

# Research Ethics Conversation Series

2026



Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

## Convener:

Mandy Lee, Assistant Professor, Centre for Health Policy and Management, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin

## About Us:

Started in March 2024 by Mandy Lee and Prof. Su-Ming Khoo as a joint initiative by Trinity College Dublin and the University of Galway, the Research Ethics Conversation Series was established with the goal of creating a community of inquiry and practice, to bring researchers and ethics committee personnel into conversation with one another, outside of the bureaucratic structures of standard research governance.

We seek to bring together an interdisciplinary community of inquiry to engage in exploratory conversations about new and/or difficult, thorny issues in research ethics, as identified by researchers working in the field as well as those engaged in research ethics oversight and other relevant areas of higher education practice. We believe in creating this communal space for those interested in the broad field of research ethics across multiple disciplines, as a key challenge we identified was a lack of safe spaces for dialogue between researchers and ethics committees on emerging/challenging research ethics topics, where a well-founded consensus is lacking, and/or where diverse stakeholders with different perspectives and traditions need to have their voices heard and listened to.

We strongly believe that research ethics should be open, inclusive, and pluralistic, and to be broadly discussed and deliberated amongst practitioners and policymakers. We are interested in facilitating a space for discourse and reflection among those keen to push forward the progress of research ethics through both critique and consensus.

We have grown from a small community of tens of us across Trinity and Galway in 2024, to a community approaching 200 members in 2026, with people based across the island of Ireland as well as the UK and Continental Europe, with contributors to our conversations sharing their insights from diverse disciplines and research contexts. Our membership has been growing organically through word-of-mouth and personal recommendations, and we are pleased to see the continuing participation of regular members not only from amongst the researcher cohort, but also from those engaged in research governance.

For our 2026 series, I am pleased to announce we will have an exciting programme involving contributions from senior research leaders as well as ECRs, with our first STEM researcher as well as our first US-based lead speakers. We continue to feature lead speakers from under-represented backgrounds and those with marginalised voices.

This year, a key theme of our programme focuses on research within repressive contexts, where our lead speakers present provocative challenges to institution-/regime-centric norms, with the goal of staying true to our democratic values in our research and governance. We invite you to join us in these conversations.

## Format:

All our RECS Conversations take place online via Zoom. Based on the experiences gained from our successful inaugural series in 2024, we established a monthly programme of Conversations, starting in late March, with a break over the summer period. There is a total of 8 Conversations in each calendar year (March to June, September to December), taking place in either the third or fourth week of the month, usually on a Thursday. Since 2025, each of our Conversations is scheduled for a 1.5-hour duration (from 3pm to 4:30pm GMT), to allow space for a proper conversation to develop.

While the lead speaker may present a topic for up to 45 minutes (the range could be from 30 minutes to an hour), the rest of the time in the 1.5-hour session is devoted to conversation amongst the group on the topic, where attendees are encouraged to talk with each other and build on each other's points and perspectives, rather than simply having a Q&A directed solely to the lead speaker.

The sessions are chaired by Assistant Professor Mandy Lee at Trinity College Dublin as the convenor of this Conversation Series. All sessions are unrecorded to ensure safe sharing. Slides and other materials (where relevant) presented by the lead speakers during the sessions might be circulated after the session, with the authors' agreement, to our mailing list members for further reflection/action.

## 2026 RECS Programme

### Pre-Summer Programme (March to June):

#### First Conversation

Topic: **"Who decides how Open science should be? Discussing (ethical) implications of transdisciplinary communities pushing for science reform"**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. Sheena F. Bartscherer (Humboldt University, Germany)**

Date: Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 3pm to 4:30pm Ireland (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

#### Second Conversation

Topic: **"Protests, documentary practices, and ethical issues – the evolution of images on Hong Kong's democratic movements"**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. Judith Pernin (IADT, Ireland)**

Date: Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2026, 3pm to 4:30pm Ireland (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

#### Third Conversation

Topic: **"The ethics and politics of the use of grassroots-produced digital testimonies on mass atrocities: advocating for trauma-informed principles of care, autonomy, and safety."** [Topic Updated to focus on the ethics of positionality and representation for person-of-colour activist-researchers in politically challenging times, in the wake of racist killing and rise of racial tension in Ireland in the weeks preceding this session, and also increasing transnational repression of oppressed communities in Europe]

Lead Speaker: **Mandy Lee (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland)**

Date: Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 3pm to 4:30pm Ireland (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

Fourth Conversation

Topic: **“Thinking With Care: Feminist Ethics of Care for Engaged Research in Times of Crisis”**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. Brenda Mondragon Toledo (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland)**

Date: Thursday, 25th June 2026, 3pm to 4:30pm Ireland (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

SUMMER BREAK (July and August) (No Conversations)

Autumn/Winter Programme (September to December):

Fifth Conversation

Topic: (Working Title) **“Ethical Considerations in Migration Research”**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. Mastoureh Fathi (University College Cork, Ireland)**

Date: September [Date TBC], 3-4:30pm Irish Time (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

Sixth Conversation

Topic: **“When the Field is Closed: The Ethics of Remote Ethnography in the Uyghur Region of China”**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. David O’Brien (Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland)**

Date: October [Date TBC], 3pm to 4:30ppm Irish Time (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

Seventh Conversation

Topic: (Working title) **“The Threats to Academic Freedom: Interim Findings from a Survey of HEI/RI Executives in Switzerland.”**

Lead Speaker: **Dr. Nassim Rousset (ETH Zurich, Switzerland)**

Date: November [Date TBC], 3pm to 4:30ppm Irish Time (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

Eighth Conversation

Topic: [TBC]

Lead Speaker: **Prof. Bandana Purkayastha (University of Connecticut, USA)**

Date: December [Date TBC], 3pm to 4:30ppm Irish Time (4pm to 5:30pm CET)

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## 2026 Lead Speakers' Biographies (in Alphabetical Order):

### **Dr. Sheena F. Bartscherer**

Senior Researcher, Robert K. Merton Center for Science Studies/Berlin School of Library & Information Science, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

[sheena.fee.bartscherer@hu-berlin.de](mailto:sheena.fee.bartscherer@hu-berlin.de)

Sheena Bartscherer is a senior research associate at the Robert K. Merton Center for Science Studies, currently working on global replication initiatives and the general open science movement in the DFG-funded research project “replication as a social movement”. In April this year she will begin her work as the lead of an international consortium, funded by the VW foundation, to investigate science reform communities more broadly.

