Portugal*

## F04 – P108

**MARCO SASSARO**

*University of Milan – Bicocca*

### **A PLACE TO BE - SERIOUSLY - GAY IN: STEREOTYPES, STIGMA, ISOLATION AND HOW ITALIAN GAY MEN FOUND SHELTER ON AN ONLINE FORUM BEFORE THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

Progettogayforum.altervista.org is an old-school internet forum used by Italian gay men which operates since 2009 (though most of its userbase was active until 2015 circa). In this intervention we provide our multi-methodological study of this website and we present our findings along two main lines of analysis. Firstly we describe the online forum as a kind of internet-based social form typical of the pre-social media era: we comment on its features of anonymity, lack of visual content and topic-based communication and we compare the themes of the discussions under the light of the political issues facing the Italian LGBT+ community at the time. Secondly, we describe progettogayforum.altervista.org as an alternative space for gay discourse and community building with respects to less anonymous in-person political organizations, gay bars and clubs. In this attempt we employ a content analysis of a representative sample of the forum posts and we triangulate its findings with in-depth non-structured interviews with some of progettogayforum most affectionate members as well as with its main moderator and founder. The vetting of members, the heavy moderation, the affordances typical of online forums of the time, as well as the discussion-driven internal culture of the forum and the fact that many members were otherwise unable or not interested in living an “out and proud” gay life result in a peculiar space for gay socialization. On Progettogayforum, complex topics like religion, current affairs, politics, gay old age are able to be discussed in depth, and the sharing of stories about lived experiences like trauma, relational hardship and loneliness is used by members as a way to reach out to a virtual community of peers for emotional support. From this space, a small community of in-person friends was able to develop and stay in contact beyond the website.

*gay  
internet  
forum community  
online*

## D02 – P64

**COSIMO MARCO SCARCELLI**

*University of Padova, Italy*

### **EXPLORING ITALIAN ADOLESCENTS’ PERSPECTIVES ON ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY AND PERCEIVED HARMS.**

This study investigates how Italian teenagers aged 14-18 perceive their use of online pornography and unpack the notion of potential harms related to porn consumption. Drawing on 56 in-depth interviews, the research adopts a cultural studies approach to analyze youth narratives about pornography’s role in shaping sexual identities, relationships, and literacies.

The findings reveal that while echoing normative narratives around youth, pornography and harm, teenagers offer nuanced insights into their concerns. A major theme is porn addiction, which interviewees connect to mental health issues, distorted reality, and potential escalation to violent or deviant behavior. Many perceive online porn as powerful enough to permanently alter young minds, reflecting media effects theory perspectives. Gender differences emerge, with interviewees framing boys as more inherently vulnerable to porn’s negative impacts due to biological factors like heightened hormones and sexual desire. Perceived harms for boys include relationship issues, anxiety around sexual performance, and a path towards aggression. For girls, body image concerns are highlighted. However, some interviewees suggest potential positive effects of porn, such as providing a sexual outlet that mitigates violent tendencies in boys. The study underscores how Italian youth construct coherent yet simplistic views about pornography in a cultural context lacking comprehensive sex education and dominated by media moral panics. The research argues for moving beyond one-dimensional effects models to understand pornography’s complex role in developing youth sexual identities and relationships. It advocates fostering open dialogues incorporating young people’s voices to increase porn literacy and awareness of pornography’s interplay with gender, ethics, and wellbeing in the digital age.

*Pornography  
Adolescents  
Italy*

## B04 – P34

**LARISA SHAPKOVSKAYA**

*University of Helsinki, Finland*

### **HOMOSOCIAL WORLDS, HETERONORMATIVE ANXIETIES: AGEING MIGRANT MASCULINITIES IN FINLAND.**

The presentation examines how older Russian-speaking migrant men in Finland narrate their friendships as a gendered and culturally specific process. Drawing on theoretical insights from critical studies on masculinity and ageing, it explores friendship as a key site for performing and renegotiating masculine identities. Migration and ageing both present challenges to men's sense of self, often reducing their social status and disrupting traditional markers of masculinity such as autonomy, strength, and productivity. The research is based on 21 interviews with senior heterosexual migrant men in Finland, half of whom were single. The research illuminates how ageing, migration, and masculinity intersect in shaping emotional, social, and sexual subjectivities. It highlights how heteronormative and patriarchal norms persist even in conditions of marginalisation, as older Russian-speaking migrant men attempt to preserve late Soviet ideals of masculinity—centered on strength, sexual desirability, and control—despite ageing and challenged social status. Men aware that they are not attractive for women any more due to their age and migration status and can not compete with local and more resourceful men. All interviewees distanced themselves from groups perceived as threatening to their masculine self-image, including women, Finnish men, and migrants of color as racialised others. Homosocial spaces such as men's clubs offered familiarity and a stage to reassert vocational status and class-based masculinities. Their friend connections reflect not only gendered but also sexualised hierarchies rooted in the lost of desirability and anxieties around masculine failure.

*Masculinity  
Homosociality  
Friendship  
Ageing  
Migration*

## B01 – P19

**MARYNA SHEVTSOVA**

*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium*

### **WEAPONIZING TRADITION: RUSSIA'S ANTI-GENDER NARRATIVES IN ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE IN GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA**

This paper explores how Russia instrumentalizes anti-gender discourse in its broader geopolitical campaigns, focusing on recent electoral interference in Georgia and Moldova. Drawing on discourse analysis, election monitoring reports and reports by LGBTQ rights and feminist NGOs, the paper examines how Russia/pro-Russian actors use anti-LGBTQ and anti-feminist rhetoric to frame EU integration as both morally corrupt and geopolitically dangerous. In both countries, Russian-backed actors have deployed anti-gender messages to sway public opinion against pro-European candidates, conflating EU membership with the erosion of traditional values, national sovereignty, and social stability.

This strategy is not only cultural but also (geo) political: by linking gender rights to EU alignment, Russia promotes a narrative in which EU integration inevitably leads to war, instability, and the breakdown of traditional society—as allegedly demonstrated by Ukraine. The 2020s saw a sharp intensification of these tactics, with Russia actively interfering in Moldovan and Georgian elections, supporting far-right parties and Orthodox networks to cultivate mistrust in pro-Western coalitions. In both cases, anti-gender discourse was entangled with warnings and threats around the war in Ukraine, presenting it as a cautionary tale of what happens when nations defy Russia's sphere of influence. The paper argues that anti-gender rhetoric functions as a key instrument in Russia's hybrid warfare toolkit—bridging culture, security, and politics. By mobilizing emotional anxieties around gender and sexuality, Russia not only disrupts democratic processes but also reasserts its geopolitical dominance in the post-Soviet space. The analysis contributes to ongoing debates on anti-gender mobilizations, democratic resilience, and the securitization of sexuality in contested borderlands of the EU.

*anti-gender discourse;  
electoral campaigns;  
Georgia;  
Moldova;  
Russia's influence*

### C03 – P47

**EVGENY SHTORN**

*University of Helsinki, Finland*

#### **EMPATHETIC REPORTING AS A TOOL FOR ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT: DOCUMENTING LGBTIQ+ EXPERIENCES UNDER AUTHORITARIANISM.**

This paper explores the role of media in shaping public narratives around violence against LGBTIQ+ activists in Russia, focusing on the case of the 2013 attack on Dmitry Chizhevsky and Anna Prutskova at the St. Petersburg-based LaSky community centre. The incident, occurring in the context of Russia's escalating anti-LGBTIQ+ policies, illustrates how media coverage can either challenge or reinforce systemic violence. By employing discourse analysis and standpoint theory, this study critically examines the language, framing, and omissions in media portrayals of the attack. It argues that conventional reporting often upholds a false neutrality, depoliticising violence and failing to address its structural causes. In contrast, empathetic reporting—a form of journalism that foregrounds the lived experiences of marginalised communities—can disrupt dominant narratives, foster solidarity, and hold perpetrators accountable.

Drawing on activist scholarship, the paper advocates for a reporting approach that rejects the illusion of objectivity and embraces positionality in documenting human rights violations. It contends that empathetic reporting is not merely an ethical imperative but also a methodological necessity in contexts where state-sponsored homophobia seeks to erase dissent. The findings contribute to broader discussions on the role of media in human rights advocacy and the responsibilities of journalists covering politically charged violence. By centring the voices of those directly affected, this research highlights the power of media representation in either legitimising or resisting systemic oppression. It calls for a critical reassessment of journalistic practices in repressive environments and underscores the urgency of solidarity-driven reporting in the fight against violence and discrimination.

*Empathetic Reporting  
LGBTIQ+ Activism  
Media Representation  
State-Sponsored Homophobia  
Human Rights Advocacy*

### A04 – P13

**KOEN SLOOTMAECKERS**

*City St George's, University of London, United Kingdom*

#### **THE CASE FOR A POLITICS OF COMPASSIONATE CURIOSITY.**

“We live in what Nancy Fraser has described as a “toxic environment,”” characterised by escalating political divisions that prevent any shared dialogue about building a society in which all can thrive. On one side, progressives soften dismiss reactionary populists as “deplorables”—irredeemable racists, misogynists, and homophobes—while on the other, many reactionary populists view progressives as elitist and condescending moralizers. In no subject has this ‘affective polarisation’ been more noticeable with the anti-gender mobilisations. The persistence of these divisions constitutes a threat to democracy as it feeds intolerance and support for violence.

In this paper, I seek to build on the academic call to bring emotions into our analysis of politics and the calls to develop new politics advocating for future that allows everyone to feel included [9]. Because populist instrumentalise feelings of loss, we can only combat their politics by fully understanding people's attachments to social structures, and how these shape the escalating conflicts and the inability to communicate underpinning the current toxic environment.

As such, the aim of this project is twofold: 1) to theorise how emotions and their underlying attachments shape the current political division, and 2) develop a new politics of compassionate curiosity for progressive forces that seeks to enables connection and short-circuit the emotional feeding ground for populist forces. To achieve these goals, I draw on attachment theories and insights from emotionally focused therapeutic practices to de-escalate conflict and rebuild broken relationships.

