UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
GRADUATE SCHOOL

ANNUAL RECEPTION 2019

CONTENTS

FOREWORD 3

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL 4

DOCTORAL RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (DRDP) 5

RESEARCHERS

1. MARIA BASTOS 6
2. INDRANIL BHATTACHARYA 8
3. CHARUSMITA 10
4. EMMELINE COOPER 12
5. NATHASHA S EDIRIPPULIGE FERNADO . . .14
6. AMY MACLATCHY 16
7. PABLO MORALES. 18
8. BENEDETTA MORSIANI 20
9. GIULIA PEPE 22
10. DENIZ SÖZEN 24
11. EKEREUKE UDOH 26
12. MOONISAH USMAN 28
13. CECILIA ZOPPELLETTO 30

FOREWORD

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER, WE ARE PROUD TO HOST A THRIVING COMMUNITY OF TALENTED AND AMBITIOUS DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS.

From the arts to the sciences, from business studies to the humanities, and from architecture to the social sciences, our doctoral researchers are engaged in a rich variety of original, high-quality research.

Our doctoral researchers make an all-important contribution to our vibrant research culture here at Westminster; but, beyond the University too, many can be seen informing and influencing the world of academia, business and public life.

This booklet gives a flavour of the kinds of innovative doctoral research projects recently undertaken across our three academic Colleges. It features 13 projects from final-year students, which were presented at a public event in March 2019.

In recognition that public engagement is an important element of all research, this event provided an opportunity to present research to a wider, non-specialist audience, requiring the 'translation' of what is inherently complex knowledge into accessible language. The doctoral researchers worked closely with a professional team of editors and designers. Their combined effort has resulted in an impressive collection of research profiles; and we invite the reader to join us in celebrating the achievements of our next generation of researchers.

Professor Leigh Wilson
Graduate School Director

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Graduate School was established in 2012 to provide institution-wide support for doctoral and postdoctoral research.

One aim of our activities is to enhance the University's research environment and culture.

Each year we offer a varied calendar of events catering for doctoral researchers, supervisors and academic staff. Workshop topics are wide-ranging, often reflecting current issues or developments in higher education and research.

Our Annual Lecture 2019 was by Professor Peter Patrick, who talked about the role of linguists in the current system of assessing the claims of asylum seekers in the UK.

Our events facilitate cross-school and inter-disciplinary collaboration and seek to support the professional development of our early career researchers.

In addition, we host regular supervisory briefing sessions; these offer a space for academic colleagues to discuss good supervisory practice, and explore current topics and ideas for research programme innovations and developments.

The Graduate School Board also oversees the strategic direction and day-to-day business of our doctoral and postdoctoral programmes, and regularly engages in external collaborations with both university and non-academic partners, locally and internationally.

The Board benefits from the support and expertise of an External Advisory Group representing a variety of disciplinary and professional interests.

DOCTORAL RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (DRDP)

Our tailor-made doctoral researcher development programme is student-centred, inclusive and flexible, providing opportunities for engagement at all levels and across disciplines, working with the individual's supervision process and through specialist skills sessions and workshops.

We offer a range of developmental activities designed to support a doctoral researcher throughout their study with us, from initial enrolment, considering the groundwork and tools required to make a confident start, right through to preparation for the viva voce examination, and to career planning beyond the doctorate. In 2018/19 these activities have been augmented by the Wellbeing When Writing project. This has been funded by HEFCE and the university, and is designed to support all our doctoral researchers in the process of writing.

Using the national Researcher Development Framework (RDF) as a foundation for our programme ensures that participants have the opportunity to explore topics and issues identified nationally by practising researchers, approaching them from a discipline-specific perspective and also considering research activity in a wider context.

University and School workshops bring together cohorts from each academic year to encourage peer support and facilitate interdisciplinary discussion and activity.

These workshops and specialist skills sessions are delivered by an inspiring mix of academic staff, university specialists and external facilitators, and explore a diverse range of topics including project management, research ethics and integrity, public engagement and personal resilience.

The programme complements the contribution to knowledge made by each individual's project by equipping our doctoral researchers with the skills and expertise necessary for them to succeed in their chosen career and with the wider dissemination of their research.

THE ROLE OF FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PAKISTAN

MARIA BASTOS
School of Social Sciences

My first visit to Pakistan in 2001 determined why and how I developed a scholarly interest in the country's foreign and domestic affairs. As I have continued to visit the country, and to read about its history and politics, I have become aware of the importance of foreign policy and national identity issues in Pakistan. Despite a vast scholarship, these appeared to have always been treated as disconnected. In the case of the former, parochial approaches to international politics have dominated the literature, and in the latter, it is an unwavering ideological lens that has dominated the discourse. A relational, processual-driven approach appeared inexistent.

