



# SURVIVING VIOLENCE, FROM COPING TO THRIVING

19–20 April 2023  
Wadham College, University of Oxford



LEVERHULME  
TRUST



Chaitanya  
The Policy Consultancy



Queen Mary  
University of London

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OXFORD

## Day One – Wednesday 19 April

9.30-10.00	Tea & Coffee
10.00-10.15	Welcome and introduction to Surviving Violence
10.15-11.30	<p><b>Panel One: Institutions, infrastructures, (in)justice</b>  <b>Chair Samita Sen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cathy Mcilwaine, King's College London</li> <li>• Christine Shenk, University of Zurich</li> <li>• Philippa Williams and Shazia Choudhry, Queen Mary University of London and University of Oxford</li> </ul>
11.30-12.00	Tea & Coffee
12.00-13.00	<p><b>Panel Two: Advocacy and degrees of in-justice Roundtable</b>  <b>Chair Swarna Rajagopalan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juno Women's Aid, Yasmin Rehman</li> <li>• Nari Samata Manch, Preeti Kamarkar</li> <li>• Southall Black Sisters, Hanana Siddiqi</li> </ul>
13.00-14.15	Lunch
14.15-15.30	<p><b>Panel Three: Visualising Violence and survival</b>  <b>Chair Linda Mulcahy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charlotta Salmi, Queen Mary University of London</li> <li>• Cathy Mcilwaine, King's College London and Migrants in Action</li> <li>• Surviving Violence Collective, Philippa Williams &amp; Supurna Banerjee</li> </ul>
15.30-16.00	Tea & Coffee
16.00-17.00	<p><b>Panel Four: Keynote</b>  <b>Chair Shazia Choudhry</b>            Pragna Patel, co-founder Southall Black Sisters</p>
18.30-	<b>Photography exhibition &amp; drinks reception followed by dinner</b>

## Day Two – Thursday 20 April

09.30–11.20	<p><b>Panel One – Violence, resilience and recovery</b>  <b>Chair Philippa Williams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nandini Gooptu, University of Oxford</li> <li>• Supurna Banerjee and Nandini Ghosh, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata</li> <li>• Rachel Pain and Nahid Rezwana, Newcastle University and University of Dhaka</li> <li>• Fiona Morrison, University of Edinburgh</li> </ul>
11.20–12.00	Tea & Coffee
12.00–13.15	<p><b>Panel Two – Legal epistemologies and subjectivities</b>  <b>Chair Sneha Krishnan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leonie Thies, Hamburg Institute for Social Research</li> <li>• Ruchira Goswami and Kolika Mitra, National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata and Institute of Development Studies Kolkata</li> <li>• Ayesha Riaz, Queen Mary, University of London</li> </ul>
13.15–14.15	Lunch
14.15–15.30	<p><b>Panel Three– Policy and partnerships Roundtable</b>  <b>Chair Shazia Choudhry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner</li> <li>• Yasmin Rehman, CEO, Juno Women’s Aid</li> <li>• Pragna Patel, co-founder Southall Black Sisters</li> <li>• Yasmeen Zafar, Legal Adviser, Foreign, Commonwealth &amp; Development Office</li> <li>• Aleisha Ebrahimi, Advisor, Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner</li> </ul>
15.30–16.00	Tea & Coffee
16.00–17.00	<p><b>Rapporteurs – Reflections on proceedings and future directions</b>  Anjali Rawat, Misbah Reshi and Anupriya Dhonchak, University of Oxford</p>
17.00	Close and thanks



## Keynote – Pragna Patel



Pragna Patel is the former director and founding member of Southall Black Sisters' advocacy and campaigning centre and Women Against Fundamentalism (She worked as a co-ordinator/caseworker and director for Southall Black Sisters (SBS) from 1982 to Jan 2022 with a break in 1993 when she left to train and practice as a solicitor. For 40 years, she was at the helm of SBS and has been centrally involved in some of SBS' most important cases and campaigns involving domestic violence, immigration and religious fundamentalism. She is also a member of Feminist Dissent and has written extensively on race, gender and religion.

## Conference Organisers

### Shazia Choudhry



Shazia Choudhry is Professor of Law and the Jeffrey Hackney Tutorial Fellow in Law at Wadham College, Oxford. She is also an Associate Academic Fellow and Academic Bencher of the Inner Temple. Her research interests lie in the fields of European and UK human rights law and the interface of those fields with criminal law, family law and human rights law. Particular areas of interest include the impact of the HRA and the European Convention on Human Rights on the law and policy with regard to violence against women.

