

ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER - ISSUE #3



HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'S FOREWORD

We are glad to be bringing this rich update of our many recent activities and successes to you. Our undergraduates did themselves so proud this year and we were honoured to share (virtual!) graduation with them. As I write, we are processing the results of our 19/20 postgraduate finalists, all of whom studied under unprecedented and often challenging conditions. We were pleased, and humbled, to witness how our students' determination led to excellent results. Students – we salute you!

I also cannot thank the administration team enough for their dedication. The 'no detriment policy' this year meant that (rightly) students could defer submissions until the very last minute. This of course had a knock-on effect on our administrators, who worked nights and weekends to make the finalists' board happen. In academia, administrators are the unsung heroes. Here is a huge thank you to each and every one of them.

Our new cohorts have begun their studies in an entirely virtual environment. It is a very different experience for them, and for us. We sincerely hope that we can teach in person again soon, as all of us miss the element of direct contact. All our programmes have grown in size this year, a sign that education of critical, inquisitive minds is so vital in times of such uncertainty and worry.

As you will read in this edition, it has been a sad start of the term for us. Our doctoral student Alan Wingrove, who had just transferred from another institution, passed away due to COVID-

19. He was an extraordinary man who, after a distinguished career as a very senior police officer, put his interpersonal skills to use by becoming a coach, which was also the topic of his research. His death brought home to all of us just how precious life is, and how easily lost in a global pandemic. Do take care of yourselves, mentally and physically. Ensure that you take breaks from work and replenish your energies – this is easier said than done in our virtual world, but absolutely vital. In memory of Alan, we have introduced a new annual award for the best dissertation on coaching – starting with our graduating cohort. If you would like to help us celebrate his life, then please light a candle, play Phil Collins' song 'In the air tonight' and, if you like, sing along loudly.

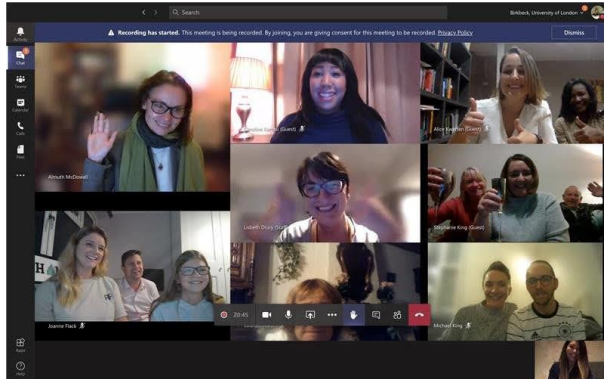
Stay well and stay strong everyone.

Professor Almuth McDowall
Head of Department

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CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS: GRADUATION 2020



Graduation is always a highlight in the Birkbeck calendar, and this year was no exception. On the 4 November 2020, the School of Business, Economics and Informatics held a virtual prizegiving ceremony to celebrate the exceptional achievements of our undergraduate students. Following a presentation from Dr Geoff Walters, Executive Dean of the School, the Department welcomed prize-winners to receive their award (virtually of course) for our BSc Business Psychology:

- Shu Ling Lee – Best Module Result
- Alice Kwarten – Best Project
- Stephanie King – Best Overall Student

Our [virtual graduation ceremony](#) took place the following day. After a particularly challenging end to their studies, we are immensely proud of the resilience of our Class of 2020. Read about BSc Business Psychology graduate [Alex Jiminez Mendoza](#) and MSc Human Resource Management graduate [Daniella Kroni](#)'s experience on the blog.

FINDING CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY THROUGH COVID-19

Earlier this year, we launched Birkbeck Connections in Organizational Psychology, an initiative to bring together our professional community to connect, share the latest evidence and learn from each other.

When possible, Birkbeck Connections will take the form of quarterly networking opportunities, but in the absence of face-to-face meetings, our video series has been bringing you the latest insights from our community. Catch up on the full series:

- [Introducing Birkbeck Connections in Organizational Psychology](#)
- [The Future of Work](#)
- [Support for Frontline Workers](#)
- [Multi-level approaches to develop resilience in social workers](#)
- [Loss, mourning & melancholia at work](#)
- [Transitioning back into the workplace](#)
- [Managing remote workers](#)
- [Diversity & inclusion, unconscious bias & black lives matter](#)
- [The nexus of work & care during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Digi-housekeeping: the invisible load of remote & flexible working](#)

To stay in touch with Birkbeck Connections in Organizational Psychology, please [join our LinkedIn group](#).