After completing an MA in International Relations and Contemporary Political Theory at the University of Westminster, I was convinced that the nexus between national identity and foreign policy in the case of Pakistan had to be fully researched. This PhD journey ultimately resulted in an enriched, yet challenging experience. As I combined research with working and living in Lahore, Pakistan, I have learned how to live as an 'in-betweener'. While focusing on the hypothesis-probing task, I have developed other research interests: China's foreign policy towards Asia, feminist approaches to foreign policy studies, and issues of gender, identity, and militarisation primarily focused on the context of Pakistan.

Pakistan's foreign policy involves a complex set of drivers, actors, interests and identities subsumed under the umbrella category of 'national identity'. My research discusses how in Pakistan different foreign policy components are related; it focuses primarily on explaining how foreign policy and national identity co-constitute each other.

Adopting dialogism and performativity as methodological tools and heuristic devices, my study examines the existent relational and processual aspects that mediate foreign policy drivers and interests (security, economic development, Islam) and actors (the civil bureaucracy, military, political class, think tanks). I have extended the analysis to Pakistan's three key foreign relationships: China, the United States, and India. This choice is prompted by Pakistan's unique historical genesis. The work argues that all these drivers, actors and interests negotiate over, and form, what is seen as 'national identity'.

Using semi-structured interviews and official foreign policy and national identity sources, I have gathered data that permits us to explain how Pakistan's relations with these three countries have shaped the nexus of foreign policy-national identity.

My research makes an original and innovative contribution to knowledge in three ways:

1. It applies a dialogical and poststructuralist approach to the study of Pakistan foreign policy, hitherto dominated by mainstream International Relations realist/neorealist approaches;
2. It offers an innovative approach to the study of identity and foreign policy;
3. It encourages and contributes to new possibilities of study and analysis in the context of South Asian foreign politics and beyond.

FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL FILM SOUND IN INDIA: CONTINUITIES AND RUPTURES

INDRANIL BHATTACHARYA
Westminster School of Arts

I was trained as a filmmaker in the 1990s and have practised as a director and an editor in the fields of film and broadcast television in India for 15 years. During my professional stint in the industry I produced documentaries and TV shows and worked as a directorial associate in feature films. I moved to full-time teaching in 2009, joining the Film and Television Institute of India as a Professor of Cinema Studies. Since then I have taught students about the art of films, published a journal on moving images, curated film festivals and run a small film archive.

As a filmmaker and teacher, I have always been fascinated by the complex relationship between image and sound in cinema. In 2015 I received a studentship from the University of Westminster, enabling me to pursue the long-cherished project on film sound in India. Apart from being a cinephile, I am also an amateur art historian. I love travelling and exploring new cities and urban cultures across the world.

The Indian film industry, producing an average of 1200 feature films a year, constitutes the largest film production network in the world. From Hollywood to Bollywood cinema, the end of the celluloid era and the beginning of the digital era has transformed the ways in which films are produced, watched and even studied. The advent of the digital age has led to an all-pervasive change. My research explores the impact of this change on the practice and aesthetic conventions of film sound in India, particularly on sound recording, editing and mixing. It is a critical oral historical account of film practice as a form of alternative or living history, drawn from unknown or neglected oral narratives, rather than a formal history constructed from archival sources. While exploring the post-celluloid moment, it was also necessary to connect it to the dominant analogue practices of the past. Thus, in order to connect the past and the present, I have also completed a pioneering survey of 20th century analogue sound practices in India.

My research has brought into sharp focus the paradigmatic shift in areas like field recording and sound design brought about by digitalisation, especially shifts in the relationship between location and sound. Interestingly, apart from significant ruptures in practice conventions from analogue to digital eras, my research also shows how the analogue conventions of thinking and doing things are not extinct, but are deeply embedded within the digital aesthetic culture in India.

Image credit: Dara Singh

FILMI VS EVERYDAY: HINDI FILMS IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE

CHARUSMITA
Westminster School of Media and Communication

After completing my BA in Economics from the University of Delhi, a research visit for my Masters in Media and Development at the University of Westminster took me to my ancestral village in North India. All my research participants at that time turned out to be men, despite an open invitation to all. Subsequent informal conversations with women there provided a glimpse of how impactful the world of Hindi cinema was on their everyday life, but they did not choose to openly discuss it in the presence of men. I decided, at that moment, to pursue further research and examine the significance of Hindi films for women living in Narwal village near the famous city of Kanpur. Essentially, my work tells the story of a film audience group (women aged 18–80) in a rural set-up who never go to the cinema and often do not even watch full movies. As part of public engagement, I was invited twice onto *Doordarshan*, the autonomous public service broadcaster founded by the Government of India, to discuss the change that film-engagement is bringing to the lives of young women in villages of India.

This project is an ethnographic study of the lives of women in an Indian village and their engagement with Hindi films. Observations, conversations and interviews were carried out in a variety of locations in Narwal village, in residents' homes, local beauty parlours, schools and workplaces. Women face economic, social, communal and moral constraints in everyday village life, and my research shows that their desires to go beyond these find expression through their engagement with films. They access Hindi film in the form of music, videos, feature films, film-based mobile apps, tabloids, and images in everyday objects and beauty parlours. This use of film is complicated by social forces such as family organisation, influence of the community, and caste.

