

ESRC WRDTP Associated Studentship – Over-policing and vulnerability in minority communities

Please note that as part of a coordinated plan to increase diversity and inclusion among our postgraduate research community, this studentship award is limited to UK candidates who self-identify as being from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background. Please see the conditions outlined below.

University: University of York

Doctoral training pathway: White Rose Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (WRDTP).

Main interdisciplinary pathway: Security, Conflict, and Justice (SCJ)

Duration: 1+3 (Masters + PhD) or +3 (PhD) award. Commencing 1 October.

Project outline

The over-policing of minority communities has a long history in the UK, arguably affecting people of colour most negatively. From disproportionate stop and search figures, higher rates of deaths in police custody, targeted counter-terrorism surveillance, immigration enforcement and gangs databases, communities of colour continue to be on the receiving end of discriminatory and oppressive policing measures.

This project will focus on understanding the lived experiences of people of colour who have had contact with policing practices where over-policing, criminalisation and racism are a concern. Through the application of a Critical Race Theory framework, the focus will be upon an understanding of the stories of how policing interventions are received by marginalised communities. This will be achieved by in-depth, qualitative studies with a sample of 18–35-year-old women and men of colour in large Northern cities.

While minorities are sometimes conceptualised as ‘vulnerable groups’, questions remain about how well people of colour are served through an increased focus on policing vulnerability. This study will seek to understand better the complexities of over-policing, criminalisation, and the consequences for marginalised communities, as well as contribute to making sense of how vulnerability can be understood in relation to over-policed communities.

It will also focus on the opportunities for exploring alternatives to policing that focus instead on access to welfare, healthcare and community-based systems of support. Urban populations within the age group 18–35 are the focus of the research as they are more likely to experience significant police contact. The following topics would receive particular attention, with the specific research design then agreed in consultation with the doctoral researcher:

- The impact of stop and search on people of colour (including new covid-19 emergency police powers)
- The impact of anti-trafficking policing on migrant sex workers
- The impact of immigration enforcement on migrant communities

- The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities
- The impact of gangs matrix databases and the 'war on gangs' on Black communities
- The impact of deaths following police contact on people of colour

Areas of focus will include:

- Experiences of contact with the police and policing partners as lived and interpreted by marginalised communities
- The long-term mental, physical and social effects of over-policing and encounters with the police/criminal justice system
- The role of fear and police distrust in further exemplifying vulnerabilities (i.e. not wanting to access essential services such as victim support)
- Resistance and alternatives to policing (i.e. the call to defund the police)

Conditions

Conditions relating to PhDs undertaken within the Department will [apply as described](#).

In addition, as part of a coordinated plan to increase diversity and inclusion among our PGR community, **this studentship is limited to candidates who self-identify as being from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) background and who are [eligible for Home Fee Status](#)**.

Under sections 158-159 of the Equality Act 2010, positive action is allowed where members of protected groups have been underrepresented within the workforce, or in a particular work group, in the preceding 12 months.

At York, our data show that British people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are underrepresented at postgraduate researcher level, so this scheme looks to offer them targeted support to address this. These are lawful measures designed to redress imbalances and counteract the effects of past discrimination. They ensure that people from previously excluded groups can compete on equal terms with other applicants.

[More information about what the University of York means by the term BAME can be found here](#).

For further information or an informal discussion:

If you have any questions about the application process or would like an informal discussion about the studentship please contact:

- Dr Kate Brown kate.brown@york.ac.uk

Please note Dr Sian is currently on maternity leave and therefore won't be able to respond to informal enquiries via email.