

Normality in an uncertain world



6th ENQUIRE Postgraduate Conference, 10th and 11th September 2013

We are pleased to confirm our keynote speakers:

Derek McGhee, Professor of Sociology
University of Southampton

Angharad Becket, Associate Professor of
Political Sociology, University of Leeds

Julia O'Connell Davidson, Professor of
Sociology, University of Nottingham

Call for Abstracts

This conference aims to bring together post-graduates and researchers, with an interest in normality, to explore the development, current application and possible future of such research.

Example themes for papers include but are not limited to:

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| Gender and sexuality | Families |
| Migration and Citizenship | Globalisation |
| Health, illness and disability | The body |
| Statistics | Methodology |
| Culture | Technology |
| Social policy | Political action |

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words by Friday 3rd May 2013 to

enquire@nottingham.ac.uk

In a world of uncertainty, never has 'the normal' been so important. All societies operate normative patterns of behaviour that are enforced by sanctions. Such patterns are now interwoven and valorised at global, national, communal and personal levels so that 'the normal' has become a powerful entity. Ideas of biopower and self-governance are structured around the control of bodies and the creation of 'normal' ways of being. It can now be argued that tyrannies of perfection structure contemporary social life.

While social research has often focused on explaining deviance and the abnormal, such explanations are dependent upon a perception of 'the normal' for their existence. 'The normal', therefore, becomes important across disciplines, resonating with researchers as a central concept in addressing the pressing sociological issues of our time.

The idea of a 'normal' raises pertinent questions for future research. Who defines normality? What are the implications for deviance? Why do researchers construct and deconstruct the abnormal? Does normality serve as a mechanism of control? What function does normality play in different cultures/societies? Is normality inevitable?

Such questions apply across the discipline and call into question the normality of research itself. Indeed, are there such things as normal and abnormal methodologies? How important is the statistical norm? What structures the conception of 'valid' or 'useful' research?

In order to create a conference that pushes the boundaries and stimulates further and continued debate, we welcome broad interpretations of the conference title.