In a space where the pleasure of engaging with films can itself be a transgressive activity, I found that *filmi* connotes anything that is 'other' to village life in these women's imaginations. *Filmi* is an informal term that is often bandied about, but strictly means film-related, different from 'filmic' in its usage. I analysed all the things they meant when they used this word and found that 'being *filmi*' connotes various attributes such as being an avid film consumer, stylish, romantic, a slacker or jobless, unrealistic, rebellious or an outcast, or devoid of moral values.

My research argues that the role of Hindi films is transformative in the everyday lives of my participants. I show how they are moving away from rigid everyday structures of power to fulfil their desires in real and/or imaginative spaces by indulging in creative cultural production, using various modes of film-engagement, and negotiating within households. For example, Rehana, a 19-year-old resident, along with three friends, secretly bought a low-cost smartphone in 2015. The phone remains in rotational custody without their families' knowledge. They enjoy watching videos of Hindi film songs on YouTube to "learn new dance steps". She shared, "Everyone in the village asks us to perform at weddings and events. Where do they think we are learning the dance steps from?".

Image credit: ©Charusmita, 2016

THE CHOICE OF VOICE: MAKING PENSION SCHEME GOVERNANCE FIT FOR THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE INVESTING

EMMELINE COOPER
School of Social Sciences

I am interested in organisations and their governance and I enjoy researching issues where knowledge is created across disciplines, across industries, and from cross-national analysis.

I have researched the ways in which citizens can be involved in government policy-making (London School of Economics), the culture and working practices in a factory (Landis & Gyr, London), and corporate social responsibility in a bank (University of Basel, Switzerland).

My academic background is in Social Policy and Research Methods (MSc, London School of Economics and Political Science) and Social Anthropology (BA, University of Sussex). I have experience of working on applied organisational research and communications in the Social Research Institute, IpsosMORI, in the UK Audit Commission and in the London Borough of Lewisham.

This research is inspired by my belief that the theories and methods of the social sciences can help define, discuss, address and shape the challenges created in complex social and economic systems.

Sustainable investing considers the environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in an investment, such as the impact of an investment on climate change. By considering these issues, investors may change where or how they invest.

Pension schemes invest to provide their beneficiaries with their pensions. They have legally defined duties, under trust law, to meet their best interests. Sustainable investing can present challenges to meeting beneficiaries' best interests. First, for performance-driven investment, the evidence of how emerging ESG issues impact upon performance may be unclear. And second, for value-driven investment, beneficiaries' opinions may be unknown and may balance priorities in different ways.

In such circumstances, how can sustainable investing meet beneficiaries' best interests?

One answer to this problem is to open-up channels of participation, communication and deliberation with beneficiaries. Voice is an option to enhance influence when members have no opportunity to leave an organisation. It is difficult, if not impossible, for beneficiaries to move to another occupational pension scheme. Through voice, beneficiaries can become more integrated into the management of a pension fund. Examples of the use of voice range from very simple consultative mechanisms to committees which have more substantial influence.

This approach would not replace existing forms of governance such as the trustee board, but would complement it.

My research uses three 'theories of voice' – stakeholder theory, participatory democracy and deliberative democracy – to identify the benefits of participation, communication and deliberation for pension schemes and individual beneficiaries.

By exploring the design of innovative examples of voice in pension scheme decision-making, the research examines if, and how, voice can improve sustainable investing.

CHAINS OF DISCRIMINATION: A CASE STUDY OF MIGRANTS PERCEIVING THE 'MIGRATION CRISIS' IN MILAN

NATHASHA S EDIRIPPULIGE FERNANDO
Westminster School of Media and Communication

I was born and raised in Milan, Italy, but my parents are Sri Lankan. Over the years, this dual cultural heritage has constantly encouraged me to question the concepts of identity and belonging, the awareness of being 'the Other', and above all the media's power in defining the 'Other'.

After completing my BA in Media and Modern Literature at Goldsmiths College, I interned at a number of NGOs working on alleviating homelessness or fostering social cohesion. Having learnt a great deal through this experience, I studied and completed the MA on Diversity and the Media at the University of Westminster, which gave me the opportunity to study the issues and academic concepts around migration and apply them to my own life.

Inspired by this I applied to do a doctoral degree at the Communication and Media Research Institute at the University of Westminster. My intention was to hear from those whose actual voice seemed to be completely absent from the Italian media. My objective was to take a snapshot of their/our everyday lives. In fact, this made me question not only my positionality between 'second generation migrant' and 'Italian' but also between 'researcher' and 'participant'.