*Feminist ethics of care  
Compassionate curiosity  
social justice  
Future*

## DO1 – P58

**MANSI SONKAR**

*Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India*

### **THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY EXIST AND RESIST: THE KACHCHI PAKKI/JANNAI AND HIJRA IDENTITIES OF PRAYAGRAJ CITY IN UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.**

The umbrella term Transgender gained prominence in India with the opening up of the Indian Economy to transnational funding for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The term, even though inclusive of gender variant identities, is now mostly associated with the binary notion of transness rather than those who contest the gender binary. In the case of India, subcultural groups like Hijra, Kinnar, Aravani, and Jogappa, placed within the transgender grouping, comprise individuals whose gender identity and characteristics are not in congruence with one's sex assigned at birth. However, the existence and experiences of the gender/sexual variant identities like Janani/Kothi and Kacchi Pakki, seen within the ambit of the larger subcultural groups like Hijra and Kinnar, get marginalized. The present study explores how the Kacchi Pakki and the Jannani identities present in Prayagraj city in the state of Uttar Pradesh navigate their ways of existence and resistance within the trans\* community and the society at large. Using in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, the study further tries to look into the role of structures of domination present in the everyday life of marginal identities and how these identities negotiate with the status quo and sometimes become a part of it.

***Sexual & Gender variant identities  
Subcultural Trans\* identities, Hijra/Kinnar  
Hijra/Kinnar  
Structures of Domination***

## C02 – P44

**MICHAEL STAMBOLIS-RUHSTORFER**

*Université Toulouse – Jean Jaurès, France*

### **PRO-LIFE PROFESSIONALS: HOW ANTI-ABORTION MEDICAL EXPERTS CULTIVATE CREDIBILITY IN THE UNITED STATES.**

How do “traditional family values” groups in the United States and France work to generate credibility as experts—or what I call expert capital—in order to be taken seriously by courts and legislatures? What habits, networks, and resources do they use in order to match and compete with the expertise of their progressive, feminist, and LGBTQ rivals? To answer these questions, this paper draws on interviews and ethnographic observation of “experts” involved in organizing against abortion and same-sex marriage in these two countries. Specifically, I interviewed experts who provided testimony same-sex marriage before courts and legislatures. I also observed at the annual Matthew Bulfin Educational Conference (MBEC), jointly organized by the American Association of pro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American College of Pediatricians. On both of these contentious issues, experts engage in a series of actions as an epistemic community meant to shore up the value of their contributions in the public debate. First, they distance themselves from activists by coordinating their activities in a seemingly ordinary setting where professional norms and codes are maintained. Second, they pool the resources of their wealthy sponsors, including the Heritage Foundation, in order to make it easier to produce expertise that looks scientific and can pass muster before decision-makers. Third, they attempt to create expert capital and shape scientific production. Finally, they provide a space in which senior and junior colleagues can network and advance their agendas despite their relative marginalization in their respective fields.

***Experts  
Anti-abortion  
Anti Same-Sex Marriage  
United States  
France***

**B04 – P32****BINGCHANG SUN***University of Cambridge, United Kingdom***THE MASCULINE SUBJECT: HOMOSEXUALITY, MASCULINITY, AND DESIRE.**

My paper proposes to problematise gay masculinity as a site of (homo)sexual politics and gendered subjectivation, offering an interdisciplinary queer feminist critique of subjectivity, intimacy, and nationhood within contemporary China's neoliberal, masculinist culture. Masculinities studies, though 'feminist inspired and inflected', has remained indifferent to the 'well-established antagonism to presumed limits of gender categories' characteristic of much feminist work (Beasley 2020: 34, 38); nor has it sufficiently engaged with sexuality which could productively explore 'different forms of subjectivity and power' (Gottzén 2020: 69). Critical engagement with feminist and queer theory could therefore 'reconceive of the field of critical studies of men and masculinities' (Allan 2020: 81). Situating this cross-disciplinary conversation in China is no simple locational change. Chinese masculinities studies, by tracing the persistence of traditional cultural ideals to and the impact of 'glocal' discursive, socio-political negotiations on masculinities, indexes Chineseness to masculinities, forming part of ongoing efforts to gender Chinese Studies (Song and Hird 2014; Hird and Song 2018; K. Louie 2002; K. H. Louie 2015). This scholarship, however, treats as synonymous 'masculinity studies' and 'heterosexual masculinity studies', to borrow Traister's (2000: 275) words. China's neoliberal, authoritarian governance hinges on its heteropatriarchal, masculinist culture, prioritising the regulation of gender and sexuality (Ho et al. 2018). If masculinity is a configuration of gendered practices rooted in patriarchal oppression (Connell 1995) and homosexuality the desire 'for the same from the perspective of a self already identified as different from itself' (Bersani 1995: 59), unpacking gay masculinity will reveal the complex dynamics between (homo)sexual politics and gendered subjectivation. My research contributes new knowledges by rethinking reified gender categories pervading current masculinities scholarship and problematising the fraught relationship between (homo)sexuality and masculinity, and intervenes in the decolonial, Queer Asias scholarship by examining queer resistance and complicity on both individual and collective levels in China.

**Masculinity****Sexuality****Queer Theory****Psychoanalysis****China studies****D03 – P66****MARIA URSO & RICCARDO CALDARERA***University of Palermo, Italy***CONSTRUCTING THE SEX OFFENDER: RISK, INTERVENTION, AND WELFARE MODELS IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE.**

In recent decades, sex offending has emerged as one of the most complex and politically sensitive social issues across both national and European contexts (Zara et al., 2020). This has led to a growing urgency to identify predictive behavioral variables that may allow for the anticipatory treatment of sex offenders. In other settings, this social urgency has resulted in the development of so-called 'sex offender registries', designed to enable governmental authorities to monitor the conduct of sexual offenders, including those who have already served their sentences (Logan & Prescott, 2021).

Such interventions may reflect how moral panics have developed around the phenomenon of sex offending, aimed at identifying and tracking 'dangerous individuals' (Cohen, 2011; Pitch, 2007).

Building on these considerations, this paper seeks to analyze the treatment of sex offenders through the lens of major welfare state models. It highlights how the construction of sex offending as a social problem has evolved over time, shaped by media dynamics, political pressures, and transformations in risk societies (Re, 2024). The aim is to examine how different welfare configurations (Mediterranean, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, and Continental) influence not only treatment-oriented policies but also the public and institutional definition of the sex offender as a subject to be treated, contained, and neutralized.

The construction of the sex offender as a distinct violent offender—separate from other violent crime profiles (Zara et al., 2020)—reflects not only legal and political decisions but also the broader orientation of welfare systems toward deviance and marginality.

In conclusion, this contribution aims to problematize the ways in which European societies define and manage sex offending through historically contingent and evolving categories of social dangerousness.

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***Sex offending***

***Governance of Risk***

***Welfare Policies***

***Social construction of sex offenders***

***Penal policies***

**B02 – P27**

**ELSPETH VAN VEEREN**

*University of Bristol, United Kingdom*

**THE GENDER AND SEXUALITY OF SECRECY.**

Feminist theorising has a long history of thinking through secrecy. This work however is often implicit and contained within ongoing conversations around the division of the public and private, the silencing, invisibilisation, and marginalisation of women's voice, labour, and knowledge, and the relegation and sequestration of women and sexuality to the intimate and domestic sphere, which is nonetheless publicised and policed when deemed transgressive. The histories of women's persecution and gender-based violence, as well as the struggles for greater rights are also intertwined with secrecy. Therefore, to better understand the interconnections of role of secrecy within crisis and (dis)order requires, as this paper contends, a reclaiming of feminist theorising and its insights into the role of gender and sexuality in (re)making the world through secrecy. Feminised subjects have a troubled relationship with secrecy as a force and it is this relationship that this project sets out to interrogate. To do this, this paper proposes first, to undertake a re-reading of three key strands of feminist theorising to better understand the relationships between secrecy and (dis)order. Second, it recovers the longer history of the development of a specific feminine subject, the suspicious feminine (*femininum suspectum*) that inhabits different abject figures in Anglo-American history. Third, it brings these insights into conversation with secrecy studies. Finally, from the interconnections of feminist thoughts and secrecy studies, the project seeks to develop a three-part framework for understanding gender and sexuality, with secrecy, inequality and disorder.

***secrecy***

***cultures of suspicion***

***gender feminist theory***

***queer theory***

### E03 – P88

**MORTA VIDŪNAITĖ & ARTŪRAS TEREŠKINAS**

*Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania*

#### **NO INTIMATE CITIZENSHIP FOR LGBTQIA+ IN LITHUANIA? THE ATTITUDES OF LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND WOMEN.**

Intimate citizenship pertains to bodily citizenship and individuals' autonomy in making decisions about their bodies. It plays a significant factor in gender equality and governs partnerships, traditional and non-traditional relationships, and sexuality. This concept highlights the impact of citizenship on bodies, genders, and sexualities in both private and public spheres. This presentation is based on a contextual content analysis that reflects the position of the Lithuanian Catholic Church and qualitative semi-structured interviews capturing the attitudes of practicing Lithuanian Catholic women toward the intimate citizenship of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Lithuania during the early 2020s. The research indicates that the Lithuanian Catholic Church exhibits intolerance toward same-sex sexualities by emphasizing their perceived harm to marriage, heterosexual nuclear families, individuals, the Lithuanian nation, and society as a whole. The practicing Catholic women characterize homosexuality as a sin, a deviation from the norm, a mental disorder, perversion, suffering, abnormality, and an illness that must be cured. They view heterosexuality as a prerequisite for "good citizenship," as it is contingent on the family as a reproductive unit through which the stability of gender roles and hierarchies can be maintained. Non-heteronormative individuals are relegated to second-class intimate citizens and are largely erased from public visibility. Viewing homosexuality as an abomination and perversion, some participants even invoked the figure of a child as an argument against homosexuality and LGBTQ+ individuals in general.

The presentation examines how the Lithuanian Catholic Church and practicing Catholic women respond to non-normative sexualities and the extension of partnership rights to same-sex couples. It argues that the demeaning attitudes of Catholics toward the equal rights of LGBTQIA+ people negatively impact the discourse surrounding sexuality and gender equality and infringe upon intimate and bodily citizenship in Lithuania, further rendering the lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Lithuania precarious.

