

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

REGIONAL SCOPING STUDIES

ABOUT

[The Feminist Centre for Racial Justice](#) was founded in September 2022 and is one of several officially constituted centres of SOAS, University of London. The Feminist Centre focuses on the majority world as geographies from which to build feminist imaginaries of “race”. The Centre brings together fields of enquiry that have, to date, developed in parallel: feminist theories on power, protests and change, studies of diasporas, critical race theories and migration studies. The Centre's approach of research, test, reflection cycle is central to how synergies between research and movement building are built and become evidenced as part of the Centre's legacy.

The Feminist Centre's goals are to:

1. Recentre the global South as a primary site from which to reframe global narratives on racialised and intersectional gender justice.
2. Produce an archive of Indigenous feminist methodologies derived from studying and working with movements engaged in long term pathbreaking racial justice work.
3. Defy problematic scholarly and geographical binaries that have obscured work on gender and race across time and space.
4. Foreground the transnational nature of emerging political cultures and forms of protest and solidarity.

SCOPING STUDIES

Over the next year the Feminist Centre will focus on research as central to developing shared knowledge about the interconnected issues that frame our focus. This call for proposals for scoping studies is designed to respond to two central questions.

1. Understanding practices of surveillance, containment, and their gendered and racialised underpinnings.
2. Mapping spaces of protest and solidarity.

We are inviting proposals that respond to the questions above along some of the themes identified below. The scoping studies should adopt a regional approach and will be designed to understand.

1. Contemporary literature on the subject.
2. Contemporary responses by movements, intellectuals to the issues identified.
3. Existing gaps in literature and practice.

KEY THEMES

Migration and Borders

According to the International Organisation for Migration there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population. Overall, the estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades. IOM approximates that the total estimated 281 million people living in a country other than their country of birth in 2020 was 128 million more than in 1990, and over three times the estimated number in 1970. The movement of people for diverse reasons is as old as the world, yet in recent times migration has been met with heightened ultra-nationalist approaches to protecting state borders. Across the Middle East, academic and activist interest in migrant workers in general in the Middle East but especially in Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCCs), has grown rapidly in recent

years. The recent work on migrant domestic and care workers that has drawn attention to the racialised underpinning of the kafala system and other oppressive structures and practices that contribute to the exploitation and marginalisation of migrant domestic workers. In Europe, masked under the spectre of state sovereignty is an underlying anxiety of culture, identity, and scarcity of resources for the “other”. Cultural differences and diversity have been mobilised around protectionist discourses and accompanying policies particularly around European and American identity and futures. Underpinning these debates are hostile border policing approaches including those that specifically target people affected by humanitarian crisis. For example, in the UK, the government’s post Brexit immigration policy has attracted considerable controversy in recent years, particularly concerning efforts to tackle ‘illegal’ immigration through the [‘Stop the Boats’ Bill \(or Illegal Migration Bill\)](#). Through this bill, migrants entering the UK through channels deemed illegal will be ‘swiftly removed to their home country if safe, or another safe country.’ As Adamson and Greenhill (2023) argue, migration “deals” such as 2022 UK-Rwanda, 2016 EU-Turkey and 2017 EU-Libya are connected to longer histories of state-organised forced migration schemes such as population transfers, exchanges, and expulsions. Finally, it is worth recognising that these hostile policies on migration and borders also feature in South-South relations. Scoping studies under this theme could cover a range of issues.

1. How technologies that govern migration and borders are producing new narratives on race, gender, and class.
2. How do conversations on “good” and “bad” migrants govern contemporary understandings of the nation state.
3. What does the constellation of government and regional organisations migration deals shore up the racialised underpinnings of the state. For example, how does one make sense of the anti-Blackness that shapes responses of Tunisian, Algerian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian governments towards Africans.
4. How do migrant domestic workers organise themselves as well as solidarity movements that work in conjunction with them to address their disenfranchisement but also develop modes of political protest that emphasise the intersections between seemingly disparate struggles organised around gender, race, sexuality, nationality, and class.
5. What are the specific racial, gender, geographic and class dimensions of the employment of migrant domestic and care workers in specific contexts?
6. The working conditions of migrant domestic and care workers including in a comparative perspective across countries, sectors, alternative work opportunities, and across race, gender and other characteristics that might be relevant.
7. The gender, race and class power dynamics involved in the employment of migrant domestic workers.
8. The role of migrant domestic work within demographic, social and macroeconomic considerations of both ‘sending’ and ‘receiving’ countries.