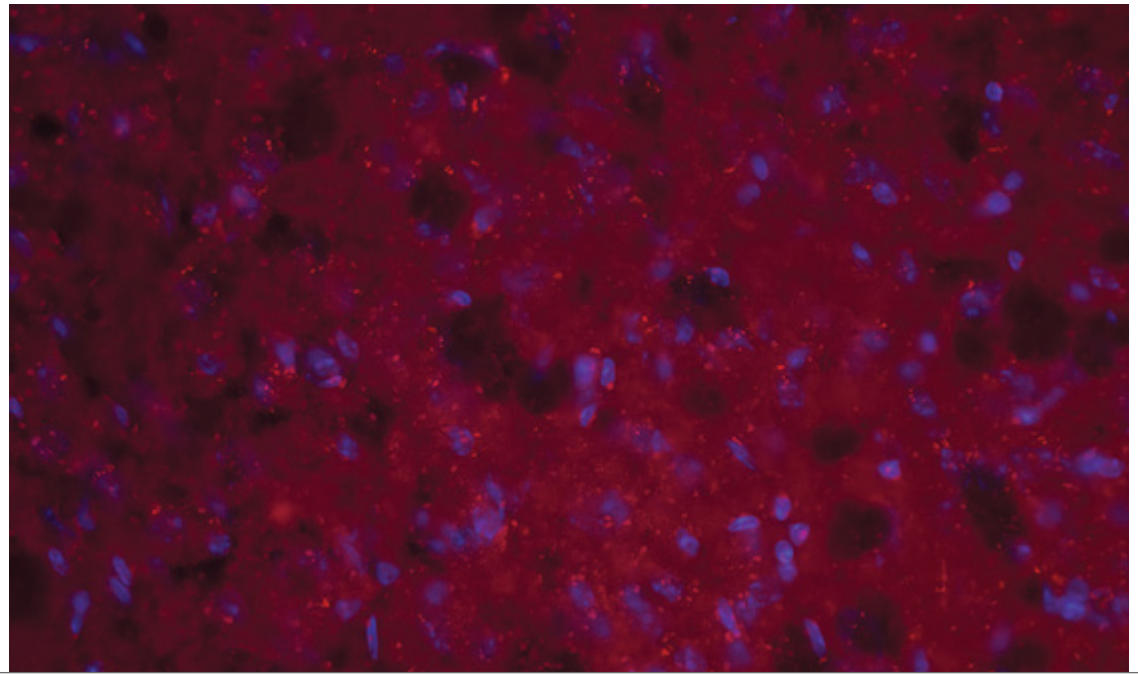
Immigrati, migrants, struggle to find a position in Italian society. They represent 8% of the population in Italy and they are usually employed in low-paid and low-skilled services. They are perceived as 'wanted but not welcome'.

When I started my PhD in 2015, the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of *immigrati* in the Italian media was already evident, but it worsened with the rise in news reporting of the Mediterranean 'migration crisis'. It was then that I became interested in understanding how such media practices might affect the already-established *immigrati*'s perceptions of the newcomers. In particular, the focus of my research is an exploration of whether *immigrati*, already residing in Italy, show empathy for the new migrants or whether they discriminate against them, using the same rhetoric to which they themselves had possibly once been subjected and probably still are.

To study whether this 'chain of prejudice' was being constructed in the Milanese context, I embarked on 6 months of ethnography in Milan's diverse areas of 'Zona 2' and 'Zona 9', (in)famous for the high demographic presence of *immigrati*, studying the everyday life and media habits of well-established migrant communities.

My findings show that despite there being some empathy towards newly-arrived migrants, this seems to disappear in the case of Muslim migrants: the stigmatization of the 'Muslim-Other' is increasing even in these Milanese communities and is in line with more widespread European anti-Muslim sentiment.

Overall, my study tries to uncover the way *immigrati* make sense of their own transnational narrativity through other people's determination of who they are and through the portrayal of the 'migration crisis' in various news outlets. My research examines how the identity of the *immigrati* is formed and enacted within these different areas and communities of Milan, where new relations and networks are created that nonetheless lead to new forms of exclusion and 'othering'.



A NOVEL APPROACH TO TREATING DISEASES OF THE BRAIN

AMY MACLATCHY
School of Life Sciences

My interest in science was spurred by my experiences during my foundation year here at the University of Westminster. I arrived at science as a mature student through a circuitous and serendipitous route. I had originally enrolled in a Herbal Medicine degree. However, during my foundation year I changed direction to complete my studies with a degree in Biochemistry. I had little exposure to science prior to this experience and found a thirst which has led to embarking upon work in a most challenging but fascinating field of science – a novel brain drug delivery system.

My BSc final year dissertation focused on analytical work, rather than lab-based experimental work, as I explored the endocrine disrupting effects of flame retardants and the increased incidence of male infertility. However, during this time I met Dr Mark Odell who introduced me to the field of drug delivery. This encouraged me to venture further academically, finally enabling me to study this field, whilst broadening my experience and expertise in the lab environment.

Diseases of the brain are intrinsically difficult to treat. This is due to a physical and functional barrier referred to as the blood brain barrier (BBB), separating the circulating blood from the central nervous system. It selectively restricts entry of foreign and potentially toxic substances to protect the brain. Unfortunately, many drugs capable of treating brain disease, such as tumours, are also excluded by it. Only a small minority of drugs treating conditions such as insomnia, schizophrenia and depression can cross the BBB. My research explores how we can overcome this protective barrier to treat disease whilst retaining its restrictive and protective properties.