*Intimate citizenship  
LGBTQIA+  
Lithuanian Catholic Church  
Lithuanian Catholic women  
Heteronormativity*

### E02 – P82

**GIACOMO VIGGIANI**

*University of Brescia, Italy*

#### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY, AND GYNECOLOGICAL HEALTH: CHALLENGES AND EXPERIENCES OF LGBT+ INDIVIDUALS IN ITALY.**

LGBT+ individuals continue to face significant barriers in accessing equitable and affirming healthcare. Among the less explored areas is gynecological health, which intersects with complex dynamics of embodiment, visibility, and institutional recognition. This paper presents the framework, methodology, and key questions of an exploratory study conducted in Italy, aimed at investigating the experiences and perceived needs of LGBT+ people in relation to gynecological care.

Through an online questionnaire distributed nationally to a diverse LGBT+ sample, the study probes how sexual orientation and gender identity influence health behaviors, access to services, and relationships with healthcare providers. Particular attention is paid to the impact of social stigma, cultural incompetence within the medical profession, and the role of trust in shaping individuals' decisions to seek care or to avoid it altogether.

The Italian healthcare system, with its regionalized governance and lack of national guidelines on LGBT+ health, offers a revealing case for understanding how structural and normative factors intersect with personal health trajectories. Drawing on sociological perspectives on medical authority, minority stress, and healthcare inequalities, the study aims to contribute to ongoing debates about the inclusion of sexual and gender minorities within mainstream health systems.

This study underlines the urgent need for more inclusive, sensitive, and well-informed gynecological care practices. It calls for the integration of LGBT+ health competencies into medical education and continued professional training. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of patient-centered approaches that affirm diverse identities and foster equitable access to preventive care. In conclusion, the findings provide a sociological lens through which to examine how institutional norms and interpersonal dynamics shape the health experiences of marginalized populations in contemporary Italy.

## DO2 – P61

TANJA VOGLER

University of Vienna, Austria

### EDUCATION OF DESIRE: HETEROSEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION, AND EXCLUSION IN CHRISTIAN-CONSERVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSES OF THE EARLY 1970S.

Today, we are witnessing an intensifying anti-gender backlash. Conservative and right-wing attacks on the LGBTIQ+ community, feminists, refugees, and migrants are rooted in a conspiracy-driven antisemitic ideology of “population replacement,” which contrasts the supposed high fertility of migrants with the perceived non-reproductivity of queer-feminist individuals (Butler 2024; Wielowiejski 2024). This paper takes a historical perspective to examine the entanglement of heteronormative, reproductive discourses and the exclusion of the sexual Other (Dietze 2019). Through critical discourse analysis (Foucault, 2019 [1986]), it explores Christian conservative professional discourses on sex education in Germany and Austria during the sexual revolution (1968–1975). This period is significant, as the ‘sexual revolution’ marked the first major challenge to Christian-conservative authority in sex education, coinciding with the decriminalization of homosexuality and the introduction of sex education into school curricula (Sielert et al. 2017; Sager 2015, Zimmermann 2015). Building on Foucault’s (2019) insights in *The Use of Pleasure*—which argues that sexual moral codes, such as the privileging of heterosexual marriage, have remained relatively stable—this study examines how young people were guided toward this ideal. Beyond Foucault, drawing on postcolonial and Black critiques (Stoler 1995; Spivak 2023 [1988]), it also interrogates the construction of non-subjects or negative subjects within white Christian discourses on sexuality education. The results reveal that heterosexual partnership, marriage, and family are no longer framed through fear and shame but rather through the promise of future happiness via personal self-fulfillment. However, this sexual ethic is constructed in opposition to so-called “primitive” people, who are positioned as the non-subjects of this moral framework.

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**Sexuality Education**  
**Sexual Revolution**  
**Othering**  
**Homosexuality**  
**Discourse Analysis**

B01 – P18

JULIA WALCZAK

University of Silesia, Poland

**“LGBT-FREE ZONES” AS SYMBOLIC POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF GAZETA POLSKA’S ANTI-GENDER AND ANTI-QUEER CAMPAIGN**

In 2019, dozens of local governments across Poland adopted resolutions declaring themselves “free from LGBT ideology”, sparking widespread criticism for promoting exclusionary and discriminatory policies. In this political climate the conservative Polish weekly opinion magazine *Gazeta Polska* launched a controversial campaign by distributing stickers labeled “LGBT-Free Zone”. This symbolic gesture is emblematic of the broader anti-gender and anti-queer discourse that had its peak in Poland between 2019 and 2020 (Amnesty International, 2022; ILGA Europe, 2024).

This paper offers a case study of *Gazeta Polska*’s role in constructing and disseminating such discourse, positioning the outlet as a key actor within the populist-conservative media ecosystem. The analysis draws on Teun van Dijk’s approach to critical discourse studies (van Dijk, 1984; 1998; 2008, 2014), particularly his conceptualization of discourse as a form of symbolic power that shapes social cognition (van Dijk 2008). Through the systematic use of ideological language, media actors can construct “us vs. them” dichotomies, reproduce social inequality, and legitimize exclusionary practices. These mechanisms are particularly salient in the case of *Gazeta Polska*’s 2019 campaign, which coincided with a broader surge of anti-LGBT policies in Poland. The study examines selected articles published by *Gazeta Polska* during the 2019 campaign. The aim is to unpack the discursive strategies used to frame LGBT+ people as ideological threats, enemies of the nation, and symbols of Western moral decay. These narratives are situated within the broader context of Poland’s right-wing populist politics, in which so-called “anti-gender ideology” functions as a mobilizing symbol for conservative-nationalist identity.

*anti-gender discourse;*  
*LGBT;*  
*media;*  
*Poland*

G04 – P124

COLIN Y. YANG

University of Bristol, United Kingdom

**QUEER ANTI-CAPITALIST REBELLION IN THE AGE OF PLATFORM CAPITALISM: HOW DO QUEER VLOGS PERFORM ANTI-CAPITALIST QUEER POLITICS IN CHINA?**

Through a digital queer Marxist lens, this paper studies the complex digital material conditions around queer media representation in China today against a background of stringent censorship and state-led promotion of capitalist, heterosexist and nationalist ideologies. It unpacks firstly, how queer vlogs on Bilibili.com, a Chinese equivalent of YouTube, use stereotypes as a gateway to visibility. Moreover, by constructing an online persona that performs a camp style with Chinese characteristics, these vlogs, though mediated by commercial platforms, constitute rebellion against both the erasure of queer visibility and the normative ideals promoted by the state of desire, beauty and personal success. Employing multi-modal critical visual methods including semiotics, discourse, genre and compositional analysis, this paper also sheds light on how, in doing so, these queer vlogs perform queer politics and bottom-up digital activism in non-aggressive, non-violent, individual and creative ways. In doing so, the paper proposes a more nuanced approach toward queer visibility and queer politics in visual culture in the age of platform capitalism and in a society where formal social activism protests are prohibited under the ideological promotion of ‘social harmony’ and ‘positive energy’.

*queer politics*  
*queer rebellion*  
*anti-capitalist politics*  
*platform capitalism*  
*Chinese queer studies*

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**Full panel: B01****CHAIR: TANJA VUČKOVIĆ JUROŠ***University of Zagreb, Croatia***ECHOES AND DIVERGENCES: ANTI-GENDER DISCOURSES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE. PANEL ORGANIZED BY THE COST ACTION CA23149 ANTIGENDER-POLITICS.**

This panel explores different dimensions of anti-gender mobilizations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), focusing in particular on the production and reception of anti-gender discourse. Anti-gender messages targeting different anti-gender causes (from LGBT+ rights to abortion) across various CEE countries are marked by many similarities, reflecting the transnational character of anti-gender mobilizations. Therefore, across the cases highlighted in this panel, we can identify similar patterns of anti-gender discourse. These, for example, include national boundary-making (us vs. them), especially in relation to LGBT+ rights in Poland and Croatia; recasting gender and sexual rights as threats to national sovereignty in Georgia and Moldova or the survival of “the nation=the family” in Bosnia and Herzegovina; or misuse of the scientific authority in Slovenia and Croatia.

However, these and other similarities of anti-gender discourse may sometimes lead to disregarding important contextual differences that shape these messages in various CEE countries. Indeed, the necessity of both recognizing the shared traits and challenging the tendency to homogenize the CEE region is one of the driving forces behind the COST Action Antigender-Politics, which is the organizer of this panel. Therefore, in this panel, we also highlight the diversity of our cases, in terms of when the anti-gender mobilizations started, how successful they were, or who were the main drivers of anti-gender campaigns. Thus, the cases include CEE countries with the longest histories of anti-gender campaigns in the region (Croatia, Slovenia) and the cases where anti-gender mobilizations are a more recent development (Georgia, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina); the cases where the anti-gender campaigns marked major successes though via different mechanisms (e.g. in Poland due to the state-sponsorship, and in Croatia due to the rise of strong conservative civil society) and those where they experienced major defeats (e.g. Slovenia); as well as the cases with quite different positionings towards the EU and Russia.

Against the background of these diverse CEE cases, in this panel we focus on different ways in which anti-gender discourse and messages are produced and disseminated. In the case of Poland, Julia Walczak centers on the role of media, specifically the campaign against “LGBT ideology” by the conservative Polish weekly opinion magazine *Gazeta Polska* in support of the municipal decisions to create “LGBT-free zones”. Next, Maryna Shevtsova analyses the use of anti-gender discourse in Georgian and Moldovan electoral campaigns, linking the main anti-gender messages to Russian interference. The case of Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina presented by Zlatiborka Popov Momčinović shows us the emergence of anti-gender messaging by a conservative civil society, while the Slovenian case analyzed by Nina Perger and Roman Kuhar leads us much further along the way, by presenting anti-gender messaging of the more professionalized Slovenian conservative civil society. Finally, in the last presentation, Tanja Vuckovic Juros shows some of the outcomes of the anti-gender messaging of the Croatian anti-gender movement by presenting how this discourse was adopted by ordinary people to justify their opposition to gender and sexual equality.