In addition to her academic publications in these areas, Shazia also engages in advisory work at the domestic and international level. This has included her appointment as Specialist Adviser to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Violence against Women (2014-15), Specialist Adviser to the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill (2019) and Specialist Adviser to the Women and Equalities Committee (2022).

### Philippa Williams



Philippa Williams is a Reader in Human Geography at Queen Mary University of London. As a feminist political geographer her research is animated by questions of everyday politics of the state, urban citizenship, violence/non-violence and digital (geo)politics in India and the UK. Philippa recently collaborated with OTOKA to produce 'Privacy Tectonics' – a digital art exhibition, is co-authoring (with Lipika Kamra) a forthcoming book on 'Privacy Tectonics: Digital geopolitics, WhatsApp and India' for Bristol University Press, co-editing a volume on urban temporality and Banaras for Bloomsbury (with Vera Lazeretti and Cristiana Zara) and co-leads (with Shazia Choudhry) 'Surviving Violence: Everyday resilience and gender-justice in rural-urban India'.

## Speakers

### Supurna Banerjee



Supurna Banerjee is Assistant Professor in Institute of Development Studies Kolkata. She works on issues of gender, labour, violence, migration and intersectionality. She has published in various peer reviewed journals on these issues including South Asian Multidisciplinary Academic Journal (SAMAJ) and Journal of South Asian Development. Her monograph *Activism and Agency in India: Nurturing Resistance in the Tea Plantations* was brought out by Routledge in 2017. She is also the co-author of *Limits of Bargaining: Capital, Labour and State in Contemporary India* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). She has also recently worked on issues of domestic violence as Co-Principal Investigator in an Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) sponsored research project *Reconceptualizing Domestic Violence: Shifting Discourses Within the Women's Movement* (2016-18).

### Aleisha Ebrahimi



Aleisha is a Family Law Associate Lecturer (Teaching) at UCL's Faculty of Law. Her PhD research focuses on gender equality as a matter of international human rights law, with a focus on structural inequality, domestic abuse and economic violence. Aleisha's doctoral research combines doctrinal and empirical methodologies, in order to consider the effect of law on society. In September 2022, Aleisha was appointed as Senior Policy Advisor to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner of England and Wales.

### Nandini Ghosh



Nandini Ghosh is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, West Bengal, India. She obtained her PhD degree in Social Sciences from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai in 2008. She has published a monograph, *Impaired Bodies Gendered Lives: Everyday Realities of Disabled Women* in 2016. She has edited *Interrogating Disability in India: Theory and Practice* (2016) and *Caste and Gender in Contemporary India: Power, Privilege and Politics* (co-edited with Supurna Banerjee, 2018). She has published widely on issues relating to disability, gender, caste and other marginal identities. Her areas of interest are qualitative research methodology, sociology of gender, marginalisation and social exclusion and social movements. As an academician-activist working on the intersectional issues of disability and gender, she was closely associated with the process of framing the new disability rights law in India and has also represented the delegation of Indian activists at the review of the implementation of the UNCRPD in India in 2018-19.

## Nandini Goptu



Prof Nandini Goptu is Associate Professor of South Asian Studies at the Oxford Department of International Development and Fellow of St Antony's College. Trained as a social historian, her past research was on urban politics and poverty in colonial India. Her recent research is multidisciplinary and concerned with social and political transformation and cultural change in contemporary India in the wake of economic liberalisation and globalisation. She is currently researching new cultures of work in India and leading the India leg of an ESRC-funded project on urban transformation and gendered violence in India and South Africa, in collaboration with the Universities of Cambridge and Johannesburg. She has researched and published on a variety of subjects, including caste and religious politics, urban change and politics, poverty and labour, enterprise culture, skill development, media and politics, and social movement of sex workers.

## Ruchira Goswami



Ruchira Goswami teaches at the National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata where she offers courses in Sociology, Human Rights, Gender and Law, Child Rights and Film and Law. She was the Head of the Centre for Child Rights, NUJS, a multidisciplinary centre set up in partnership with UNICEF with the mandate of research, documentation and advocacy on child rights issues.

A British Chevening scholar in Human Rights from the London School of Economics, her areas of interests include feminist movements and legal reforms, child rights, representation of law in films. She has recently worked on two research projects – as Project Director on Implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in West Bengal sponsored by UNICEF office of West Bengal (2016) and as Co-Investigator in an Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) sponsored research project Reconceptualizing Domestic Violence: Shifting Discourses Within the Women's Movement (2016-18)

## Nicole Jacobs



Appointed as Domestic Abuse Commissioner in 2019, Ms Jacobs was previously Chief Executive Officer of the charity Standing Together Against Domestic Violence and has more than 2 decades of experience working to tackle domestic abuse.