### **Dr. Mastoureh Fathi**

Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University College Cork, Ireland.

[mastoureh.fathi@ucc.ie](mailto:mastoureh.fathi@ucc.ie)

Mastoureh Fathi is a senior lecturer in sociology at the Department of Sociology and Criminology, University College Cork, Ireland. She has published on topics of home and migration, class, gender, intersectionality and identity. She is currently the PI on project funded by Research Ireland (Migrants' Digital Spaces: MIGDIS). She was a Marie Skłodowska Curie Individual Fellow at Institute for Social Science Research in 21st Century; PI on a British Academy funded project Home, Pedagogy and Belonging and PI on an Irish Research Council funded project Elderly (non)migrants' narratives of home: A comparative study of place-making in Ireland and Germany. Her latest book is called Migration and Home: An IMISCOE Short Reader (2024 Springer, open access), co-authored with Caitriona Ní Laoire. She is currently serving as the co-editor in chief of Irish Journal of Sociology.

### **Mandy Lee**

Assistant Professor, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

[Mandy.lee@tcd.ie](mailto:Mandy.lee@tcd.ie)

Mandy Lee is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Health Policy and Management, School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin. A health sociologist, her research interests include narrative medicine, trauma studies and research ethics, with an increasing focus on creative/arts-based methods. She was module leader in Research Methods and Research Ethics while also serving as course coordinator of the M.Sc. Health Service Management from 2004-2019. She served on TCD Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Committee from 2005 to 2009. In 2009, she co-founded the Health Policy and Management/Centre for Global Health (HPM-CGH) Research Ethics Committee. She served as deputy Chair of the HPM-CGH REC in 2021-2022, and remains as a non-reviewing advisor. She has published on research methods and research ethics nationally

and internationally, and provided research ethics training to national agencies. Since 2021, Mandy is a PhD candidate (part-time) at TCD Sociology, exploring trauma, resilience and resistance of the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement through narrative inquiry. She is the founding convenor of the Research Ethics Conversation Series in 2024. Since 2025, Mandy is the Health Sciences Co-Chair on the Trinity Medical and Health Humanities network.

### **Dr. Brenda Mondragon Toledo**

Teaching Fellow, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

[MONDRAGB@tcd.ie](mailto:MONDRAGB@tcd.ie)

Dr Brenda Mondragón-Toledo is a feminist sociologist with a PhD in Sociology and Latin American Studies from University College Cork. She is a Teaching Fellow in the Sociology Department at Trinity College Dublin. Her research focuses on theorising experiences of gender-based violence through a comparative lens, particularly between Mexico and Ireland. Positioned at the intersection of sociology and anthropology, her work employs arts-based research methods, with a specific emphasis on textile-making practices as both methodological tools and forms of knowledge production. Brenda's work is grounded in feminist epistemologies and methodologies, and informed by decolonial theory, with a focus on analysing the patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism as intersecting axes of power.

### **Dr. David O'Brien**

Postdoctoral Researcher, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

[david.obrien@uj.edu.pl](mailto:david.obrien@uj.edu.pl)

Dr David O'Brien is based at the Centre for International Studies and Development, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. His research project entitled 'Narrating the 'new silk road': Chinese 'huayuquan' (discourse power) in OBOR/BRI externally-directed propaganda' has received a grant of 1.2 million zloty from the prestigious programme POLONEZ BIS-2 of the Polish National Science Centre (Narodowe Centrum Nauki). He graduated with a PhD in Asian Studies from the National University of Ireland (Cork) in 2013 with a thesis entitled People and Place in the New Frontier: An Examination of the Construction of Han and Uyghur Ethnic Identities in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. He was formerly at Ruhr University Bochum in Germany (2019-2023) and before that at the Chinese campus of Nottingham University (2013-2019). His work explores ethnic identity and ethnic policy in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. His research has appeared in China Quarterly, International Politics, Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, Asian Ethnicity, among others. He is co-author with Melissa Shani Brown of People, Place, Race, and Nation in Xinjiang, China: Territories of Identity. Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. He is also the co-founder and co-director of the Irish Uyghur Cultural Association.

### **Dr. Judith Pernin**

Post-doctoral Researcher, Elevate programme, IADT, Ireland.

[Judith.Pernin@iadt.ie](mailto:Judith.Pernin@iadt.ie)

Judith Pernin is a postdoctoral researcher at IADT (Dublin) with a background in Chinese Studies and Film Studies. She holds a Ph.D. from EHESS (Paris) on Chinese independent documentaries (1990-2010). Based in Hong Kong between 2008-2020, she wrote extensively on protests, visual culture and documentaries. She now also conducts research on the Irish film industry in the EU context, focusing on the creative documentary sector.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7063-6098>

**Prof. Bandana Purkayastha**

Associate Dean, Social Sciences, Regional Campuses, and Community Engagement. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor (Sociology), University of Connecticut, U.S.

[Bio to come]

**Dr. Nassim Rousset**

Postdoctoral researcher at the Computational Systems Biology laboratory, ETH Zurich, Switzerland.

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[Bio to come]