*anti-gender mobilizations  
discourse*

*Central and Eastern Europe  
gender and sexual rights*

## B01 – P18

**JULIA WALCZAK**

*University of Silesia, Poland*

### **“LGBT-FREE ZONES” AS SYMBOLIC POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF GAZETA POLSKA’S ANTI-GENDER AND ANTI-QUEER CAMPAIGN**

In 2019, dozens of local governments across Poland adopted resolutions declaring themselves “free from LGBT ideology”, sparking widespread criticism for promoting exclusionary and discriminatory policies. In this political climate the conservative Polish weekly opinion magazine *Gazeta Polska* launched a controversial campaign by distributing stickers labeled “LGBT-Free Zone”. This symbolic gesture is emblematic of the broader anti-gender and anti-queer discourse that had its peak in Poland between 2019 and 2020 (Amnesty International, 2022; ILGA Europe, 2024).

This paper offers a case study of *Gazeta Polska*’s role in constructing and disseminating such discourse, positioning the outlet as a key actor within the populist-conservative media ecosystem. The analysis draws on Teun van Dijk’s approach to critical discourse studies (van Dijk, 1984; 1998; 2008, 2014), particularly his conceptualization of discourse as a form of symbolic power that shapes social cognition (van Dijk 2008). Through the systematic use of ideological language, media actors can construct “us vs. them” dichotomies, reproduce social inequality, and legitimize exclusionary practices. These mechanisms are particularly salient in the case of *Gazeta Polska*’s 2019 campaign, which coincided with a broader surge of anti-LGBT policies in Poland. The study examines selected articles published by *Gazeta Polska* during the 2019 campaign. The aim is to unpack the discursive strategies used to frame LGBT+ people as ideological threats, enemies of the nation, and symbols of Western moral decay. These narratives are situated within the broader context of Poland’s right-wing populist politics, in which so-called “anti-gender ideology” functions as a mobilizing symbol for conservative-nationalist identity.

*anti-gender discourse;*  
*LGBT;*  
*media;*  
*Poland*

## B01 – P19

**MARYNA SHEVTSOVA**

*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium*

### **WEAPONIZING TRADITION: RUSSIA’S ANTI-GENDER NARRATIVES IN ELECTORAL INTERFERENCE IN GEORGIA AND MOLDOVA**

This paper explores how Russia instrumentalizes anti-gender discourse in its broader geopolitical campaigns, focusing on recent electoral interference in Georgia and Moldova. Drawing on discourse analysis, election monitoring reports and reports by LGBTQ rights and feminist NGOs, the paper examines how Russia/pro-Russian actors use anti-LGBTQ and anti-feminist rhetoric to frame EU integration as both morally corrupt and geopolitically dangerous. In both countries, Russian-backed actors have deployed anti-gender messages to sway public opinion against pro-European candidates, conflating EU membership with the erosion of traditional values, national sovereignty, and social stability.

This strategy is not only cultural but also (geo) political: by linking gender rights to EU alignment, Russia promotes a narrative in which EU integration inevitably leads to war, instability, and the breakdown of traditional society—as allegedly demonstrated by Ukraine. The 2020s saw a sharp intensification of these tactics, with Russia actively interfering in Moldovan and Georgian elections, supporting far-right parties and Orthodox networks to cultivate mistrust in pro-Western coalitions. In both cases, anti-gender discourse was entangled with warnings and threats around the war in Ukraine, presenting it as a cautionary tale of what happens when nations defy Russia’s sphere of influence. The paper argues that anti-gender rhetoric functions as a key instrument in Russia’s hybrid warfare toolkit—bridging culture, security, and politics. By mobilizing emotional anxieties around gender and sexuality, Russia not only disrupts democratic processes but also reasserts its geopolitical dominance in the post-Soviet space. The analysis contributes to ongoing debates on anti-gender mobilizations, democratic resilience, and the securitization of sexuality in contested borderlands of the EU.

*anti-gender discourse;*  
*electoral campaigns;*  
*Georgia;*  
*Moldova;*  
*Russia’s influence*

## B01 – P20

**ZLATIBORKA POPOV MOMČINOVIĆ**

*University of East Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

### **USE OF GENDER IDEOLOGY DISCOURSE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA. THE CASE OF 21 ORGANIZATIONS FROM REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

This paper explores the use of “gender ideology” discourse by organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) following an open letter signed by 21 conservative groups from Republika Srpska opposing the Draft Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women. Unlike many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the use of the term “gender” in BiH to articulate social and moral concerns, as well as anti-gender rhetoric to sway decision-makers, has only emerged recently—at the end of 2023—with this open letter. To understand these organizations’ goals and communication strategies, I conducted nine in-depth interviews with women and LGBT activists, journalists and experts, and two focus groups: one with women activists from Republika Srpska and another with women working on gender equality in academia. I also analysed available websites and Facebook posts of 21 organizations.

The findings indicate that the term “gender ideology” is rarely used, with the organization Parents for Rights of Children – which has connections with anti-gender groups in Serbia – being a notable exception. Instead, many organizations focus on protecting traditional family values. They often employ ethnic and religious symbols and narratives of victimization while maintaining limited engagement on social media. In contrast, the organization Parents for Rights of Children actively uses anti-gender rhetoric, including references to “gender ideology,” and opposes gender-sensitive language, gender studies and education, framing their messaging around children’s rights and cultural and biological survival of Republika Srpska. Importantly, all 21 organizations focus on prenatal policies rather than directly messaging against abortion. Instead, interlocutors suggest that anti-abortion messages are spread through private channels. While most organization infrequently employ other anti-gender tropes, some occasionally express anti-LGBTI attitudes. Despite the diversity among 21 organizations, the interlocutors believe they share a common goal of further repatriarchalization of Republika Srpska along with its ethnic and religious purification.

*gender ideology discourse;  
conservative groups;  
abortion;  
Bosnia and Herzegovina*

## B01 – P21

**NINA PERGER & ROMAN KUCHAR**

*University of Ljubljana, Slovenia*

### **SCIENTIFIC TRUTH OR IDEOLOGICAL MANIPULATION? THE STRATEGIC (MIS)USE OF SCIENCE IN ANTI-GENDER MESSAGES**

Research on anti-gender mobilizations has shown that these movements are engaged not only in struggles over political power but also in battles over epistemic authority. Anti-gender actors attempt to delegitimize established academic fields – particularly gender studies – by positioning themselves as defenders of “real” science. In doing so, they seek to establish an alternative epistemology, typically rooted in rigid biological essentialism, while simultaneously disregarding the established methodological and epistemological standards of scientific inquiry. This contestation over knowledge production is central to their efforts to reshape public discourse and influence education, family, and health policies.

In this paper, we analyze the Slovenian manual “Za otroke gre” (Children Are At Stake) for parents that claims to offer guidance on how to protect children in schools from so-called “gender ideology” and LGBT+ content. It was written by one of the key figures of the Slovenian anti-gender movement. While the manual heavily relies on scientific sources and language, it does so in misleading and contradictory ways. By invoking scientific authority – often through cherry-picked references, decontextualized findings, the strategic use of pseudo-scientific language, or outright misrepresentations – it seeks to frame its anti-gender message as rational, grounded in science and empirically confirmed. This case study illustrates how scientific discourse is appropriated to legitimize anti-gender narratives and obscure their ideological underpinnings. It contributes to the growing body of scholarship that documents the wide range of strategies used by anti-gender movements in their manipulation of science, including the promotion of “experts” without academic credentials – such as “social media scientists” – to shape public debate and discredit gender studies.

*anti-gender mobilization;  
epistemic power;  
gender ideology;  
science framing;  
Slovenia*

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**B01 – P22**

**TANJA VUČKOVIĆ JUROŠ**

*University of Zagreb, Croatia*

**ANTI-GENDER TALK. USING COMMON-SENSE,  
NATIONAL BOUNDARYMAKING AND SCIENCE TO  
JUSTIFY THE OPPOSITION TO GENDER AND SEXUAL  
EQUALITY**

How ordinary people make sense of genders and sexualities in times of mobilizations against equality? Why do they find some anti-gender messages persuasive and gender and sexual equality scary? These questions underly the MSCA-IF project Sense AGENDA. In this presentation, I provide some emerging answers based on the data from Croatia, a Central Eastern European country whose anti-gender mobilizations stand out among many other countries due to their longevity and the central role of the conservative civil society which was successful in transforming anti-gender mobilizations into an anti-gender movement.

In 2022 and 2023, I conducted 18 focus groups with “ordinary people”, where I looked at three groups in particular: parents of school-aged children (the main target of first anti-gender mobilizations in Croatia), mostly consisting of people in their 40s, and then the groups of younger (below 30) and older (above 60) citizens. In these group conversations we discussed a wide variety of gender and sexuality topics, from sex education and abortion to same-sex parenting and transgender identity. While different people voiced a variety of perspectives on genders and sexualities, in this presentation I focus on those that are consistent with the anti-gender discourse as available from the Croatian public space. I look especially at how people justify these anti-gender messages and use them to defend the viewpoints that oppose gender and sexual equality. In this analysis, I focus on three types of justifications in particular: (1) the justification of “common-sense” which finds the sheer thinkability of non-normative sexualities and genders threatening; (2) the boundary-making where all those living or supporting non-normative sexualities and genders are placed outside the national imagined “we”; and (3) the use of (pseudo-)scientific argument as a way to increase the persuasive power of the messages targeting those outside the community (e.g. religious) of the like-minded.