As set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is an independent voice that champions the voices of victims and survivors, engaging those with lived experience to help shape government policy and make recommendations on what more can be done to tackle domestic abuse.

## Cathy McIlwaine



Cathy McIlwaine is a Professor of Geography and Vice Dean for Research in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Public Policy at King's College London. She has worked for several decades on issues of gender, poverty and violence in cities of the global South, and in London with a specific focus on the Latin American community from the perspective of livelihoods and gender-based violence. She has published widely including eleven books and over 40 journal papers. Cathy has worked with international policy-makers at the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and UN-Habitat, as well as with migrant, feminist and human rights organisations in London (Latin American Women's Rights Service, Migrants in Action, Latin Elephant and Latin America Bureau) and Rio de Janeiro (Redes da Maré).

## Migrants in Action, Carolina Cal Angrisani, Simone Amorim, Adriana Pereira



Migrants in Action (MinA) is a London based applied arts organisation run by and for minoritised migrant women survivors of gender-based violence. MinA will present and perform their audiovisual piece "We Still Fight in the Dark" developed with People's Palace Projects and King's College London. This moving performance work resulted from a series of workshops based on the We Can't Fight in the Dark research project carried out between 2016-2018 by Professor Cathy McIlwaine which was one of the first research projects to gather data on the nature and types of gender-based violence experienced by Brazilian migrant women in London.

[Watch their teaser video.](#)



## Kolika Mitra

Kolika Mitra are a sociologist and has submitted their PhD thesis at The Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. They completed their Master's in Sociology at the University of Hyderabad. They have worked as Researcher, Consultant, Program Associate and volunteer at various organisations in New Delhi and Kolkata over the last nine years. Their main areas of research interest are sexuality and gender studies, queer studies, research methodologies and social movements. Kolika currently identifies as genderfree/agender and is a member of the West Bengal Transgender Development Board under the Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, Govt. of West Bengal. Celebrating queerness in all and challenging heteronormativity from every possible angle are their boosters in life along with nature, food, books and music



## Fiona Morrison



Fiona is a lecturer in Childhood Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Her broad research interests are in the areas of childhood, children's rights, child welfare and family relationships. Fiona's previous research focused on children's views and experiences of contact where there is history of domestic abuse and of contact policy and legislation. She has held a variety of posts in the voluntary sector. She worked at Scottish Women's Aid as a children's policy worker and at Barnardo's as a support worker and a development worker.

## Rachel Pain



Rachel Pain is a Professor of Human Geography at Newcastle University in the UK. Her research focuses on violence, fear and trauma, with gender-based violence a particular interest from intimate to international scales. Her work is informed by feminist theory and participatory action research. She collaborates on this research with public and voluntary sector organisations, and with survivor groups.

## Yasmin Rehman



Yasmin Rehman is a feminist, human rights activist and researcher. Yasmin is currently CEO at Juno Women's Aid in Nottingham/South Nottinghamshire. In addition to her day job, Yasmin is often called as an expert witness in legal cases providing expert reports on faith based abuse, honour based abuse, forced marriage and polygamy.

Yasmin has worked for more than 30 years predominantly on violence against women and girls, race, faith and gender, and human rights.

Yasmin is currently a Board member of Centre for Women's Justice, a fellow of the Muslim Institute, a Honorary Research at University of Kent and a member of the editorial board of Feminist Dissent. She is a former Board member of EVAW (End Violence against Women Coalition), National Secular Society Council the Cross-Government Working Group on Hate Crimes.

Yasmin was awarded the Irwin Prize for Secularist of the Year 2017.



## Nahid Rezwana



Dr. Nahid Rezwana, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Environment, University of Dhaka, has been working in this department since 2005. Nahid Rezwana holds a PhD in Geography from the Durham University, UK and MSc degree in Hazard and Disaster Management from the Kingston University London, UK. Her scholarship explores how and why disasters have uneven impacts on women and how these conditions could be improved with gender-sensitive disaster management. Nahid has received research grants from renowned organizations like UNDP, USAID, CMMF, IHRR, DRTMC, CALS and Delta Study Centre. She has several publications on gender and disasters. Recently Dr. Rezwana and Professor Rachel Pain (Newcastle University, UK) have published a book 'Gender-Based Violence and Layered Disasters: Place, Culture and Survival' from the Routledge, UK in December 2022.

