

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU)		
Unit of Assessment: 31 – Theology and Religious Studies		
Title of case study: Punk and implicit religion: increasing participation and enhancing public understanding of the disadvantaged and marginalised		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2018 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Francis Stewart	Post-doctoral Research Fellow	2018 to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/09/2018 – 31/12/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Exploration of the voices and identities within the Northern Irish and Irish punk scenes has led to public impact through engagement with creative communities and practitioners, arts sector, and marginalised and under-participating groups. Impact has also been achieved through enhancing understanding of issues and shaping attitudes, in particular, regarding enabling wider participation and accessibility to events. Furthermore, impact has stimulated public interest in research, and increased understanding of gender roles and promoted equality. This has intersected with work through the Research Centre for Implicit Religion, which hosted public events in the UK and the USA, generating some impact on teaching.</p>		
2. Underpinning research – References in section 3 are indicated by number (e.g., R1)		
<p>This impact case study builds on Stewart's portfolio of published work before joining BGU, including the landmark monograph, <i>Punk Rock is My Religion – Straight Edge Punk and 'Religious' Identity</i> (Routledge, 2017). Research since September 2018 has extended and deepened scholarship on the punk scene and implicit religion (IR), and their interconnections. Insights have led to local, national and international reach and significance regarding both the punk scene and IR.</p>		
The punk scene		
<p>Research has examined issues of access to, and participation in, events relating to the punk scene. Survey work has developed and expanded from September 2018 onwards. This has further consolidated and advanced various insights gained from interviews with marginalised punks (R1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marginalised punks are being utilised to uphold narratives about punk's equality and access-for-all that supports the continued dominance of white, cis-gendered, hetero-normative, males (R1, R2, R3); • Curations of subcultures need to align more closely with how religious communities and cultures are displayed (R3); • Memorialisation of subcultures needs to take seriously the role of academics in enabling continued marginalisation (R3); • Marginalised punks want to take an active role in public events, including academic ones, but need the process scaffolded for them; • Students and members of the public would significantly benefit from the same scaffolding process in relation to diversity, widening participation and knowledge exchange. <p>Civil war and ongoing levels of threat have resulted in Northern Ireland's punk scene seldom</p>		

being included in punk exhibits and memorials. When included, it focuses on male experiences during 'The Troubles' (R2, R3). The paucity of academic writing on women's experiences in Northern Ireland has resulted in marginalised groups being further victimised and silenced by academic patriarchy (R3). Therefore, opportunities need to be created for women and marginalised punks to share experiences and create events that centre ideas without further entrenching issues around representation and othering (R1, R2, R3).

In **England**, public events about punk tend to be driven by economics rather than cultural exchange. Inclusion of, or focus on, the same bands ensures profit, but also reinforces a particular narrative and (re)presentation of punk (R2, R3). By creating free local events on different aspects of punk and scaffolding the process of presenting ideas and experiences, members of the public became key participants working alongside and with academics.

Stewart's research relating to punk inter-relates with that linked to implicit religion. Stewart is Director of the BGU-based Edward Bailey Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion (EBCSIR) (<https://implicitreligion.co.uk/>), an extension of the Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion and Contemporary Spirituality. Both Centres are inspired by the seminal contribution of Bailey on IR (or secular spirituality).

In the **USA**, the same scaffolding process was utilised to create a new IR conference. Ongoing conversations and considerations of the applicability of the tools developed from the research (R1, R2, R3) led back to a more in-depth understanding of the necessity to create a conference circumnavigating the use of the marginalised to uphold those already privileged and visible.

3. References to the research

* Independently peer-reviewed journal article

1. Abraham, I. and **Stewart, F.** (2020) 'Straight edge evangelicalism and the DIY spiritual revolution', in Abraham, I. (ed.) *Christian Punk: Identity and Performance* (London: Bloomsbury), 67-84.
2. **Stewart, F.** (2020) 'The unknown creed: punk and political uncertainty in Northern Ireland', in Francis, M. and Knott, K. (eds) *Minority Religions and Uncertainty* (London: Routledge 2020), 100-114.
3. * **Stewart, F.** (2019) 'No more heroes anymore: marginalized identities in punk memorialization and curation', *Journal of Punk and Post-Punk*, 8, 2, 209-26.

4. Details of the impact – Sources in section 5 are indicated by number (e.g., S1)

Public impact achieved the following, in relation to punk-related activities:

- Working with creatives and inspiring new forms of artistic expression;
- Collaboration with the arts sector;
- Engagement with marginalised and under-participating audiences;
- Enhancing understanding of issues and shaping attitudes;
- Stimulating public interest and engagement in research;
- Increasing understanding of gender roles and promoting equality.

In addition, some 'impact on teaching' was generated as a component of implicit religion activities.

The main beneficiaries were attendees at events, main partners, and co-collaborators:

- Punk Scholars Network;
- Mansions of the Future (Arts-Council-funded project venue, Lincoln);
- International students.