*anti-gender talk;  
ordinary people;  
opposition to gender and sexual equality;  
Croatia*

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## Full panel: C01

**CHAIR: JULIE MINDERS**

Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

### **WHAT DO PEOPLE DO WITH PORNOGRAPHY? EXPLORING PRACTICES, RESISTANCES, AND SOCIAL NORMS.**

While porn studies are a well-established research field in the United States - which does not exempt its researchers from censure and moral suspicion (Comella, 2024) - research on pornography is expanding slowly in most European countries (Landais, 2014 ; Popolla, 2019). As for sexual practices that diverge from the hetero-conjugal reproductive norm, pornography is often linked to categorisation as deviant or pathological for those who engage with it (Rinaldi, 2016). In the social and psychological sciences, we observe an overrepresentation of studies focusing on the effects of porn on sexual and affective behaviors, bearing the influence of sex wars with pro- and anti-porn positions (Smith, Attwood, 2014). Within this context, a growing body of research on pornography as a space for queer and feminist subversion (Taormino et al., 2013) coexists with a larger body that supports its prohibition and/or the therapeutic treatment of its users (Borillo, 2023 ; Vörös, 2014). While often framed in terms of risk (Bozon, 2012) in public debates, digital platforms and pornography also appear as sites of experimentation and education for the youth, and particularly for the LGBTQI+ (Clair, 2023 ; Bóthe et al., 2019). In a context where pornographic productions are increasingly accessible across all age categories (Spampinato, 2024 ; Maheaux et al. 2021), looking for scientific answers can appear as an urgent issue. However, research designs often lack realistic experimental conditions or rely solely on self-evaluation, rendering it difficult to establish causality links (Fisher, 2024). Moreover, most studies that focus on effects tend to homogenize “pornography” and “pornography users” oblivious to the types of media, categories and activities involved. This surprising lack of details, beyond methodological challenges, seems to take after the moral tone of the public debate. More broadly, the rise of digital platforms is accompanied by claims of a loss of moral values and capitalistic capture of love and sexuality (Ilouz, 2006 ; Bergström, 2019). Categories (“tags”) used in video pornography, dating apps, and other digital spaces - often relating to ethno-racial features or sexual minorities - indeed raise important questions about cultural scripts (Simon & Gagnon, 1986) and how these may or may not manifest in the intimate lives of their (non-) users (Mazières et al., 2014).

Therefore, following Foucault’s (1976) approach, we mean to explore the reproduction of power relating to pornography. However, we align with Marquis’ stance that research on power needs to go beyond official speeches, and be grounded in the tangible practices of the actors (Marquis, 2014). This panel aims to foster a conversation centered on concrete social practices : what do people do with pornography?

Bringing together research perspectives on diverse social contexts, the panel will explore how norms are reproduced, appropriated, resisted and subverted through mundane or creative uses and practices. By focusing on individual and collective experiences, we aim to uncover the diverse and often contradictory manners in which pornography can appear as both a tool for reproducing power dynamics and an object of resistance. Ultimately, our goal is to move beyond the polarized debates surrounding pornography and to provide a deeper, more nuanced understanding of its role in contemporary sexualities, grounded in social realities.

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**pornography**  
**medicalization**  
**sex education**  
**queer and feminist cultures**  
**practices of intimacy**

## C01 – P37

**OSCAR BANNING**

EHESS – IRIS, France

### **DISTINCTION THROUGH SEXUAL SCRIPTS. HOW UPPER-CLASS GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES FROM PORNOGRAPHY, THE TOP/BOTTOM SEXUAL SCRIPT, AND THOSE WHO CONFORM TO IT.**

In male same-sex sexuality, the structuring of sexual scenarios around asymmetrical roles—“top” or “bottom”—appears to be fundamental, even unavoidable, both in pornography and on dating apps (Fouet, 2022; Banning, 2023). However, the “top/bottom” sexual script is met with significant criticism from homo and bisexual men. Drawing on the results of a qualitative interview-based study (n = 12) conducted in Villeurbanne (France) in 2023, my presentation will focus on the ambiguity of the “top/bottom” sexual script (Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Kippax & Smith, 2001; Hoppe, 2011), which is considered omnipresent in pornography and on dating apps, yet is widely criticized and distanced from by the interviewees. More specifically, I will examine how this distancing from the “top/bottom” script—perceived as *a pornographic and digital hegemony*—is a common experience. Four registers of critique articulated by the participants will be identified: the perception of the script as boring, lacking tenderness, violent, and/or heteronormative. Furthermore, I will show that this distancing is not only widespread, but also expected. Far from the idea of pornography shaping its consumers, the norm for the white, urban, gay and bisexual men interviewed is, on the contrary, to distinguish themselves from it and from the sexual scripts associated with it. Groups identified as too conforming to the “top/bottom” script are subject to judgment regarding their sexual desires and practices. I will argue that this *process of distinction—through sexual scripts and through the relationship to pornography*—follows lines of class, race, and age, thereby underlining the need to incorporate the lens of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1979) into the study of pornography’s social uses.

*Sexual scripts*  
*gay cultures*  
*pornography*  
*dating apps*  
*social distinction*

## C01 – P38

**JULIE MINDERS**

Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

### **EROTIC TOOL OR MEDICAL THREAT? SEXUAL SCRIPTS AND THE THERAPEUTIC FRAMING OF PORNOGRAPHY**

Pornography offers a particularly salient example of the phenomenon of the medicalisation of society (Castel, 1979) and, more specifically, of sexuality (Foucault, 1986). Often framed in terms of sanitary hazards for youth and society at large (Webber and Sullivan, 2018), pornography is linked to an epidemic of addiction, according to a large number of actors, particularly sexologists (Vörös, 2019). Sexology has historically grappled with issues of social respectability, often building legitimacy by mobilizing medico-scientific framings (Jones, 1977). Our ethnographic experience of francophone sexology, however, reveals that therapeutic approaches to pornography are multiple, to some extent replicating the historical *pro-* and *anti-*porn debate (Smith, Attwood, 2014). This communication draws on an online exploratory qualitative data collection concerning the public activities of a small sample of highly mediatised sex-therapists in Belgium and France - men and women of diverse ages, professional backgrounds, institutional affiliations, and (non-)religious orientations. Our aim is to deepen the analysis in terms of medicalisation and psychologisation (Castel, 1980) by examining the diverse ways in which pornography is considered in educational and therapeutic practices. Various approaches will be explored, such as using pornography as a tool for addressing “hypo-active sex-drive”; collaborating with porn activists and working on movie sets; framing pornography as a threat to couples and the “psycho-sexual development” of individuals; or creating typologies of positive and negative sexual material, distinguishing between eroticism (good) and pornography (bad). By examining the arguments mobilised (scientific, psycho-medical, moral, feminist, etc.), we aim to illuminate the cultural scripts at play and analyse how they are operationalised (Simon and Gagnon, 1986).

*pornography*  
*medicalization*  
*sexology*  
*sexual scripts*

## C01 – P39

**MARIELLA POPOLLA & GIULIA SELMI**

*University of Genova, Italy & University of Parma, Italy*

### **QUEER AND FEMINIST PORN AS SEXUAL EDUCATION: AN EXPLORATION OF YOUNG AUDIENCE**

As stated by several research, pornography consumption among adolescents and young adults seems to be driven also by the need to find information about sexual practices, identities, and behaviors that cannot be easily accessed elsewhere, like at school, or within the family (Shaughnessy et al. 2011; Boies 2002; Goodson et al. 2001 in Scarcelli 2016). As stated in the literature (Albury 2014; Dawson 2017; Litsou *et.al.* 2020; Oosterhoff *et.al.* 2016) then, the consumption of pornography can function as a form of ‘sex education’ particularly in those contexts - such as Italy - where there is no sexuality education curriculum, except for some regional programs provided by local health agencies within the frame of sexually transmitted diseases prevention. While in mainstream pornography this educational function is often deeply connected to the reproduction of the gender and sexual order, feminist and queer porn seems to have more consciously embraced it. On the one hand, by giving visibility to non-patriarchal and non-heteronormative gender relationships as well as to non-normative bodies and identities that makes available a new sexual imaginary to young generations. On the other hand, by engaging in actual educational videos, especially on social networks and in cooperation with sex-educators from outside the industry and with inclusive sexy shop owners. In this sense feminist and queer porn reframes the conception of porn workers as ‘sex object’ into ‘sex experts and educators’ that challenge the social perception around porn as embedded in unequal conception of sexuality. This paper aims at exploring this process by analyzing the media production of a set of queer and feminist porn performers (and their reception of young audience), especially those accessible on Instagram, and by identifying groups and collectives that, in Italy, use social networks as a way to deliver sexual education to a broader audience of young adults and adolescents.

***pornography;***  
***sex education;***  
***gender relationships;***  
***queer,***  
***feminism.***

## C01 – P40

**SERGIO VILLANUEVA BASELGA, LAURA FERNÁNDEZ,  
& MARIA-JOSE MASANET**

*Universitat de Barcelona, Spain*

### **EXPLORING YOUTH MEDIA PERSPECTIVES: YOUNG PEOPLE USING, EXPERIENCING AND GIVING MEANING TO PORN. AN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN THE BARCELONA AREA**

This article explores how adolescents and young people in Barcelona engage with, interpret, and learn from pornography in the context of limited formal sex education. Drawing on a short-term ethnographic study involving 155 participants aged 14 to 23 from diverse educational settings, the research adopts a bottom-up, queer feminist perspective to center the voices and lived experiences of youth. The study identifies three key areas of analysis: the spatial, temporal, and media contexts of porn consumption; gendered interpretations of pornographic content; and the dual educational and preventive roles young people attribute to porn. Findings reveal that porn is encountered early and pervasively, often through transmedia platforms and, notably among girls, in non-consensual contexts. While boys are more likely to co-view and frame porn consumption as humorous or exploratory, girls often respond with discomfort and critique its unrealistic and heteronormative portrayals. Girls demonstrate higher levels of critical media literacy, frequently reflecting on how porn fails to align with their desires and bodily experiences. Metaphors used by participants—such as “butcher shop” or “Cirque du Soleil”—illustrate the emotional and cognitive distance felt from mainstream porn narratives. Despite dominant discourses portraying porn as inherently harmful, the research uncovers instances where youth engage with it as a learning tool—especially those from non-normative sexual and gender identities. Participants show awareness of the ethical implications of porn consumption, often expressing ambivalence about its role in their sexual development. The study challenges alarmist, adult-centric views and underscores the importance of incorporating media literacy and inclusive, feminist-informed discussions into sexual education. By recognizing young people as active, critical media users, the article calls for a more nuanced approach to porn and its place within youth sexuality and education.

***pornography***  
***youth***  
***sex education***  
***ethnography***  
***media literacy***

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**CO1 – 41**

**MÉLAINE BUSTOS**

*Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium*

**FEMINIST VALUES AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE IN WOMEN'S PORN CONSUMPTION: AN EXPLORATION**

Nowadays the increased accessibility of online porn has generated a lot of debate. While definitions of porn vary across social contexts and individual interpretations, contemporary research concentrates on porn videos, the most consumed form.