## Ayesha Riaz



Ayesha Riaz is currently pursuing a PhD at Queen Mary University of London whereby she is investigating the relationship between the British State and solicitors that help asylum seekers in the UK. She previously worked at a legal aid firm in the UK and provided legal advice and assistance to those that were vulnerable such as detained and non-detained asylum seekers/victims of domestic violence and victims of trafficking.

## Charlotta Salmi



Dr Charlotta Salmi is a Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial and Global Literature at Queen Mary University of London. Her research focuses on visual storytelling methods (graphic narratives, street art) and social movements. She is the Principal Investigator for an interdisciplinary Sustainable Development project, Visualizing Gender-based Violence in Graphic Awareness Campaigns in Nepal (with Dr Barbara Grossman-Thompson, CSULB), funded by the British Academy. The project aims to evaluate best practices for using street art as a communication tool. Alongside running the Sustainable Development project, she is currently on a Leverhulme Fellowship, working on a book for Columbia University Press titled Picturing Protest in The Global Graphic Narrative.

## Christine Schenk



Christine Schenk is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies at the University of Zurich. In her research, Christine studies the relation between religion and social orders in the context of crises, conflicts, and disasters with a regional focus on Indonesia and Sri Lanka. At present she leads a project that studies the influence of Muslim organizations on legal jurisdictions at Muslim courts and how civil society organizations renegotiate these jurisdictions and the underlying legislation in Sri Lanka.

## Samita Sen



Professor Samita Sen is Vere Harmsworth Professor in Imperial and Naval History at the University of Cambridge. She was First Vice Chancellor, Diamond Harbour Women's University (West Bengal, India). She has taught in the universities of Calcutta and Jadavpur.

Her monograph on women's employment in the jute industry in colonial Bengal was published in 1999 and won the Trevor Reese Prize in Commonwealth History. She is at present working on women's migration and history of marriage. She has published papers on education, the women's movement, religious conversion, informal labour, including transport workers, and domestic violence. She has participated in action research on gender budgeting, women in governance and women's land rights. Her recent publications include a jointly written book on women domestic workers, *Domestic Days* (2016) and edited translations of three tracts on Assam tea plantations, *Passage to Bondage* (2016). *Love, Labour and Law: Early and Child Marriage in India*, co-edited with Anindita Ghosh, was published by Sage India (2021). She has been a member of Sachetana, an autonomous women's organization in Kolkata (India), since the early 1980s.

## Hannana Siddiqui



Dr Hannana Siddiqui is a multi-award winning activist, researcher and policy advocate working at Southall Black Sisters as Head of Policy, Campaigns and Research, and as a freelance consultant. She has worked on violence against black and minority ethnic (BME) women and girls in the UK for over 35 years. Her wide range of work has included undertaking casework, strategic litigation and expert reports as well as policy advocacy, campaigning, providing training to professionals and research on domestic abuse, forced marriage, domestic homicide and so called 'honour killings and 'honour' based abuse (HBA), suicide and self-harm, immigration and asylum law, no recourse to public funds (NRPF), racism and religious fundamentalism. Latest publication includes 'No Safe Place' (July 2022, Ad Lib Publishers) with Bekhal Mahmud about Bekhal's life of so called 'honour' based abuse and the tragic 'honour killing' of her sister, Banaz Mahmud.

## Leoni Thies



Leonie graduated from her Master's programme in Social Sciences at Humboldt University Berlin this January. She wrote her final thesis on the (de-) construction of credibility in sexualized violence cases based on an ethnographic study in the Berlin Criminal Justice System. Since April, she has been a research fellow at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research (HIS) in the research group on 'Sociology of Law'. She has previously worked in a research project on 'Access to Justice' at the Berlin Social Science Centre (WZB). Leonie's research focuses on sociological investigations of daily practices in the (criminal) justice system and the lived experiences of its subjects from a critical feminist perspective.

## Yasmeen Zafar



Yasmeen Zafar is an Assistant Legal Advisor in the Legal Directorate at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

FCDO is the UK government department responsible for protecting and promoting British interests around the world and works in the UK and in 178 countries and territories. The Legal Directorate supports FCDO's strategic priorities and advises on all legal matters affecting its work including questions of public international law, public law, commercial law, EU law and human rights.

Prior to joining FCDO, she was a lawyer in Cabinet Office Legal Advisors and handled prison litigation and inquests for the Ministry of Justice. She has also worked extensively in private practice.