Punk: public events

A series of local and regional events were developed through 2019-20, in consultation with the Punk Scholars' Network and punks near to Lincoln. The events achieved:

- Discussion of themes and issues (**S1, S2, S3**):
 - Punk pedagogies (Mansions of the Future, July 2019);
 - Punk sexualities (Mansions of the Future, October 2019);
 - Punk aesthetics (Akedo Bar, January 2020);
 - Punk and the sacred (Mansions of the Future, November 2019);
 - Punk parenting (Mansions of the Future, July 2020).
- Collaboration, with local artists, musicians and performers, members of the public, and academics working together to present their ideas in various ways and learning from each other;
- Outputs, including: art exhibits, panels, presentations, film/documentary screenings, live performances;
- Charity collections for Lincoln Foodbank and Lincoln Rape Crisis;
- Attendance of 117 members of the public in Lincoln and surrounding areas (**S1, S2**);
- Follow-up requests for more diverse representation at events, and challenging of racist, sexist and homophobic lyrics and behaviours at local gigs and on social media (**S3**).

Event feedback (**S1, S2, S3**) included:

- 'As a band we will take up your suggestion to make a public call for women and non-binary individuals to come to the front of the stage at our shows, we will make that a space for them';
- 'I hadn't realised how female musicians were treated by owners and bookers, I will pay more attention to that in future and make sure to call it out now that I know about it';
- 'This has really made me rethink what I think punk is and what it should be'.

Correspondence relating to the organisation of one event asked:

- 'I need help in figuring out how to make the festival more equal and inclusive. Some mates mentioned the stuff you and Laura were doing locally about this, and that the film screening they went to really made them embarrassed about the lack of female, transgender, queer musicians and bands, as well as those of colour that we were putting on. We've failed and need to do better, can you help us?'

Punk: media engagement

Stewart's interests have attracted wider public media attention, for example:

- Interviews on podcasts in the USA (307 listens/downloads) and the UK (559 listens/downloads) (**S4**);
- Interview on American radio for US based international podcast series Classical Ideas, following publication of *Punk is my religion* (2017), <https://classicalideaspodcast.libsyn.com/ep-57-dr-francis-stewart-on-the-religious-surrogacy-of-straight-edge-punk>, 15 citations;
- Media interview for Trent Television on behalf of BBC Scotland on diversity in punk, especially in relation to her research on Northern Ireland; broadcast as 'The War Next Door', BBC Scotland, November 2019 (BBC Scotland average weekly viewing figures, 700,000);
- Media article for online newspaper, *The Lincolnite*, 2019 (**S5**) (*The Lincolnite* typical circulation: 873,701 monthly viewers; 200k+ followers).

Punk: public lectures and professional training

Stewart's established engagement with public-facing events relating to her work on diversity and punk has led to:

- Invited guest public lectures at the University of Glasgow, Middlesex University (**S6**) twice, Sarum College six times, North Carolina State University, and St Mary's University, Nova Scotia.
- Training day for ordinands, Lincoln Theological College.

Impact case study (REF3)

Public lecture feedback (North Carolina State University) (S7) included:

- ‘An amazing presentation and conversation that really provoked me to think in new ways’,
- ‘It’s opened up a field of study I would never have known about or thought of before’,
- ‘Getting to learn about this has meant the world to me, I can’t wait to learn more’.

Implicit religion: public events and impact on teaching

The EBCSIR, directed by Stewart, has a strong public impact dimension achieved through its open events and emphasis on widening participation (S8).

Annual Implicit Religion conference events in 2019, with a limit of 40 on-site attendees, attracted (S9):

- 31 on-site participants (UK, BGU);
- 17 on-site participants (USA, New Jersey)
- 7-33 viewers per panel in free live streaming (UK and USA).

The conferences incorporated impact on teaching, with scaffolding approaches reflected in the mentoring of new and early career, marginalised and other participants through to publication (S10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact**Punk: public events**

1. Public event feedback: forms from attendees of Punk Sexualities event (October 2019).
2. Public event feedback: comments of attendees at events on Punk Marginalisation, July 2019; Punk Pedagogies, July 2019; and Women in Punk, March 2020.
3. Public event correspondence: Lincoln punk festival (email received September 2019 for event in July 2020).

Punk: media engagement

4. Media article: podcast for Chris Deacy’s series on Nostalgia - https://audioboom.com/posts/7216559-francis-stewart?fbclid=IwAR0VWJbwa_r9r7AUyVvKQqmUKIMveODQmxG4zTBaiuEPQAQGHqjnrma7Tc.
5. Media article: article for *The Lincolnite* paper on punk sexualities – <https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2019/09/column-what-place-does-punk-hold-in-british-cultural-history/>.

Punk: public lectures and professional training

6. Testimonial: guest public lecture on post-feminism, Mike Dines, Middlesex University.
7. Public event feedback: guest lecture, North Carolina State University.

Implicit religion: public events and impact on teaching

8. Testimonials: George González (Baruch College, CUNY), and Ipsita Chatterjea (Regina), USA Implicit Religion conference, 2019.
9. Social media: Twitter statistics for engagement with IR conferences – 17.3–33.1k impressions, UK conference weekend; 13.8-21.4k, USA conference weekend.
10. Event feedback: student participants comments on experience and learning, US conference weekend.