Dr Susan Kahn interviews KK Harris on diversity and inclusion, unconscious bias and Black Lives Matter as part of Birkbeck Connections in Organizational Psychology.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

HYPERMASCULINE ORGANISATIONS AND BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S CAREER PROGRESSION IN NIGERIA



Dr Vanessa Iwowo shares the findings from her latest research into gender inequality in the workplace in Nigeria.

Discussions around barriers to women's career progression are not new to the public agenda, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the unequal division of domestic and caring responsibilities in the home. However, the majority of research in this area has been developed in the global north and thus overlooks the significance of specific economic, social and cultural conditions that exist in other contexts. With my colleagues Toyin Ajibade Adisa (University of East London), Chima Mordi and Ruth Simpson (Brunel University), I sought to uncover the specific barriers facing women's career progression in Nigeria.

Why Nigeria? Often referred to as the "giant of Africa", the country is notable both for its economic prosperity and entrenched patriarchal values. The barriers to women advancing their careers in Nigeria could have wider implications for gender equality in the global south.

Gender inequality and Social Dominance Theory

Despite legislation which supports gender equality and Nigeria's participation in international agreements to eliminate gender discrimination, the problem persists. Prior research into 190 Nigerian companies found that just 10.5% of board seats are held by women. In the civil service, where women account for 24% of the workforce, they hold less than 14% of overall management positions.

Examined through the lens of Social Dominance Theory, which purports that social groups are hierarchically positioned, we see how cultural ideologies and institutional discrimination work together to produce group-based inequality. A gender-based hierarchy dominates, where men are favoured, gaining disproportionate positive social and material value at the expense of the subordinate group, women. This group-based oppression is driven by systemic individual and institutional discrimination and supported by stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs which dictate the norms that govern institutions. These hierarchies are especially hard to break down as they are embedded in social systems.

Challenges to career advancement faced by women in Nigeria

Entrenched stereotypical attitudes about the role of women in Nigeria means that management and leadership are viewed as the exclusive domain of men, while women are seen to belong in the domestic sphere. This hypermasculine context only serves to exacerbate the barriers faced by women in their careers. In interviews with 43 women working in the five major administrative capitals of Nigeria, we identified three key barriers to progression at work:

1. Systemic and excessive male-group-based domination

Every woman that we spoke to identified a bias in recruitment and promotion decisions in their organisation. An approach based on merit is overruled by a preference for a male candidate, regardless of capability. What is more, this bias is openly acknowledged, with the allocation of male candidates to senior roles seen as a foregone conclusion.

2. Corruption and the exchange of favours

The vast majority of women that we spoke to (39 out of 43 interviewees) had personally encountered corruption in the workplace in the form of "godfatherism", the practice wherein a woman is expected to exchange money or sexual favours for progression in the workplace. The consequences of godfatherism are both devastating and wide-reaching: either a woman is cut off from career advancement, or she is coerced into a sexual relationship in order to

progress. Such is the commonality of this practice, that the promotion of a woman is often associated with this exchange by colleagues.

3. Domestic responsibilities

The expectation that women will take full responsibility for domestic arrangements is entrenched from a young age, when girls are made to take on household responsibilities while boys are left to play. A few women also reported being overlooked for a university education in the family, due to the assumption that this was an unnecessary expense for them to fulfil their predetermined roles as wives and mothers.