# Abstracts

## DAY ONE

### Panel One: Institutions, infrastructures, (in)justice Chair Samita Sen

**Cathy McIlwaine**

*Title: Navigating gendered infrastructural violence and resistance among Brazilian migrants in London*

**Abstract**

Drawing on recent feminist thinking on slow and infrastructural violence, this paper examines the experiences of migrant women survivors of gender-based violence in London. It develops the notion of gendered infrastructural violence to help understand how migrant women survivors navigate statutory and non-statutory institutions when seeking support. Focusing on Brazilian women's experiences in London, the paper shows how they navigate multiple forms of passive and active infrastructural violence played out in terms of xenophobia, discrimination and a hostile immigration environment. Such experiences can dissuade them from reporting due to actual and perceived fear of further violence being perpetrated against them. While infrastructural violence perpetrated by an oppressive racial state can exacerbate migrant women's suffering of direct gendered abuse, migrant and/or feminist organisations, referred to as migrant infrastructure, provide invaluable support and an essential protective bulwark. Yet these experiences are mediated differently depending on women's social locations in terms of intersecting race, class, occupational and immigration status and language competencies. In turn, migrant women do not accept gendered infrastructural violence in a passive manner; they develop coping mechanisms and resistance practices, individually and collectively to address this and other forms of gendered violence that they experience.

**Christine Schenk**

*Title: War and the fragmentation of Muslim Personal Law in Sri Lanka*

**Abstract:**

In this paper, I show how in Sri Lanka the legacies of decades of war have resulted in a constant struggle between Muslim organizations, women's rights activists, and Muslim judges on how to read and implement Muslim Personal Law. The political struggle has fragmented the practice of Muslim Personal Law and obfuscated the legal traditions. In Sri Lanka, where Muslims are a minority, violence against Muslim women is often not legally pursued due to the internal injustices of Muslim courts, called Quazi court system. The Quazi court system is ruling under Muslim personal law as part of the Sri Lankan justice system. Since the 1920s, activists have widely addressed these injustices, such as the appointment of male judges only, the possibility of child marriage and polygamy as well as the missing consent by the wife during the ceremony of the marriage. Despite the claim of the Muslim umbrella organization All Ceylon Jayamathul Ulama (ACJU) and their influence on determining the court setups and its practices, the practice of jurisdictions diverge. Comparing cases from eastern and western Sri Lanka based on fieldwork between 2017 - 2023, I highlight the distinct influence of Muslim organizations in relation to the civil war and the consequences not only for Muslim courts, but also for lawyers and Muslim women's rights activists.

## **Philippa Williams & Shazia Choudhry**

*Title: Domestic violence, survival politics and feminist geolegalities of complaint*

### **Abstract:**

This paper reimagines the language and practices of 'help seeking' in contexts of domestic violence as 'feminist complaint' and examines the relationships between the feminist geolegalities of complaint and 'survival work' (Brickell 2020). We draw on Laurent Berlant and Sara Ahmed's grammars of 'complaint' to reframe how we conceptualise normative understandings of 'help seeking' which, we argue, depoliticise not only survivors' violent contexts but also the unjust and violent nature of social, state and legal institutions within which survivors 'seek help' or 'complain'. We examine how utterances and acts of 'complaint' as vernacular and formal legal grammars/practices reveal much about (social) institutions and power. Whilst complaints are not always made in formal-legal contexts, we argue that complaints are motivated by asking questions about injustice and violence, which speak to wider frameworks of legality (and ethics) even whilst not always directly engaging and registering 'the law' or occupying legal spaces. Drawing on survivors' testimonies of their complaint work and experiences - collected by teams in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal for the 'Surviving Violence' project - the paper examines feminist complaint along 3 axes: i) the (im)possibility of gendered complaint, ii) the spatial and embodied politics of complaint and iii) the temporality of complaint

## **Panel Three: Visualising violence and survival**

### **Chair Linda Mulcahy**

#### **Charlotta Salmi QMUL**

*Title: Visualizing Gender-based Violence in Kathmandu's Street Art Campaigns*

### **Abstract**

This paper considers how street art is being used by NGOs, advocacy groups and activists in Nepal, to tackle gender-based violence (GBV). Nepal has a high incidence of violence against women and girls, of which domestic violence is the most common. The eradication of GBV has therefore become a key sustainable development goal and campaigns have tried different strategies for empowering women and girls, including the use of street art as an awareness raising tool. As the PI of a British Academy GCRF project in Nepal (2018-2023), I have worked with Dr Barbara Grossman-Thompson (International Studies, CSULB), local artists and NGOs to assess the production and reception of this kind of awareness-raising street art in Nepal. Together with Sattya Media Arts Collective and Social Science Baha, we ran a series of workshops in government schools to engage girls (aged 13-17) in the co-creation of the kind of visual messaging they would like to see on their neighborhood walls. The work has raised a number of questions around the value of visibility - as an empowering form of representation in popular feminism and development discourse - and what the potential of the art form might be - not only for awareness raising to mobilize change, but as a form of expression for women and girls to represent their experiences.