Feminist perspectives remain divided between seeing porn as an violent and oppressive medium toward women, while others emphasize its potential for sexual expression and women's empowerment. Despite historical perceptions of pornography as a male-dominated domain, recent research highlights increasing female consumption. In 2006, 20% of women reported viewing pornography "often" or "sometimes" (Bozon, 2008), with rates rising continually (Smith, 2007; Pornhub, 2021).

Regardless, they can experience discomfort with the ethical aspects, including the portrayal of non-consensual acts, gender stereotypes, and the exploitation of performers (MacKinnon, 1987 ; Williams, 1989 ; Bridges et al., 2010 ; Mass et Dewey, 2018). As a result, several women report actively seeking alternative forms of sexual media, such as ethical/feminist pornography, literature or audio platforms, which they perceive as more aligned with their values (Smith et al., 2015 ; Solano et al., 2020 ; Chesser et al., 2018 ; Macleod, 2020). This shift highlights the concept of cognitive dissonance: the psychological discomfort experienced when an individual holds contradictory beliefs, values, or attitudes simultaneously (Festinger, 1957). This communication is based on an exploratory research realised during an university certification in clinical sexology. Based on literature review and qualitative online questionnaire, we investigated how women deal with potential dissonance related to porn use. Although markers of cognitive dissonance were observed, no clear link was found between feminist beliefs and dissonance related to porn use. After reviewing research on women's porn use (Chesser et al., 2018 ; McKeown et al., 2018 ; Ashton et al., 2018 and 2019) this communication will examine the strategies women use in order to reduce porn-related dissonance, and question the links between feminist beliefs and dissonance intensity.

***pornography***

***feminism***

***women's sexuality***

***cognitive dissonance***

***intimate practices***

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**Full panel: F01****CHAIR: SILVIA DEMOZZI***University of Bologna, Italy***COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN DIFFICULT TIMES – AN OVERVIEW OF THE ITALIAN CONTEXT.**

This panel aims to critically reflect on the state of the art of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in Italy, a country where sexuality education is still not compulsory by law, and its implementation remains sporadic, often contested by political and cultural resistance (Abbatecola, 2024; Selmi, 2015). In difficult times marked by the resurgence of anti-gender discourses, increased social polarization, and ongoing public disinformation (Butler, 2024), this panel brings together theoretical, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods contributions to map the challenges, potentials, and transformative ambitions of CSE in the Italian context.

CSE is internationally recognized as a key tool in promoting equity, well-being, and preventing gender-based violence, discrimination, and abuse (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; UNESCO, 2018; WAS, 2014; WHO & BZgA, 2010). It supports an integrated vision of sexuality and gender, grounded in human rights, respect, and empowerment from early education (Demozzi & Ghigi, 2024). Yet, in Italy, its practical enactment remains fragmented and uneven, particularly disadvantaging regions in the south and marginalized communities.

The first contribution by Francesca Barbino offers a queer and decolonial framework to broaden the theoretical foundations of CSE. Her contribution aims to dismantle hetero-cisnormative and Eurocentric assumptions, promoting intersectional pedagogies to prevent systemic violence from early education.

The second contribution by Eleonora Bonvini presents a qualitative study on early childhood and primary education in Italy. The research highlights ambivalence and resistance but also uncovers the transformative potential of CSE in contexts where childhood sexuality is still taboo.

The third contribution by Alice Chinelli and colleagues assesses the EduForIST project's impact on secondary school students. Their quanti-qualitative findings reveal improved knowledge among younger students, while older ones show less engagement for gender-related topics – emphasizing the need for age- and context-sensitive interventions.

The fourth contribution by Valeria Bruno and colleagues investigates how Italian bisexual women experience CSE. The study reveals significant gaps in institutional education, with informal sources often replacing formal instruction. CSE is perceived as crucial to affirming diverse sexual identities.

The final contribution by Giuliano Flagiello, Lisa D'Errico, and Angelo Cristofaro explores how disinformation and biased media narratives shape public discourse on LGBTQIA+ issues. Their qualitative analysis identifies discursive strategies that marginalize communities and offers tools for critically deconstructing them.

The various contributors to the panel emphasize the urgency of expanding the epistemological, methodological, and political foundations of CSE in Italy. The ambition of this panel is to broaden the field of sexuality education by proposing new lenses, grounded in both research and lived experiences, that can inform more inclusive, critical, and context-sensitive approaches. As Butler (2024) notes, the phantom of gender condenses collective fears to stir political passions: unmasking these dynamics is key to building informed and inclusive educational responses.

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### ***Comprehensive Sexuality Education***

#### ***Sexual Identity***

#### ***School context***

#### ***Gender-based violence***

#### ***Manipulation of information***

F01 – P93

**FRANCESCA BARBINO**

*University of Palermo, Italy*

**QUEERING AND DECOLONISING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION - A THEORETICAL PROPOSAL TO PREVENT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCES**

Gender-based violences, understood as any physical, verbal, symbolic and psychological violence acted against women, homosexual, bisexual and trans\* people (Educare alle Differenze, 2024) are caused by inequalities of power between genders, rooted in patriarchal models that affect young people as adults, and which intersect with other oppressions generating more severe traumas (Crenshaw, 1989; Walby, 1990).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is internationally recognized as a concrete solution to tackle discrimination and violence, as it allows to learn how to recognize, react and not perpetrate them (WHO, 2010; UNESCO, 2018), to act on sexism, homonegativity, hegemonic masculinity, bullying and cyberbullying (Demozzi and Ghigi, 2024), to protect the sexual rights of all subjectives (WAS, 2014). Despite the attempts to legislate on the matter (Bruno, 2024), Italy remains one of the few European countries not to include compulsory sex education in school curricula, creating a fragmented framework of experiences with important discrepancies within the country, to the detriment of the center-south (Chinelli et al., 2024; Lo Moro et al., 2023), also due to the opposition of the so-called “anti-gender” movements (Selmi, 2015; Abbatecola, 2024).

This study aims to explore the contribution of critical queer and decolonial theories to the debate on CSE, in a way to deconstruct, from an educational perspective, those monolithic, hetero-cisnormative and Eurocentric visions that see the study of sexualities as taboo and deviation from the “norm”. The hypothesis is to experiment a model of CSE that can broaden, at a theoretical level, the current approaches promoted by international organizations towards a more resistant, intersectional and inclusive understanding of sexuality and affectivity, which could be effectively useful to eradicate the root causes of oppression, discrimination and gender-based violence from an early age and starting from schools (Borghi, 2011; Burgio, 2019; Di Grigoli, 2023; Rinaldi, 2023; Seal, 2019).

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***Comprehensive Sexuality Education;***  
***Decolonial studies;***  
***Queer studies;***  
***Sexuality;***  
***Gender-based violences.***

**F01 – P94**  
**ELEONORA BONVINI**

*University of Bologna, Italy*

**COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY SCHOOL: ITALIAN EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES**

In recent decades, international organizations such as UNESCO, WHO, and WAS have recognized Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) as essential for comprehensive development starting in early childhood. CSE promotes an integrated approach to sexuality and gender that includes cognitive, emotional, physical, and social dimensions, viewed as both individual and social constructs (UNESCO, 2018; WHO & BZgA, 2010; WAS, 2014; Risman, 2004).

Research has highlighted CSE's positive outcomes: promoting sexual and gender diversity, preventing intimate partner violence and child sexual abuse, fostering respectful relationships, and enhancing social-emotional learning (Goldfarb & Lieberman, 2021; Bruno, 2022). Furthermore, CSE stresses the importance of going beyond the transmission of knowledge to also develop skills, values, and attitudes (Chinelli et al., 2023). Three core elements distinguish CSE from traditional models: the need to begin in early childhood, the inseparability of sexuality and gender, and its transformative ambition grounded in rights and empowerment (Bonvini, Demozzi, & Ghigi, 2025). Despite growing evidence, CSE implementation in Italy remains fragmented and controversial. With an average starting age of 14 – the highest in Europe – Italian programs often exclude children aged 0 to 11, a group still underexplored in research (European Commission, 2020; Balter et al., 2018, 2021; Martin & Bobier, 2017; Robinson & Davies, 2017). This exclusion reflects a persistent belief that sexuality is an adult domain and thus inappropriate or dangerous for children (Robinson, 2012).

This paper presents findings from a qualitative study aimed at exploring Italian teachers' and educators' attitudes, representations, and practices regarding CSE in early childhood and primary education, aiming to identify key influencing factors and inform more consistent and internationally aligned training pathways.

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***Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE); Early Childhood Education; Gender and Sexuality; Teacher Attitudes; Educational Policy in Italy***

## F01 – P95

**VALERIA BRUNO(1), THAÍS DE CASTRO JURY ARNOUD(2), CHIARA ANTONIUCCI(1), ROBERTO BAIOTTO(1), & JESSICA PISTELLA(1)**

*(1) Sapienza University of Rome, Italy & (2) Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil*

### **UNDERSTANDING COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION: A MIXED METHODS STUDY ON ITALIAN BISEXUAL WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES**

The 2030 Agenda positions Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) as a right for everyone (IPPF, 2016; UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, CSE is recognized as a sexual human right (WAS, 2014) and should be addressed in several contexts – schools, families, and health services – through interdisciplinarity and sharing educational responsibility (IPPF, 2017). However, in Italy, CSE still faces several challenges and barriers (Bruno, 2024; Chinelli et al., 2022; Lo Moro et al., 2023). Additionally, there is still a lack of socially marginalized people's perceptions regarding CSE, such as bisexual women who face double stigma, bi-cancellation, discrimination, and exclusion (Lucietto, 2023; Pistella et al., 2023). The main aim of the present study is to understand the experiences and perspectives of Italian bisexual women on CSE, considering their specific needs, concerns, and perceived barriers, through a mixed-methods study. Self-identified bisexual women ( $n = 439$ ; Mage = 27.25; SD = 5.34) completed a questionnaire in the first stage of the study; 23 women from the first stage participated in semi-structured interviews. Quantitative results show that informal sources of information such as newspapers and magazines, TV, social media, Internet, and pornography are the primary references for CSE. Using bottom-up Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2021), three themes emerged: 1) Sources of Sexuality Education ( $n = 120$ ); 2) Positive Aims of Sexuality Education ( $n = 69$ ); and 3) Barriers to Sexuality Education ( $n = 30$ ).