A unique national context

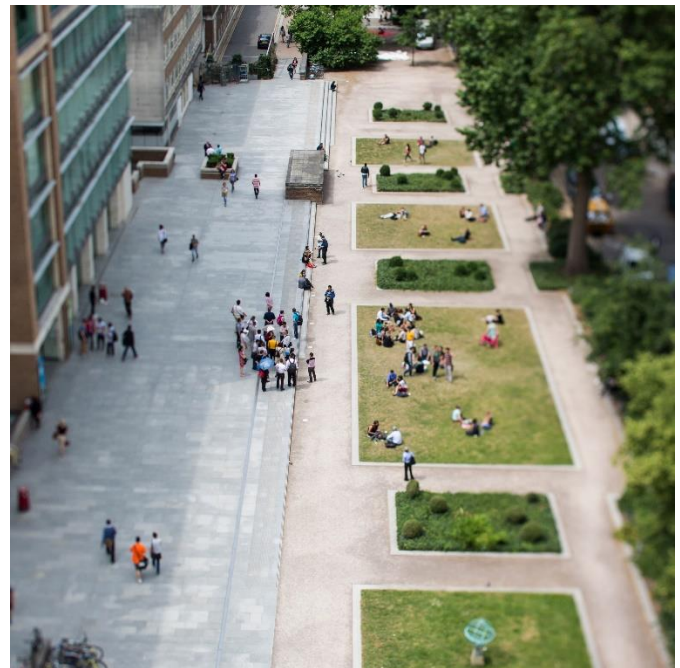
Our research suggests that Nigerian women are being held back in their careers by corruption and discrimination particular to their national context, such as entrenched patriarchal values, assumptions about the role of women and ingrained cultural and religious beliefs. While male dominance and barriers to women's career progression are not unique to Nigeria, the way in which patriarchal structures are embedded across all systems and institutions is particular to the national context. For example, some potential commonalities could be drawn between godfatherism and the western #MeToo movement. However, where corruption in the west is widely challenged, godfatherism is normalised. Indeed, it forms part of a wider cultural context in which it is seen as "un-African" for a woman to lead.

Aside from denying women the right to self-actualization and economic independence, hypermasculine organisations are limited by a lack of diversity. Social Dominance Theory would suggest that the way to overcome these barriers is by challenging the status quo and "mainstreaming" hierarchy-attenuating attitudes from non-dominant groups. A deeper understanding of these attitudes and how they manifest in the workplace may go some way towards challenging entrenched beliefs and practices, working towards a more equal future.

This article is based on the paper 'Social dominance, hypermasculinity and career barriers in Nigeria' in Gender, Work & Organization.

AWARDS, HONOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

- A paper by **Dr Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya** and **Professor Alexandra Beauregard** entitled 'The Impact of Global Economic Crisis and Austerity on Quality of Working Life and Work-Life Balance' has received the European Management Review (EMR) Best Paper Award. EMR is the official journal of the European Academy of Management. [View the paper online.](#)
- **Dr Jo Yarker** has won the prestigious Innovation, Research and Education award from the Vocational Rehabilitation Association for her work with Professor Karina Nielsen, funded by the Productivity Insights Network.



NEW STAFF APPOINTMENTS

We are pleased to welcome Jessica Dark and Nicola Bentham to the Department as Graduate Teaching Assistants.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Our academics have been sharing their expertise to support mental health in the workplace and sustainable working practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