A delivery system that encapsulates a therapeutic agent could limit unwanted side effects elsewhere in the body by reducing non-specific interactions. There are key features required for a successful drug delivery system. These include the ability to cross biological barriers, specifically target the right area, and perform its function at the target site. However, this has proven challenging, with many potential systems explored in the past having been shown to be too invasive, non-target specific or efficiently removed from the body before triggering an effect.

My research is investigating a delivery system based on small compartments called vesicles, derived from oil of the African sunflower, *Vernonia galamensis*. My research has demonstrated that the vesicles are stable, they are non-toxic, they encapsulate their cargo and release the cargo in the presence of a specific enzyme upregulated in the brain, particularly in diseased brains. They cross the BBB intact and we believe they will be able to carry treatments for diseases of the brain such as glioblastomas and Alzheimer's disease. Current work is investigating the mechanisms whereby these vesicles enter the brain and what cargoes they can carry.

Image credit: @Amy MacLatchy, 2017

SOFT POWER AMBITIONS AND GLOBAL MEDIA WARS: THE BATTLE OF ATTRACTING LATIN AMERICAN VIEWERS

PABLO MORALES
Westminster School of Media and Communication

Born in Argentina to a family with Hispanic, Italian and Native American heritage, from early on I had my mind set on exploring the bigger world out there. Despite my Eurocentric upbringing, after graduating from university I found myself going to China to study the language and pursue a Masters degree. After completion, I moved to Beijing in 2010 and started working as a journalist for the Spanish-language services at China Radio International and People's Daily Online. That is where the idea for my doctoral project first originated.

Working for some of the media outlets that are actively engaged in advancing Beijing's public-diplomacy agenda of promoting its world view to foreign audiences, I was a witness to China's international communication strategy. I became curious to understand the profile of our audiences and to what extent my work was reaching listeners and readers in the Spanish-speaking world. I suspected that the impact was not so great, particularly because most of the feedback we received were emails written by people seemingly already interested in China (some of them even *sinophiles*). So I started to wonder about the real influence of such media outlets, especially in relation to their continuity and sustainability in the long term, given the fierce competition they face from other international networks and also from the domestic media in the targeted countries.

After relocating to the UK in 2015 I was awarded a studentship by the Communication and Media Research Institute at the University of Westminster to conduct my PhD project. I started this journey focusing on China and how it uses international broadcasting as a tool to create soft power. Soon the study expanded to include Russia and Iran. Like China, they also claim that their reputation has been – and continues to be – damaged due to a biased narrative spread worldwide by the mainstream media of Western countries.

To counter this narrative, these countries have set up international news networks that broadcast in a series of foreign languages. Besides English and Arabic, the third most popular language has been Spanish. Coming from Latin America, I was automatically drawn to compare how Spanish-speaking audiences were receiving the messages broadcast by China's CCTV-E (now CGTN), Russia's RT and Iran's HispanTV. Furthermore, I wanted to identify what factors may be undermining the effectiveness of their approach, particularly with regards to soft power ambitions.

After conducting a series of focus groups in Mexico and Argentina in 2016, I found that changes in news consumption patterns, scarce availability and accessibility across the region, together with issues of credibility and trust in the media, are some of the main challenges for these broadcasters. Besides these, cultural proximity also needs to be factored in so that the cultural gap between the broadcasters' style and content and the viewers' expectations can be bridged. In conclusion, this study helps broadcasters identify key aspects that need urgent improvement in order ultimately to enhance viewership, and perhaps even contribute to creating soft power.

PERFORMING CULTURAL IDENTITIES: FASHION AND BEAUTY PRACTICES AMONG YOUNG LONDON CONGOLESE

BENEDETTA MORSIANI
School of Humanities

My research interests focus on historical and cultural issues of migration mainly due to my own life history and cultural identity. I began to develop a curiosity towards cultural difference when I first visited Eritrea, the homeland of my mother, my aunts, my grandmother and my great-grandmother, at the age of six. Those early days cultural memories and my family background have inspired me to be fascinated by the transformation of African cultures in European multicultural settings.

Whilst undertaking my BA degree in Oriental History and Cultures at the University of Bologna, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Sudan, where my Eritrean relatives currently live. I then completed a combined MA in African Studies, between Bologna and Sweden, with a thesis on identity construction and self-representation amongst a group of Eritreans in Bologna. I finally became a migrant myself when settling in London with my Iranian husband, also a migrant who left his country for political reasons. All these experiences drove me to be concerned with the understanding of diasporic life histories, self-perceptions, perspectives and contributions of young African people in Europe and, more generally, with the investigation of representations of cultural identity among migrant communities through the study of material culture.