## **Surviving violence collective represented by Philippa Williams and Supurna Banerjee**

*Title: (Re)framing domestic violence and survival work*

### **Abstract**

In this presentation we introduce and discuss the work of 3 documentary photographers, commissioned by the 'Surviving Violence' project to carefully and consciously shift ontologies of domestic violence away from violent events and victims, to reframe domestic violence and survival work. The photography presented is the outcome of listening, interpreting, translating and thinking with the testimonies of domestic violence survivors in rural and urban Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Collectively the images represent a series of striking and contrasting works that closely dialogue with overlapping and sometimes contradictory and indeterminate narratives of fear, blame, silence, support, resilience, hope, desire and acceptance, avoidance, anticipation, friendship, family, anger, frustration, confusion, isolation, containment, surveillance and survival. And, we explore what happens when these images travel and are recontextualised.

## **DAY TWO**

### **Panel One – Violence, resilience and recovery**

#### **Chair Philippa Williams**

#### **Nandini Goptu**

*Title: Negotiating everyday forms of private violence in urban India*

#### **Abstract:**

India's National Family Health Survey-5, 2019-21, reported that of all surveyed women who experienced violence, only 14% sought help; 77% never did so or even told anyone. This is especially true of everyday, normalised, subtle and banal forms of violence in private that seldom gain public attention, including disciplining of women's conduct and behaviour, coercive control, emotional intimidation and manipulation, mental abuse and economic restrictions (all identified as forms of domestic violence by the UN). Control over women's lives, activities and mobility have escalated in recent years, in the wider context of the Indian state resolutely positioning itself as the protector of vulnerable women and valorising women's role within the family, on the one hand, and, on the other, media and right-wing political demonisation of independent and autonomous women who make their own choices, defying the family. These trends have been further boosted by egregious cases of urban rape and murder that have led to the cultural construction of cities as spaces of aggressive masculinity and endemic threat of violence towards women. This perceived fear of women's safety and public violence in cities shapes their experience of everyday violence in private, as women are subjected to increasing surveillance and patriarchal control within families and households. While a pervasive silence surrounds these issues, particularly among the upper and middle classes, women seek to survive and negotiate such everyday forms of violence, humiliation and subordination by forging new gendered identities, solidarities, kin and friendship networks, enterprises and citizenship practices.



**Nandini Ghosh & Supurna Banerjee**

*Title: Towards Resilience: Domestic Violence and Survival Work in West Bengal*

**Abstract:**

Almost 30% of women across the world face domestic violence in different forms, whether it is intimate partner violence, violence in marital spaces or natal family violence (World Health Organisation, 2021). The women suffer several consequences when the perpetrator, usually men, use the advantage of power and authority to control the women and/or cause harm to them. But women living in such violent spaces demonstrate considerable resilience in dealing with the violence, managing the different levels of violence and sometimes, exiting from such spaces and relationships. Research on resilience recognizes a complex interaction among individual attributes (e.g., intelligence, insight), family milieu (e.g., safe and secure connections), and social interactions (e.g., positive peer relations) in promoting well-being (Fraser, 1997; Masten, 2001). Our research on domestic violence in West Bengal from 2016 to present, suggests that surviving violence places a whole lot of the onus and labour on the survivors themselves making surviving a work something which we term 'survival work' (Surviving Violence: Everyday Resilience and Gender Justice in rural-urban India). Through in-depth narratives of six survivors of violence in the state of West Bengal (between 2016-2021) spread across caste, class and religion, we map the universe of survival work i.e. the different struggles that women in different situations of domestic violence undertake, in order to survive, to carve out a meaningful existence and to make sense of their everyday lives. We examine the coping strategies employed by women that build resilience and lead to rebuilding of lives at various planes. The women's experiences show how different networks and/or technologies enable survival work and/or reproduce violence in their everyday lives. Access to justice systems and social networks often influences the survival work women engage in to cope with violence. The path to survival involves not just exit, but also rebuilding their lives, forging interpersonal relationships and formal and informal support systems that encourage and affirm their independent existence. Through a detailed study of these life narratives the paper thus challenges the narrow conceptions of resilience and tries to illustrate how the journey from a victim to a survivor, in itself is survival. It also seeks to highlight the labour involved and onus placed on the survivor to initiate and sustain such work.