- In November 2020, Professor Alexandra Beaugard and Dr Susan Kahn presented at the ‘This Can Happen: Empowering Workplace Mental Health’ conference. Professor Beaugard chaired a panel discussion on ‘Supporting transgender mental health at work’, while Dr Kahn spoke on mental health in the workplace.
- Professor Gail Kinman was the keynote speaker for the Festival of Social Work, where she spoke about ‘creating a supportive work environment for social workers’.
- Also in November, Dr Rebecca Whiting ran a workshop for social entrepreneurs and community workers on managing work-life boundaries, organised by Action Hampshire. Dr Whiting is also due to give an invited seminar for the Digital Organization and Society Research Centre at the School of Management, Royal Holloway, University of London on 2 December 2020 entitled ‘Collecting qualitative online data: our methodological journey since 2012’.
- In October, Professor Gail Kinman presented the John Goodlad Memorial Lecture at the Royal College of Nursing Conference and in the same month spoke about ‘sleep, rumination, recovery and mental health’ at the BPS/SOM Seminar Series and about the mental health of nurses and midwives to the Society of Occupational Medicine.
- Also in October, Professor Almuth McDowall and Dr Yi-Ling Lai delivered keynotes at the International Society for Coaching Psychology.
- Professor Almuth McDowall and Dr Kevin Teoh delivered a webinar on burnout for the Law Care Webinar Series in September 2020, while Dr Teoh also delivered webinars on job crafting for ThoughtFull Online Professional Training.
- Dr Kevin Teoh and Professor Gail Kinman presented at the UCD School of Medicine Conference: Occupation Stress and Burnout among Health Care Workers in October 2020.
- That same month, Professor Alexandra Beaugard spoke about ‘views from HRM in overload: How good jobs went bad and what we can do about it’ at the Work and Family Researchers Network 5th Biennial Conference series.
- Dr Kevin Teoh and Professor Almuth McDowall delivered well-received practice seminars on job crafting and moving teams towards ‘us’ rather than ‘them and me’ for INO in the Netherlands on invitation of our MSc student Mohsin Siddiqui.
- In July 2020, Dr Teoh presented to the Rotary Club Switzerland on ‘Managing Wellbeing while Working in a Pandemic’ and in August 2020 he presented on ‘The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Nurses and Midwives in the UK: Systematic Review and Recommendations’ at the NHS Staff Council on Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- Professor Almuth McDowall was quoted in a Guardian article on “[is lockdown making us eccentric](#)”; in [Welingelichte Kringen](#); and, together with Dr Nancy Doyle, wrote a Forbes article entitled “[Do women make better leaders in a pandemic? Don’t trust the data...](#)”
- Professor Gail Kinman made contributions to a number of news outlets, including the BBC on “[how to be happier while working from home](#)”; the Times on [working hours and work-life balance](#); the Financier Worldwide Magazine on “[Mind matters: structuring an effective wellbeing framework](#)”; and in the Telegraph on “[20 ways to stay connected to the outside world as restrictions tighten](#)” and [the feasibility of working from a pub instead of home](#).

ALAN WINGROVE

It is with deep sadness that we announce that one of our PhD students, Alan Wingrove, passed away at the end of October 2020 due to COVID-19. Alan's PhD focused on the evidence-based coaching supervision for internal coaches and drew on Self-Determination Theory. Alan was an accredited Executive Leadership Coach and Coaching Supervisor for 15 years before embarking on his PhD. He started his research degree journey at the University of Portsmouth in 2017. In 2020, Alan followed his principal supervisor, Dr Yi-Ling Lai, to Birkbeck where he continued on his coaching supervision study.

Alan was an excellent student as well as a fundamentally good man. According to Alan's previous colleagues and supervisors, he had the rare gifts of being a good listener and a careful thinker. Alan had recently published his paper "Self-determination theory: a theoretical framework for group supervision with internal coaches" in the *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*. The Department will endeavor to finish and publish the work that Alan started in his memory. Our thoughts and condolences are with Alan's widow and his family.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

- Clements, A., Sharples, A. & **Kinman, G.** (2020). Identifying wellbeing challenges and solutions in the police service: A World Café approach. *The Police Journal*.
- Collins, A., and **Beauregard, T. A.** (2020). The effect of breaches of the psychological contract on the job satisfaction and wellbeing of doctors in Ireland: A quantitative study. *Human Resources for Health*, 18(89).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-020-00534-3>.
- De Lange, A., Lovseth, L., **Teoh, K.**, and Christensen, M. (2020). Healthy healthcare: lessons learned and a new research agenda for occupational health psychology.

Frontiers in Psychology – Organizational Psychology. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.0223.

- **Kinman, G.**, Grant, L. & Sharples, A. (2020). Peer coaching for wellbeing and personal effectiveness. *Leadership Issues in Social Care*. 2, 4, 28-35.
- **Kinman, G.**, McDowall, A. & Teoh, K. (2020). Managing staff who are working at home: business as usual? *Work-life Balance Bulletin*. 4,1, 21-28.
- **Kinman, G.** & Grant, L. (2020). Emotional demands, compassion and mental health in social workers. *Occupational Medicine*, 70, 2, 89-94.
- Travers, C., Maher, K., **Kinman, G.** & Bateman, N. (2020). "We are not working at home, but are at home, during a pandemic, attempting to work": Exploring experiences of homeworking and work-life balance during the Covid-19 crisis. *Work-life Balance Bulletin*. 4,1, 10-16.
- **Wingrove, A., Lai, Y. L.**, Palmer, S., and Williams, S. (2020). Self-determination theory: a theoretical framework for group supervision with internal coaches. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 18(2), pp. 183-196.
- Wray, S. & **Kinman, G.** (2020). The psychosocial hazards of academic work: An analysis of trends. *Studies in Higher Education*.