My project focuses on the migratory experiences of young people originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Compared to other well-established Black African diasporas in London, individuals from the DRC began to settle in the city quite recently, especially between the 1980s and 1990s, being amongst Francophone sub-Saharan groups with a migrant trajectory disconnected from British colonial history. The aim of my doctorate is to contribute to the relatively limited academic analysis available on this minority group, filling the gap on aspects of everyday cultural life.

My use of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork organically revealed the significance of various forms of fashion expressions and aesthetic rituals of the body employed by young London Congolese and stressed the need for an understanding of socio-cultural realities and cultural identities in everyday life. These experiences are 'performative', which means that they are constructed by actions, by 'performances' rather than being related to nature and biology. The research traces how participants re-think and portray their cultural heritage through the production of garments and the organisation of fashion and beauty shows and how these sets of performance practices are employed to embody racial, ethnic, gender and transnational identities. The impact that the multicultural context of London is having on the production and consumption of these forms of cultural expressions is also considered. The study finally documents the cultural and economic contribution young Congolese make to the urban landscape of London.

My research demonstrates how diasporic histories and everyday life experiences of young people who belong to an under-researched Black African group are inscribed and narrated through performances of the body. Importantly, all these cultural practices are very much entangled with the politics and economics of everyday life. My thesis provides an innovative perspective and stimulates broader discourses on the active, creative, and at times problematic and contrasting, experiences of the London DRC group in a multicultural metropolitan milieu.

Image credit: ©George[ACK] Photography

MIXING LANGUAGES IN A DENIED COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF NEW ITALIAN MIGRANTS IN LONDON

GIULIA PEPE
School of Humanities

My interest in linguistics is rooted in my origins. As the daughter of dialectal speakers who moved from the south to the north of Italy, I spent my childhood noticing the differences between my parents' language and the local variety of Italian spoken in the city where we lived, and experiencing the relationships between language, prejudice and power relations.

Against this backdrop, my educational trajectory is perhaps not surprising. In high school, I studied humanities and classics. I moved on to study for a degree in Italian Literature and Linguistics at the Università degli Studi di Milano, after which I came to the University of Westminster to do an MA in English Language and Linguistics. Moving to London allowed me to experience the greatness of its multiculturalism and to observe the real face of the new Italian mobility. Sharing an apartment with many other Italians who migrated after the 2008 financial and economic crisis, I started noting the linguistic phenomena that characterise their conversations. These observations led to a research proposal, which ultimately transformed into a full doctoral project.

The 2008 economic crisis began a new exodus of young people from Italy, a country with a long migratory tradition. My research explores the language of young Italians in London, which has become a favourite destination.

When this project started (2015), Italian media and scholars were keen to depict the new wave of emigration as a case of 'brain drain'. Italian migrants were described as highly-educated young professionals, bilingual in Italian and English – an image that contrasts with previous generations of migrants who were mainly uneducated, poor and monolingual in their dialects. My research highlights the flaws in this depiction and suggests instead that the post-crisis wave is sociolinguistically highly heterogeneous.

I interviewed twenty migrants and audio-recorded their conversations during naturally occurring social gatherings. In this way, I created a 170,000-word corpus.

The most important theme that emerges from my qualitative analysis is the migrants' scepticism towards the idea of an Italian 'community' in London. Due to the internal super-diversity of their group, migrants feel they do not belong to a large ethnic community. That notwithstanding, I did observe a linguistic practice that all informants have in common: *translanguaging*, a multilingual practice which I explain as living one's transnational life with feet in two (or more) languages.

In a community whose members deny their belonging to it and reject traditional identity performative acts, translanguaging is a tool to negotiate and perform new professional and adult identities shaped by the migration. Translanguaging is a means to define the borders of such a contested community, since its members identify those who are allowed to be involved in translanguaging and those who are not. Such shared linguistic practice contrasts with the challenge to the existence of the community, as it facilitates the identification of non-traditional forms of 'others' that inform the wave's migratory identity.

THE ART OF UN-BELONGING

DENIZ SÖZEN
Westminster School of Arts

I studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and at Goldsmiths, University of London. I am currently completing a practice-based PhD at the Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (CREAM), University of Westminster, London. My work has been shown in various contexts internationally. Recent exhibitions include *The Art of Un-belonging* (solo) at London Gallery West (2018), *ResponseABILITY* at < rotor > center for contemporary art in Graz (2018) and *Hyphen* at Ambika P3, London (2019).

I have received numerous awards and residencies, including, 'West Balkan Calling', Public ROOM Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (2016), the MAK-Schindler Scholarship Los Angeles (2013–14), Cité des arts Paris (2014), the CREAM research scholarship (2014–2017) and the Marianne.von. Willemer Prize for digital media (2014). I have presented my research internationally and my writing has been published in print and online. Forthcoming publications include 'Trans Plantations' in *Sharpening the Haze: Visual Essays on Imperial History and Memory*, published by Ubiquity Press.

My video installation *Surya Namaz* which forms part of my practice-based research has been shortlisted for the 2019 British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies Practice Awards, Best Practice Research Portfolio (Audio visual and installation).