**Nahid Rezwana & Rachel Pain**

*Title: Gender-based violence and layered disasters*

**Abstract:**

The evidence is now overwhelming that disasters and gender-based violence are closely connected, not just in moments of crisis but in the years that follow as the social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters play out.

We draw on our recently published book *Gender-Based Violence and Layered Disasters* (Routledge, 2023) which addresses two key gaps in research. First, it examines what causes the relationship between disasters and gender-based violence to be so widespread and so enduring. Second, it highlights victim-survivors' own accounts of gender-based violence and disasters. It is based on findings from original research on cyclones and flooding in Bangladesh and the UK and a review of global evidence on the Covid-19 pandemic. We conceptualise the coincidence of gender-based violence, disasters and other aggravating factors in particular places as 'layered disasters.' Taking an intersectional approach that emphasises the connections between culture, place, patriarchy, racism, poverty, settler-colonialism, environmental degradation and climate change, we show the significance of gender-based violence in creating vulnerability to future disasters. Forefronting victim-survivors' experiences and understandings, we point to the important role of trauma, and how those affected go about the process of survival and recovery. Understanding disasters as layered casts light on why tackling gender-based violence must be a key priority in disaster planning, management and recovery.

**Fiona Morrison**

*Title: Exploring children and mothers' recovery journeys in the context of domestic abuse*

**Abstract:**

Drawing on qualitative research with children and mothers, this paper explores experiences of therapeutic group work that aims to support recovery from domestic abuse. The paper sets out how a co-produced approach to data analysis with children and mothers brought rigour and ensured children and women's priorities were foregrounded in analysis. Findings explore children's and women's 'recovery journeys'. They highlight the importance of trust, confidentiality, and safety; creating nurturing spaces for therapeutic support; finding a language for domestic abuse; peer support; as well as supporting the mother-child relationship. Findings also unsettle the idea of 'recovery' from domestic abuse. They underline the non-linear nature of recovery and the ways in which persistent concerns about safety and the relational consequences of domestic abuse, especially children's relationships with fathers, act to disrupt recovery and ultimately undermine children and mothers' wellbeing.

**Panel Two - Legal epistemologies and subjectivities**  
**Chair Sneha Krishnan****Leonie Thies**

*Title: THE (DE-) CONSTRUCTION OF CREDIBILITY IN INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE CASES AS A STATE PRACTICE*

**Abstract:**

"This may have been so from her point of view, but for an objective observer, it is not comprehensible." (Attrition Notification) Abstract Based on institutional ethnography in the Berlin Criminal Justice System (CJS), this study explores the question of how credibility is (de-) constructed in sexual violence cases, focusing particularly on the underlying constructed dichotomy between "stranger rape" cases and cases of intimate partner sexual violence in domestic spaces. This empirical question helps to understand how state practices as epistemological practices stand in relation to diverse epistemic positions and lived experiences. Drawing on court observations, qualitative interviews and case file material, the analysis reveals a profound tension between the epistemological court practices and the victim-survivors experiential knowledge, subjectivity and needs. Through textual inscriptions mobilizing the norm of certainty of the unusual but dominating logic of 'stranger rape', painful, messy and complex experiences of intimate partner sexual violence are marked as "difficult" and not comprehensible "for an objective observer". Lived realities come to be understood through questions that make them legible through and responsive to established frames that obscure the actualities of victim-survivors' lives. Furthermore, certain subjects who do not fulfil the image of a "rational" person are rendered as "difficult" from an institutional perspective, which is especially exclusive for persons with cognitive disabilities, persons with little formalized education and persons with a borderline diagnosis. I argue that the current institutional practices and underlying logic are at odds with the lived realities of victim-survivors of intimate partner violence and can be understood as a form of epistemic injustice. This empirical case opens up further questions on the importance and possibilities of epistemic justice both inside and outside the Criminal Justice System

**Kolika Mitra & Ruchira Goswami**

*Title: Mapping rights from the margins: Awareness and access to PWDVA among disabled women and queer persons assigned gender female at birth in West Bengal*

**Abstract:**

Rights claims and rights consciousness is a fragmented terrain for survivors of domestic violence in West Bengal. This paper maps how intersections of gender, disabilities and sexualities operate in the violent domestic. It elucidates the distinctiveness, continuities, contrasts and in some cases the absence of rights articulation by queer and disabled women survivors in the state. The paper argues that rights and justice claims made by the disability and queer rights movements find muted legal responses in form of statutory laws, amendments and judicial decisions.