Books, Chapters and Reports

- **Kinman, G., Teoh, K.**, and Harriss, A. (2020). *The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Nurses and Midwives in the United Kingdom*. Report prepared for the Royal College of Nursing Foundation and the Society for Occupational Medicine.
- **Kinman, G.** & Torry, R. (2020). Responding to the death by suicide of a colleague in a primary care setting: A 'postvention' framework. Louise Tebboth Foundation and Society of Occupational Medicine.
- **Kinman, G.**, Grant, C., Fraser, J., Bell, N., Breslin, G., Colville, T., Kwiatowski, R. et al (2020) *Working from home: healthy sustainable working during the COVID-19*

pandemic and ‘Presenteeism’ during the pandemic: risk factors and solutions for employers. Covid-19 Working Differently Group at the British Psychological Society.

- **Lewis, R.** and **Yarker, J.** The psychological impact of remote rotational work. ISOS Foundation.
- Tehrani, N., Colville, T., Fraser, J., Breslin, G., Waites, B., **Kinman, G.** et al. (2020) Taking trauma-related work home: Advice for reducing the likelihood of secondary trauma. Covid-19 Working Differently Group at the British Psychological Society.
- Waites, B., Breslin, G., Bell, N., Thomson, L., Fraser, J., Mackey, G., Tehrani, N., **Kinman, G.** et al. Covid-related anxiety and distress in the workplace: A guide for employers and employees. Covid-19 Working Differently Group at the British Psychological Society.
- **Whiting, R.**, and Pritchard, K. (2020). Collecting Qualitative Data Using Digital Methods London: Sage.

The 14th European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Conference

The Department has also actively contributed to the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology, with our research often featuring prominently at the Academy’s Conference. While the COVID-19 pandemic meant the semi-annual conference was moved from being held in Cyprus to an online event, academics and PhD students were still able to share some of our recent findings to the wider international occupational health psychology community.

This year presentations included:

- **Gamblin, D.** on “Why do we not value creative people and their input to society?” Sources of strain in the performing arts. In A. McDowall (Chair). The show must go on. Precarious work in the performing arts.
- **Garayeva, S.** on Positive Thinking in organisations: To fake or not to fake? An interview study.
- **Kelleher, A.** on Eudaimonic and Hedonic motives and the Future Time Perspective:

explaining employees’ task perceptions, autonomous motivation, and persistence in their daily actions.

- **Kinman, G.** on Being ‘good enough’: Perfectionism and wellbeing in social workers.
- **Kinman, G.** on Carrying on regardless: Sickness presenteeism in academic employees.
- **Kinman, G.** on Digital nomads – the implications for wellbeing and work-life balance.
- **Koh, J.** on Work-related well-being in the legal profession: An integrative literature review.
- **Lauder, K.** on Is online workplace advice for ADHD paying attention to the research?
- **McDowall, A.** on. Career penalties and wellbeing. Do women become invisible as mothers?
- **McDowall, A.** on What are the performing arts doing about worklife balance and wellbeing for carers?
- **McDowall, A.** and **Stringer, M.** on The song remains the same: The precarious journey to the top. Developments for women and work.
- **Niemczewska, A.** on Supporting dyslexic adults in the workplace.
- **Redman, A.** on The psychology of cycle-commuting: Encouraging healthy and sustainable behaviours for wellbeing at work.
- **Soon, L.** on Work-related well-being in the legal profession: An integrative literature review.
- **Teoh, K.** on Precarious work in the performing arts and implications for wellbeing.
- **Teoh, K.** on Reflections of an organizational-level wellbeing intervention: What worked and what did not.

The Department of Organizational Psychology is part of Birkbeck’s School of Business, Economics and Informatics.

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