This practice-based research sets out to explore artistic strategies that destabilise fixed notions of belonging and identity in the context of globalisation and diasporic art. Drawing on Édouard Glissant's theory and poetics of Relation (1990) in combination with feminist and new materialist theories (Braidotti, Haraway) and an 'anthropology beyond the human' (Kohn, 2013), the research is concerned with decolonising the Eurocentric imaginary which has been shaped by dualisms, such as self and Other, mind and body, culture and nature, and so on, which constitute the colonial legacy of modernity.

The practice element consists of three discrete yet interrelated artworks that challenge an ethnocentric and anthropocentric conception of belonging. The multilingual video-performance *Surya Namaz* (2018) is a personal investigation of yoga and namaz, the Muslim prayer ritual, exploring the potential of transcultural performance, opacity and multilingualism to undo fixed notions of belonging. *Kahvehane Kongresspark* (2016), a temporary café, ceramic cups/saucers and a site-specific performance in public space and *Trans Plantations* (2018), an installation of cups/saucers and coffee beans cast in porcelain in combination with an audio-visual element, are concerned with the colonial history of and human entanglements with coffee, taking the exploration of belonging beyond the anthropocentric.

The research is led by and complements the practice element of the thesis through critical analysis and performative writing, addressing questions posed by my artistic practice in addition to case studies of contemporary artworks. Based on the conception of identity as relational, the research argues that Relation is central to the re-thinking of belonging and identity.

Image credit: *The Art of Un-belonging*, viva exhibition, London Gallery West (2018). Photo: David Freeman

PROACTIVELY TACKLING DENIAL-OF-SLEEP ATTACKS ON WIRELESS SENSOR NETWORKS

EKEREUKE UDOH
School of Computer Science and Engineering

I am a few months away from completing my PhD in Computer Science at the University of Westminster. I have a first class honours degree in computing, a Masters in information security and audit with distinction and an MBA. I have also received a gold certificate award in mentoring and am currently a visiting lecturer teaching computing modules at Westminster. With regards to teaching, I recently received a Club Excellence Award from QA Higher Education for teaching excellence.

I am passionate about training, research, innovation and consulting and recently published a paper in IEEE Xplore library which was presented at the University of Cambridge. So far, I have published three papers on wireless sensor networks, particularly on the energy-efficiency and security of these networks. One of the motivations behind this research is that wireless sensor networks form part of the core for the Internet of Things and the predicted growth in the number of devices on the internet calls for a focus on security and energy-efficiency. From a professional perspective, I have achieved a few certifications such as Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE) and Microsoft Certified Database Administrator (MCDBA).

Wireless sensor networks which form part of the core for the Internet of Things consist of resource constrained sensors that are usually powered by batteries. Therefore, careful energy awareness is essential when working with these devices.

Indeed, the introduction of security techniques such as authentication and encryption, to ensure confidentiality and integrity of data, can place a higher energy load on the sensors. However, the absence of security protection could give room for energy-drain attacks such as denial-of-sleep attacks which have a higher negative impact on the life span (availability) of the sensors than the presence of security features.

This research therefore focuses on denial-of-sleep attacks by simulating three Media Access Control (MAC) protocols – Sensor-MAC, Timeout-MAC and TunableMAC – under different network sizes and measuring different parameters such as the Received Signal Strength (RSSI) and Link Quality Indicator (LQI). Duty cycling happens to be one of the major techniques for conserving energy in wireless sensor networks and this research aims to answer questions with regards to the effect of duty cycles on the energy efficiency as well as the throughput of three duty-cycle protocols.

Finally, the research proposes a novel architecture for tackling denial-of-sleep attacks by propagating relevant knowledge via intelligent agents. The end goal of this research is to implement an energy-efficient MAC layer protocol based on the proposed architecture that tackles denial-of-sleep attacks better than the existing compared protocols.

While solar energy could be an alternative to the battery-powered sensors, some of these sensors may need to be deployed in remote locations where there is no access to solar energy. This research fits into the big picture of the Internet of Things and can be applied in areas like agriculture, defence, under-water explorations, earthquake victims' rescue, robotics and many more.

E Udoh, A Bolotov, D Economou, V Getov

Image credit: © Jamesteohart, Dreamstime.com

GENOMIC INSTABILITY IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY

MOONISAH USMAN
School of Life Sciences

I was awarded a BSc in Biomedical Sciences in 2014 from the University of Westminster. My undergraduate thesis evaluated the therapeutic effects of exercise and initiated my interest in metabolic health. I have always found working with children to be a rewarding experience. My volunteering at Great Ormond Street Hospital exposed me to a variety of notorious disorders that can disrupt a thriving childhood. It was then that I decided to become a researcher in paediatric health, with a focus on early onset obesity and its link to cancer.