The narratives of the women reveal then that the notion of rights and their access to it was not singular. While the women did not think of themselves as right bearing citizens automatically especially in relation to their families, they laid claim to spaces made by their labour by their affect and embedded into their identity. For the women we spoke to, the journey from these embedded claims to the notion of rights was one of rupture, when they were torn away from spaces claimed as their own, such as the marital household where they interrogated these issues and moved towards establishing themselves as individuals with rights- rights not built on relations but owned by them. This journey was often one of feminist consciousness.

**Ayesha Riaz**

*Title: Widening the Scope of 'Domestic Abuse' in UK Immigration Law*

**Abstract:**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 was hailed as being a 'landmark' cross party success. Survivors of domestic violence who successfully apply for settlement under the immigration rules are eligible for three months leave to remain outside the rules. Under this, survivors can access public funds to aid their escape from their perpetrator. This will be the first step before they make the full settlement application. But this concession has extremely limited reach as it merely applies to individuals who have been granted leave to enter/remain in the UK on a spouse visa, which means that many survivors of other visas remain reliant on their abuser. This is nothing new. Previous Acts/laws also restricted those that could rely on this concession. A few survivors challenged this policy (through their lawyers) by way of judicial review, which is an extremely onerous process. Thus, this paper will consider the historical limitation of those that can rely on this provision and call for its expansion to include those that are present in the UK on other visas also.



# Getting around Oxford

## Conference Address

**Lee Shau Kee Building, Wadham College**  
Parks Road,  
Oxford  
OX1 3PN

## General enquiries

T: +44 (0)1865 277900  
E: [lodge@wadham.ox.ac.uk](mailto:lodge@wadham.ox.ac.uk)

## By Bus

Wadham is a 10 minute walk from Gloucester Green Bus station which runs regular buses from London airports.

## By Train

Wadham is a 15 minute walk from Oxford Railway Station with regular trains to and from London Paddington Station.

## By Car

- A popular Park and Ride system operates from various locations on the Oxford ring road. Further details on how to get to Oxford University.
- Limited paid parking is available in Oxford City centre.



# Hotels

## **Directions to VOCO Spires**

*Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4PS*  
*Tel: +44-1865-324324*

Estimated distance to the hotel from train station: 0.93 MI/ 1.5 KM

### **Parking**

Onsite Parking available

- Car parking on site for 120 Cars.
- Parking charges applies to all vehicles including buses apart from Motor cycles.
- Residents Parking charge is £20.00 per car per night Parking Eye Manages our Car Park.
- No Electric Point or Bus Park Blue Badge Spaces

Off-site parking

- The parking surrounds the hotel building.

## **Directions to Travelodge, Oxford, Abingdon Road**

*Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XG*  
*Tel: 08715 591877*

### **Directions and parking**

From the A34, take the A423 Oxford Ring Road (signposted A4144 heading Northbound). On the A423, stay left for the A4144 Oxford/Park and Ride. Continue past the Park and Ride and turn left at traffic lights. Take the immediate left into the Travelodge car park.

**Buses to Town:** These Bus lines stop near Travelodge Oxford Abingdon Road: 11X, 300, ST1, X1, X2, X39

### **Parking**

- This car park is operated by Horizon Parking on behalf of Travelodge.
- Parking charges: £3 per 24 hours for guests.
- Pay for parking at the car park pay and display machine, via QR Code, phone, Horizon website or Horizon parking app.
- This car park is managed with Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras. Please provide your vehicle registration number when paying for your parking and register your vehicle at the tablet in reception to validate the resident parking fee.

## **Directions to The Buttery Hotel**

*Address: 11-12 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AP*  
*Tel: +44(0)1865 811950*

The Buttery is centrally-located with easy links to public transport. The train station is approximately a 15 minute walk or a short taxi ride, while the central bus station is only a five minute walk away.

Access is through the red door between Oxford Campus Stores and Oxford Campus Buttery. In the evening they operate an intercom system, the buzzer for which can be found on the left hand side of the front door. Our reception desk is located on the first floor and accessed up a flight of stairs.

# Transport

## **Bus**

The Oxford Bus Company operates a comprehensive network of services in the city, as well as express coach services to Heathrow and Gatwick airports. They also operate the BROOKESbus service in partnership with Oxford Brookes University, and the popular Park&Ride service, which connects four car parks to the Oxford city centre.

Its sister companies are Thames Travel, Carousel Buses and City Sightseeing Oxford.

Oxford Bus Company, Cowley House, Watlington Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX4 6GA  
01865 785400

## **Taxi**

001 Taxis: 01875777333  
Oxford-taxis: 018655238062