Bisexual women perceived CSE as crucial for all sexual identities and helpful in promoting acceptance, respect, and visibility of bisexual identity. The study provides insights for future policy and educational implications regarding CSE framework implementation, encompassing the crucial role of LGBTQ+ people and issues in school curricula.

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***Comprehensive Sexuality Education;  
Bisexual Women;  
Mixed-Method Study;  
Bi-visibility.***

## **F01 – P96**

**ALICE CHINELLI(1), GIANLUCA PAPARATTO(1), DOMENICO MARTINELLI(2), MARCO UBBIALI(3), FEDERICA VOGLIOBENE(3), MASSIMO FARINELLA(4), & LARA TAVOSCHI(1)**

**(1) University of Pisa, Italy, (2) University of Foggia, Italy, (3) University of Verona, Italy, & (4) Circolo di cultura omosessuale Mario Mieli, Roma, Italy**

### **SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF SEXUAL MYTHS AND GENDER MISCONCEPTIONS: RESULTS OF A REPEATED CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY WITHIN EDUFORIST NATIONAL PROJECT**

Common myths and misconceptions about sexuality have a negative impact on young people's first sexual and relationship experiences. School-based comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), as defined by UNESCO (2018), is a fundamental tool for promoting safer and respectful relationships, through the provision of integrated, evidence-based, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive educational interventions. However, Italy remains one of the very last European countries without CSE in the school curriculum. This study assessed the impact of a CSE intervention, EduForIST, funded by the Ministry of Health, on students' knowledge and attitudes towards sexual and gender misconceptions. The intervention was implemented in 7 Italian regions, from October 2021 to May 2025.

EduForIST consisted of a 10-hour intervention delivered in five 2-hour modules on: A) Changes in adolescence, B) Relationships and consent, C) Sexual identities, D) STI prevention, contraception and accessing sexual health services. The intervention was implemented in 40 Italian lower and upper secondary schools during 4 school years. The target group was adolescents aged 12-16 years. The evaluation consisted of a pre-post-test and a satisfaction qualitative/quantitative questionnaire that were administered during the fifth session.

There was a consistent improvement in students' knowledge and attitudes towards sexual and gender-related myths, especially among lower secondary students. In contrast, upper secondary students showed limited improvement, with a downward trend over time. This trend seemed to be confirmed by the satisfaction survey, which showed that these

topics were perceived as less engaging. Analyses of qualitative data are underway to explore these dynamics further.

The results suggested that EduForIST intervention was effective in improving young people's knowledge and attitudes about sexuality. However, culturally sensitive issues such as gender identity and sexual myths may affect outcomes differently in age groups. Findings need to be further explored to identify and address underlying dynamics to improve intervention outcomes.

**Keywords:** Comprehensive Sexuality Education, school, health promotion, gender

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#### F01 – P97

**ANGELO CRISTOFARO, LISA D'ERRICO, & GIULIANO FLAGIELLO**

*University of Naples Federico II, Italy*

#### **BEYOND THE TRUTH: DISINFORMATION, BIAS, AND MARGINALIZATION OF LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY**

Disinformation, understood as the intentional spread of false or misleading content, represents a significant threat to public discourse and the protection of minority rights. This study employs a qualitative approach to analyse the communicative strategies through which Italian politics contribute to spread distorted and polarizing narratives, with particular attention to the representation of LGBTQIA+ community in the national debate of the last four years. The analysis focuses on events and moments of high media exposure, when public debate has been instrumentalized for political and ideological purposes.

Using NVivo software, the survey systematizes the analysis of textual and visual content collected from online sources, allowing to identify recurring discursive patterns, framing strategies and rhetorical mechanisms used to marginalize subjects and instances. The theoretical framework integrates studies on disinformation, framing theory, and narrative analysis, laying the foundation for the construction of an interpretative model that can be replicated in other thematic contexts.

The aim of the study is twofold: on one side it is to understand how Italian political communication contributes to spread disinformation about LGBTQIA+ community and, on the other side, it is to develop a methodological tool that enables identification, interpretation, and recognition of similar phenomena on a broader scale. The results provide a critical interpretation of contemporary discursive dynamics, highlighting the social and political implications of disinformation offering analytical tools useful for deconstructing manipulative narratives.

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***Disinformation,  
manipulation of information,  
LGBTQIA+,  
qualitative methodology,  
Media,  
framing***

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**Full panel: G01****CHAIR: ADRIANNA ZABRZEWSKA***Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom***EPISTEMIC AND AFFECTIVE TACTICS OF 'ANTI-GENDER' MOBILIZATIONS IN EUROPE.**

In this panel, we build on the findings from the EU Horizon project “RESIST: Fostering Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistances against Transnational Anti-Gender Politics” (<https://theresistproject.eu/>) to explore how ‘anti-gender’ actors across Europe delegitimize queer and feminist experiences and perspectives through epistemic violence, censorship, affective politics, and abjection.

We explore the interplay of epistemologies and affects in contemporary discourses surrounding gender and sexuality by drawing on diverse case studies from France, Poland, Belarus, Switzerland, and situating them within a broader European and global context. France and Switzerland are both currently facing a conservative backlash against ‘progressive excess’ and ‘wokeness.’ In Belarus, ‘anti-gender’ sentiments are closely tied to state repression, forcing activists into exile, while Poland presents challenges due to a lack of state support for queer-feminist movements.

Across all these national contexts, ‘anti-gender’ actors leverage emotional appeals—such as fear, disgust, and shame—to galvanize support for anti-LGBTIQ+, anti-feminist, and nationalist agendas. These emotional strategies work in tandem with epistemic tactics, creating a powerful framework that positions queer and feminist identities, visibilities, and scholarship as deviant and disruptive threats to societal norms and ‘traditional’ values.

We designed this panel to invite discussion on the intricate epistemic dynamics and affective politics at play in the ongoing struggles over gender and sexuality, while also encouraging consideration of how queer-feminist resistances can be better supported in the face of these challenges. Understanding ‘anti-gender’ tactics is crucial for fostering the resilience of queer-feminist movements across Europe and beyond.

*anti-gender  
queer-feminist resistances  
epistemic justice  
affective politics  
deviance and normativity*

## G01 – P112

**MARIANNE BLIDON**

*Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France*

### **'WOKEISM' AND THE POLITICS OF SHAME: CONSTRUCTING AN INTERNAL ENEMY IN CONTEMPORARY FRENCH DEBATES**

In France, the notion of “wokeism” has rapidly become a catch-all pejorative in public discourse, targeting a range of social struggles perceived as threats to the republican order and to so-called “universalist” thought. Promoted by prominent intellectuals and political figures, this rhetoric has given rise to an ideological offensive against gender studies and critical sexuality research, frequently accused of promoting identity politics or ideological activism. This presentation focuses on two recent and highly mediated cases emblematic of this dynamic: (1) the controversy surrounding a forthcoming collective volume on “wokeism” to be published by Presses Universitaires de France (PUF); and (2) the so-called “shameful” colloquium, which mobilised a discourse openly stigmatising intersectional approaches in academia.

Through these two case studies, the presentation examines the contemporary mechanisms of symbolic censorship and intellectual delegitimation that target dissident sexualities and the scholarship that supports them. Drawing on the sociology of reception and the sociology of public controversies, it explores how such polemics contribute to the (re)construction of a normative national narrative—one in which the racialised, gendered, or queer body becomes a site of ideological conflict. This research also aims to situate the French debates within a broader transnational dynamic of ideological repression, shaped by the intersection of populism, moral panic, and a nostalgic desire for epistemic hegemony.

*wokeism;  
anti-gender politics;  
ideological repression;  
limitations to academic freedoms*

## G01 – P113

**ADRIANNA ZABRZEWSKA**

*Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom*

### **MONSTROUS QUEERS VS. INNOCENT KIDS: UTILIZATION OF CHILDREN AS VICTIMS OF 'GENDER IDEOLOGY' IN POLISH 'ANTI-GENDER' DISCOURSES**

Drawing on selected public debates and the findings from the RESIST project, this presentation examines local specificities surrounding the construction of children as purported victims of ‘gender ideology’ and ‘LGBT agenda’ in contemporary Poland, highlighting the ways in which Polish narratives intersect with operationalizations of vulnerability and deviance in ‘anti-gender’ discourses across Europe and beyond.

The concept of ‘gender ideology’ as a perceived threat to children and women is a prevalent theme in Polish right-wing parliamentary and media discourses (RESIST Project Team 2024). Additionally, proponents of ‘anti-gender’ politics in Poland often depict LGBTIQ+ people and feminists as a depraved, uncontained, foreign force that endangers ‘traditional’ women and ‘innocent’ children. The latter demographics are constructed as vulnerable entities lacking agency, reliant on the protection of cisheteropatriarchal men for national continuity and cohesion. Consequently, women and children are portrayed as objects in need of safeguarding from (imaginary) enemies: the perverted Queer, the man-hating Feminazi, and the Western ‘civilization of death’ (in contrast to the Catholic ‘civilization of life’, cf. John Paul II 1965).

While the Child as ‘the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention’ (Edelman 2004) has been examined in queer theory and while studies of ‘anti-gender’ politics found the same trope across nations, including the UK, Switzerland, and Hungary (RESIST Project Team 2024), the Polish context is distinct due to Catholic influences and the malleability of the West-East conceptual framework. Poland’s unique, postcolonially ambiguous geopolitical position allows Polish ‘anti-gender’ actors to portray the ‘West’ as both an oppressive colonizer and an orientalised site of moral decay where children suffer like quasi-martyrs from the hands of queer persons and feminists. Through its Eastern European positionality, the Polish case study can contribute to transnational discussions on the re-traditionalization of values, which profoundly affects gender and sexual freedoms across diverse sociocultural contexts.