Reparations and Racial Justice

Debates on reparations for slavery and colonial era injustices have regained momentum in the last decade. Reparations includes but is not limited to apologies for colonial harm, returning loot, compensation for specific events, or cancelling debts. The Caribbean Community Reparations Commission (CARICOM) calls upon European governments to participate in a reparations plan that seeks reparatory justice for victims of slavery, genocide, racial apartheid, and slave-trading. CARICOM argues that victims and descendants have a legal right to reparatory justice. The debate on reparations is rooted in a recognition that historical economic and political processes and their legacies today since in the global geo-political order, have created the blueprint for racial injustice. At a summit on reparations in Ghana, President Nana Akufo-Addo urged European states to pay

the overdue reparations to amend the damage they left. Governments such as the UK have taken a firm stance against paying reparations. In contrast, the Netherlands [has established a 200Million fund](#) to address the legacies of slavery alongside a formal apology. Germany agreed to [pay Namibia €1.1bn](#) as it officially recognised the Herero-Nama genocide at the start of the 20th century, as a gesture of reconciliation and not legally binding reparations. French president Emmanuel Macron has previously promised to return thousands of cultural items and address the French colonialism, but he has ruled out reparations. Both approaches show an acknowledgment of the state's involvement, but a strategic approach to not officially pay reparations. Across the United Kingdom various institutions have made overtures by returning artefacts looted during formal colonisation such as the Glasgow Museum returning [49 looted items including 17 Benin Bronzes](#). While Oxford university has identified approximately [100 looted items in its possession](#). These moves by European governments and institutions have however been accompanied two debates. The first debate is the recognition that these reparative moves have overall not been done in conversation with those harmed by slavery and colonialism. The second debate are the national discourses that assert the “benefits” of colonialism and the dangers of pursuing reparative justice to former colonies. Underpinning this logic is the assumption that the harmful legacies of colonialism no longer exist. Under this theme we are keen to map the particularities of reparations debates as they occur at the intersection of gender and racial justice. What do feminist reparative practices look like and where does the current work on this emerge from?

Transnational Organising on Racial and Gender Justice

Transnational organising on gender and racial justice has evolved in the last decade, largely supported by the growth of online activism, the evolution of feminist funds and the increasing mobilisation of the far-right globally. The interconnected nature of global challenges whether they are linked to carceral technologies and how these are embodied by policing systems across the global as seen in movements for [defund the police](#) in the US, UK and [EndSARS in Nigeria](#). Accompanying responses to police brutality has been the cracking down on protests through restrictive legislation governing freedom of association and protests, which illustrates a clear move to criminalise public dissent.

In the area of public health, global responses to COVID-19 and the disproportionate impact on Black and people of colour has recentered a focus on unequal socio-economic and political policies. COVID-19 is not the first global health phenomenon that has illustrated how global inequalities produce poor health outcomes from specific groups of people and regions of the world. From the responses to HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Zika we observe a pattern that focusses us on historical socio-economic factors that impact equal health outcomes. From food deserts, poor health service provision and financing in the peripheries of our urban cities, unequal access to health services and policy approaches that marginalise the poor.

At the same time, we are also witnessing the resurgence of anti-gender movements organising transnationally against comprehensive sexuality education, bodily autonomy (abortion rights), queer rights, and anti-*trans lobbies which resource and influence legislation and policies across the globe. Debates on same-sex sexualities and transphobia have manifested in legislative challenges. In the UK these have taken the form of challenges to gender recognition provisions, in sections of Africa, the rise of criminalisation of queer people has most recently been seen in the anti-homosexuality law in Uganda. Undergirding these legislative pursuits is the mobilisation of free speech and assertions these are fundamentally gender critical feminist approaches. [Feminist scholars](#) have argued that on closer examination there is a shared ideological base between far-

right movements that pursue white nationalism as a basis to define Euro-American identity and gender critical arguments that draw on gender essentialist arguments to define heteronormative and homonormative ideals. These essentialist arguments are also accompanied by attacks on gender and women's studies, critical race theory and broader sphere of knowledge production processes that challenge orthodoxy. Under this theme, we are keen to map transnational solidarity actions, praxis and thinking.

Profile

1. People who work with and/or around race, Black Internationalist, Pan African and indigenous scholarship, theories, and movement building approaches.
2. Evidence of previous multi-disciplinary research on or around these areas.
3. From the region in focus even if located in the diaspora.
4. Able to write and communicate with audiences using multi-disciplinary methods.

To apply:

1. Send a two-page concept note that outlines your approach.
2. Budget.
3. CVs of the research team.

Timelines:

1. Concept notes: 15th April 2023
2. First drafts: 15th May 2023
3. Final drafts: June 2023