In 2016, I was awarded a University Studentship. I have thoroughly enjoyed my doctorate programme due to the excellent support and encouragement from my Director of Studies, Dr Emanuela Volpi, and the whole supervisory team. Our research has been presented at prestigious conferences in the United Kingdom, South Korea and the Netherlands, and so far it has led to two publications in international, peer-reviewed journals. While a PhD student at Westminster, I have had the opportunity to become a skilled researcher in molecular genetics and to grow as an academic. I have teaching responsibilities in the School of Life Sciences and I also have the pleasure of working within the Centre for Teaching Innovation, where I coordinate student–staff partnership projects.

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. By 2020 the number of children with obesity globally is expected to reach 20 million. It is well established that obesity increases the risk of developing metabolic disorders. There is also evidence linking obesity in childhood with the increased risk of developing cancer later in life, but the mechanisms are only partially understood.

Cancer is a disorder whereby cells begin to multiply extensively and uncontrollably, destroying organ systems. A hallmark of cancer is genomic instability. The genome instructs cell growth, division and death. 'Genome health' is determined by the structural integrity and stability of chromosomes and DNA sequences, and is governed by various factors including genetic variants, lifestyle and ageing.

The aim of this research has been to evaluate genomic instability and accelerated genomic ageing in childhood obesity. Body composition, inflammation and micronutrient status were assessed in 132 children recruited from obesity clinics at St George's Hospital, King's College Hospital and local schools, and compared to biomarkers of genomic integrity and stability in samples obtained non-invasively.

The results demonstrate vitamin D deficiency, excessive inflammation and elevated DNA damage in children with obesity when compared to healthy weight controls. Statistical analysis suggests that the percentage of body fat and level of vitamin D can predict the extent of early DNA damage.

Treatment options for childhood obesity include nutritional and behavioural interventions, and surgery. The findings of this research recommend biomonitoring of 'genome health' to inform prioritization and the severity of clinical intervention measures.

Supervisory team: Dr Emanuela Volpi and Dr Ihab Tewfik (University of Westminster), and Dr Sara Suliman (ICL Diabetes Centre, UAE)

Usman, M and Volpi, E V (2018), 'DNA damage in obesity: Initiator, promoter and predictor of cancer', *Mutation Research – Reviews in Mutation Research*, 778.

CONSTRUCTING AND RE-CONSTRUCTING THE ZAIRIAN SPIRIT ON FILM

CECILIA ZOPPELLETTO
Westminster School of Arts

I was born in Padua, Italy, and have over ten years' experience in TV production, having worked for the London Bureau of RAI, the Italian State broadcaster and as host-writer-producer for the TV network Antenna Tre Nordest in Italy. I have lived in London since 1994, where I founded Preston Witman Productions, a video and film production company.

My directorial debut, the feature documentary *La Belle at The Movies* (2016), investigates the disappearance of cinemas in Kinshasa, the city known as 'Kin la belle' (Kinshasa the beautiful). I am currently in production for a feature documentary on the lives of Italian Jews in Congo, *Jews of Congo* (working title). I am a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Westminster and an active member of the Africa Media Centre.

Constructing and Re-Constructing the Zairian Spirit on Film is a study of how the cultural politics of the Second Republic of Zaire (1965–1997), now the Democratic Republic of Congo, impacted on the portrayal of the national image on film. The project is based on the recovery of films that had either been written off as lost or were in such a poor state of preservation as to be completely unusable, which I have unearthed through fieldwork in the DRC and Belgium and digitised at the University of Westminster.

The most significant of these discoveries are the films *Salongo* (1975) and *Election 1970* (1970). The first had been mentioned in all the literature on the country's film production but never approved for release by the government and therefore never watched by anyone and subsequently lost. The film was found in negative and transferred into digital format by Belgium's national film archive for use in this research. *Election 1970*, a film digitised at the University of Westminster, is an educational documentary produced to teach the population how to vote on the occasion of the presidential election of 1970. This was the first election under conditions of universal suffrage since independence and the first to have only one candidate, marking the official beginning of Mobutu's single-party rule which lasted for 27 years. These films capture the ideological changes brought about by the cultural revolution and sought to express a new national spirit, as the population was acquiring a Zairian rather than a Congolese identity.

This study aims at identifying a particular mode of filmmaking as contributor to and creator of nation-building through the images of 'development films'. A term proposed by this research, it looks at the filmmakers' participation in promoting the government's ideals through the related Pan-African practice of development journalism, an attempt at using the media to free newly emerging African states to throw off the legacy of colonialism and to reconfigure traditional societies.

Image credit: *Election 1970* (1970) Dir. S Tshitenge N'Sana ©Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise RTNC

MARIA BASTOS

INDRANIL BHATTACHARYA

CHARUSMITA

EMMELINE COOPER

NATHASHA S EDIRIPPULIGE FERNADO

AMY MACLATCHY

PABLO MORALES

BENEDETTA MORSIANI

GIULIA PEPE

DENIZ SÖZEN

EKEREUKE UDOH

MOONISAH USMAN

CECILIA ZOPPELLETTO

westminster.ac.uk/graduate-school

UNIVERSITY OF
INSPIRING
RESEARCH
WESTMINSTER

8744/02.19/CH/GD