*anti-gender;  
re-traditionalization;  
vulnerability;  
Poland;  
Eastern Europe*

**G01 – P114**

**ROBERTO KULPA**

*Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom*

**‘KNOW THY ENEMY’ OR EPISTEMICS OF THE ‘ANTI-GENDER’ MOVEMENTS AND QUEER-FEMINIST RESISTANCES: THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND (DE)LEGITIMISATION PRACTICES IN THE STRUGGLES OVER GENDER & SEXUALITY**

In this presentation I would like to reflect on the role of ‘knowledge’ and ‘science’ as tools, objects, and frameworks underpinning and constituting contemporary struggles over gender and sexuality. First, I will present on various uses and abuses of ‘knowledge’ and ‘science’ by the ‘anti-gender’ actors in their populist fight against gender and sexual equalities. I will also present how queer-feminist struggles have historically and geopolitically been invested in knowledge production as self-legitimising practice of resistance and resilience. Folding into this empirical overview a layer of my earlier incursions into thinking about geotemporality of ‘Post-Enlightenment’ and possibility of thinking decoloniality with Central-Eastern Europe (Kulpa 2021, 2025), I want to suggest here a sketch for a theoretical framework that is centred around the concepts of ‘queer epistemic justice’ and ‘anti-gender epistemic violence’.

The presentation is empirically and methodologically grounded in the findings of the “RESIST Project: Fostering Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistances against Transnational Anti-Gender Politics” (<https://theresistproject.eu/>). Drawing on Poland and other European countries, and opening the perspective globally to capture and situate the discussion in the ongoing ‘Post-Truth’ debates, this presentation is an additional voice in building queer epistemics of resistances.

*queer epistemic justice;  
anti-gender epistemic violence;  
decoloniality;  
queer-feminist resistance*

**G01 – P115**

**EKATERINA FILEP**

*Université de Fribourg, Switzerland*

**SPACES OF RISK, PRACTICES OF CARE: ANTI-GENDER POLITICS AND QUEER-FEMINIST RESISTANCE ACROSS DIVERGENT POLITICAL CONTEXTS**

This paper draws on two national case studies - Switzerland and Belarus - conducted as part of the RESIST research project to examine how anti-gender politics are articulated, experienced, and resisted in distinct political and cultural contexts. Situating the analysis within the broader conference theme of “deviance” and “rebellion,” the paper explores how feminist and queer actors navigate the shifting boundaries of normativity, visibility, and dissent in times of intensified political contestation.

In Switzerland, a country often associated with liberal democratic values and institutional stability, gender and sexual rights are increasingly framed as symbols of ‘progressive excess’ or ‘wokeness’ by conservative actors. Despite recent legal gains, queer and feminist activists face growing backlash, marked by a normalization of anti-gender discourse, digital harassment, and subtle forms of silencing. Here, “deviance” is not overtly criminalized but politically stigmatized, casting those engaged in gender justice work as promoters of gender ideology. In Belarus, anti-gender politics are embedded within broader mechanisms of state repression, where expressions of feminist and queer activism are framed as politically subversive. Most human rights, feminist, and queer organizations have been dismantled or forced into silence, leading many activists to continue their work from exile. In this context, resistance takes on dispersed and transnational forms, grounded in practices of care, encrypted knowledge-sharing, and collective survival. The paper discusses these cases to consider how those labelled as “deviant” or “rebellious” negotiate visibility, belonging, and survival in hostile environments. It also reflects on how care and collective practice can function not only as coping mechanisms, but as everyday forms of resistance.

*anti-gender politics;  
queer and feminist resistance;  
deviance and normativity*

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**Full panel: A03****CHAIR: YAGOS KOLIOPANOS***Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium***(RE)NORMALIZATION OF MARGINALIZED SEXUALITIES AND SHIFTING BOUNDARIES.**

Sexuality has long served as a key site for negotiating societal norms — norms that regulate not only desire and gender, but also race, class, age, and ability. Sociological studies have often oscillated between a focus on deviance — public sexualities (Humphreys, 1970; Weinberg & William, 1975; Mendès-Leite & Proth, 1998; Lopes, 2020; Gaissad, 2020), BDSM (Rubin, 2010; Landridge, 2011; Bauer, 2018), sex work (Weitzer, 2009; Compte, 2010; Brennan, 2015) — and an implicit re-centering of normative heterosexual frameworks. Yet between these poles lies a dynamic and understudied field: the everyday (re)negotiation of marginalization, where individuals and groups labeled as deviant navigate shifting norms, institutions, and moral boundaries.

This panel explores the processes of (re)normalization that shape the lives of people whose sexualities and gender identities have been historically marginalized or stigmatized. What does it mean to “return” to normal — or to resist that very impulse? How do sexual practices, subjectivities, and identities become re-inscribed into dominant logics, or conversely, generate alternative norms that unsettle those logics?

Our focus is on the complex interplay between structure and agency: the sociopolitical, economic, and medical conditions that enable or constrain movement across normative boundaries, and the lived strategies through which individuals navigate these landscapes. Bringing together research on people living with HIV, transgender men, chemsexers and male sex workers in France and Belgium, the panel offers empirical insights into the institutional, relational, and affective mechanisms that both reinforce and subvert normative ideals.

In doing so, we ask how deviant sexualities and gender expressions are reclassified — not always as liberation, but sometimes as regulation under new guises. The panel examines these tensions across diverse sites, including health and care systems, digital and urban spaces, and the labor market. By grounding our inquiry in empirical case studies, we contribute to broader debates on sexual politics, normalization, and resistance in contemporary Europe.

**Normalization**  
**Marginalization**  
**Moralization**  
**Sexuality**  
**Deviance**

**A03 – P10****SANDRINE DETANDT, CHARLOTTE PEZERIL, & YAGOS KOLIOPANOS***Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium***IN FIST WE TRUST**

Fisting among men who have sex with men (MSM) can be understood as a form of counterdiscipline—a utopian political practice that unsettles normative sexual identities and offers a mode of resistance to the disciplinary structures of sexuality (Halperin, 2008; Rubin, 1991). This “necessity of excess” (Califia, 1999), as embodied in fist-fucking, is simultaneously reshaped through systems of normalization and regulation, encompassing time management, anal health, HIV/STD harm reduction, and psychoactive substance use. Building on a broader investigation into chemsex (Detandt, 2024) among MSM in Belgium, this paper turns to fisting through the prism of ageing. The research uncovers renewed avenues of sexual expression for ageing MSM. In these contexts, fisting becomes a ritualized space of bodily transgression—where sacredness and profanity, security and risk, normativity and excess intersect and converse. Participants often describe it as a “ritual act,” imbuing each phase—preparation, insertion, penetration—with almost spiritual significance, with religious metaphors frequently structuring their narratives. Pleasure is found in the tension between the practice’s deviant framing (group sex, drug use) and its transcendence through ritual and language. At the same time, these practices foster care-based communities, particularly for those navigating through physical and social vulnerabilities. The paper also explores how fisting spaces operate in relation to age and social diversity. While interviewees frequently point to a shared sociocultural background, they also report intergenerational dynamics, where the transmission of sexual know-how—or “sexpertise” (Koliopanos, 2019)—can imply both knowledge-sharing and access to younger bodies. Yet ageing, far from being viewed as a constraint, is often reclaimed as a generative resource—a form of “ageing capital” (Simpson, 2016). Experience and embodied awareness enhance the practice, making fisting a site of resistance to physical decline, a reaffirmation of erotic agency, and a means of community-building amid experiences of isolation and marginalization.

**A03 – P11****PAUL RIVEST***Aix-Marseille Université, France***TRANSMASCULINE SEXUALITIES: (RE)PRODUCING GENDER THROUGH PENETRATION?**

Gender shapes the way sexual practices are represented, especially when it comes to penetration. The male role has traditionally been conceptualized as the penetrative partner, while the female role is regarded as the one being penetrated. These gendered distinctions structure the ways in which penetrative sexualities are framed, not only in heterosexual contexts but also in gay sexualities, where they manifest in dynamics such as active/passive, top/bottom, or stone butch/fem roles. Trans individuals, by adopting a gender identity that contrasts with their assigned sex at birth, step outside the cisgender norm. Their diverse bodily configurations also differ from those typically expected of cisgender individuals. While gender plays a central role in sexuality, it is also an important site for the production of gender. This paper examines the (re)production, negotiation, and subversion of gender norms in sexuality through an analysis of transmasculine narratives about penetrative practices. Based on ethnographic doctoral research on transmasculine sexualities conducted in France, it focuses on 55 individual interviews conducted with 35 transmasculine people. Additionally, material collected from a digital ethnography of transmasculine social media and various dating and hook-up sites will complement the analysis. After outlining the role of penetration in the development of trans identity categories and its effect on how trans sexualities are viewed, particularly in relation to transnormativity (Garosi, 2009; Johnson, 2016; Bradford & Syed, 2019), I propose to analyze how penetration is experienced and conceptualized across a range of practices — receptive and insertive, vaginally and anally — and to explore how these modalities reflect or resist normative sexual scripts shaped by prior experiences.

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## A03 – P12

**KOSTIA LENNES**

*Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium*

### **THE MORALIZATION OF MALE-FOR-MALE ESCORTING**

Drawing on a digital ethnographic study conducted on a dating website for men, as well as a series of interviews, this paper examines the moralization of contemporary male escorting in France. The relationships between male escorts and their clients can be considered as simultaneously sexual, intimate, social, and economic. The paper demonstrates that the participants grant specific meanings to these interactions — meanings that often diverge from the stereotypical and fantasized representations commonly associated with prostitution. Indeed, the escorts and clients interviewed — frequently separated by significant differences in age and socioeconomic status — tend to moralize their relationships by distinguishing them from conventional forms of transactional sex (mainly street-based and female-to-male prostitution), which they associate with deviant or marginal practices. A central strategy in this moral distinction involves emphasizing the intimate dimensions of their interactions. However, this valorization of intimacy is accompanied by a marked minimization of the sexual ‘component’ of their interactions. In fact, it is because the moral legitimacy of escort–client relationships depends on their desexualization that the transactional nature of these encounters becomes destabilized. What, then, is truly being bought or sold? Despite the broader context of social and moral stigma surrounding paid sex in France — particularly following the enactment of legislation criminalizing clients (2016) — the moralization of escorting relationships enables both escorts and clients to frame their exchanges within a relational model of sexuality, as opposed to a purely recreational one more commonly associated with prostitution. In an era where late capitalism permeates even the most intimate spheres of life, these exchanges between men provide a valuable lens to understand how sexuality and intimacy may be imbued with meanings that resist the normative logics of stigmatization typically applied to paid sexual encounters.



# DEVIANTS SINNERS AND REBELS

SEXUALITY STUDIES  
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