Greetings from England, which is cooling down, and Australia, where the end of winter draws near! This is the Summer/Winter 2023 edition of the ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter. For those reading the newsletter for the first time, we are Elaine and Lesley and together we co-edit this newsletter from opposite ends of the world with a marvelous crew of co-editors who are all alumni of the ISTR PhD Seminars.

This newsletter aims to keep our growing alumni network informed about the work and stories of colleagues who research and working in the third sector, as well as keep everyone up to date on developments in the field of third-sector research. We do this by highlighting relevant research projects, books, publications, sharing stories from our PhD seminar alumni network and more experienced ISTR members. We also offer advice on researching and working in the third sector.

In this edition: Shiqi and Ali interview Elaine and I about our 2-year stint as the co-editors of this newsletter. Anna and Azam’s column provide a list of international opportunities for papers and conference submissions and applications for funding. Mercy’s column features a question that was posed to faculty members by a PhD student who is encountering challenges with data collection. In their column, Elaine and Azam interview Linda van der Wijk, a PhD student and PhD seminar alumni who’s also the director of a Dutch NGO. Jeonghwa and Peiyao’s column presents a UK perspective of the PhD experience and dispenses tips for success in a UK PhD program. Finally, Lesley’s jobs board column offers insights into the US job market.

We hope to better understand your needs and invite you to participate in our online survey for the ISTR PhD seminar alumni, if you have not done so already.

A key theme of this issue is the important role and support the ISTR Network provides for researchers, especially those still developing their careers across the world. If you would like to continue to be part of this network and to have the opportunity to join the 2024 main conference and regional conferences, you can join ISTR via this link: https://www.istr.org/page/Membership. Memberships last for 2–4 years and provide access to all ISTR’s resources, seminars, and special conference rates. Discounts are available for students.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and we look forward to hearing from you.
News & Announcements

ISTR 16th International Conference, University of Antwerp, Belgium (July 16-19, 2024)

From the first ISTR conference in 1994 (Pécs, Hungary) onwards, different themes have appeared on the Third Sector research agenda, some of which disappeared quickly, while others remained. Examples of the latter are, at the macro-level, issues of legitimacy, inequality, democracy, and at the micro-level, organizational aspects, volunteering, or philanthropic behavior. However, these traditional research topics have been and are complemented as a response to emerging global and local phenomena generating substantial turbulence all over the world. Salient examples are the current refugee crises on all continents, the (post-)pandemic, (civil) wars, etc.

Over the last decade, the world has been hit by consecutive crises both at the global and local levels. In almost all of them, the Third Sector plays a critical role in solving different problems caused by these crises. This context explains the focus of ISTR’s Sixteenth Conference (Antwerp, 2024) on the role and position of the Third Sector in times of crisis and conflict, which are frequently marked by increasing inequalities and challenges to democracy and participatory governance.

Further, the Third Sector plays a crucial role in the pursuit of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for which it might also be engaged by governments and for-profit firms to establish goal-oriented networks and cooperations. This requires particular attention, as it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has at least ‘slightly derailed’ SDG efforts.

Finally, citizen participation in governance at all levels is under threat in times of crisis. A strong Third Sector is needed to respond in those environments facing the rise of more authoritarian regimes. In all civic spaces, Third Sector organizations have a role to protect and improve citizen participation in governance. This requires standing up to subtle and not-so-subtle limitations on freedoms of expression, assembly and association, and also fully embracing opportunities enabled by innovations in digital technology.

Paper, poster, panel, and roundtable proposals from around the world reflecting work that is theoretical as well as empirical, unidisciplinary, as well as multidisciplinary, and pertaining to all continents, will be welcomed.

- Deadline for submission: October 30, 2023

More information and the full call can be found at: https://www.istr.org/page/ISTR2024.

ISTR 8th International PhD Seminar, University of Antwerp, Belgium (July 14-16, 2024)

The 8th ISTR PhD seminar is scheduled ahead of the 16th ISTR International Conference “Crisis After Crisis After ...: What About the Third Sector?” The ISTR PhD Seminar is open to all enrolled doctoral students doing research in the field of third sector and civil society, across the different regions of the world, and at all stages of their doctoral studies. Past participants in ISTR International and Regional PhD Seminars are welcome to apply. ISTR covers the cost of accommodation during the seminar and most meals.

Doctoral students will engage with senior scholars and peers in extensive intellectual and methodological discussion on their doctoral research, discuss the main theories and developments in the field, reflect upon publication and career strategies, and network within the international ISTR research community. While rigorous and serious, the PhD Seminar is also a supportive and affirming – and dare we say fun – experience for many who enjoy interacting with other students and faculty in the field and hearing the different perspectives they have to offer.

Get further information on eligibility and selection criteria @ https://www.istr.org/page/PhDSeminar.
Contribute to the newsletter!

Please email the co-editors if you are an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus (from whichever year) and would like to serve as a contributing editor for the column on Jobs Board & Advice.

Please email the contributing editors of the respective columns if you are an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus and have a story to share. You can also nominate a current ISTR member or an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus to be featured in the newsletter.
Alumni Spotlight: stories from the field

By Ali Baker Hamoudi & Shiqi Peng

This column is all about our alumni—who they are, what they have done, where they have been, and where they are now. Each issue will feature interviews with alumni with practitioner and academic backgrounds who work in different fields and across different geographic regions. Featured alumni will share their experiences as ISTR members, attending the ISTR PhD seminars, and their career pathways. By sharing these stories, we hope our readers can benefit from the wealth of experiences that the ISTR PhD seminar alumni network offers.

Why We Are Inspired to Grow the ISTR PhD Alumni Community:
A Chat with the Co-Editors of the ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter

In this column, we speak to two of our active ISTR PhD alums who are also the co-editors of ISTR’s inaugural PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter.

Dr. Elaine Xu, MPRIA, is a lecturer in Strategic Communications, at the School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences, College of Human and Social Futures, at the University of Newcastle (Australia).

Dr. Lesley Alborough is a social research specialist, Research Environment, at Wellcome Trust in the UK, and a visiting lecturer in Philanthropy at Bayes Business School, City, University of London.

Elaine Xu and Lesley Alborough were appointed by the ISTR Board to take on the position of co-editors of this ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter. This is the final issue Elaine and Lesley will edit as they end their 2-year term and pursue other endeavors. This interview is our way of acknowledging the great work they have done to get this newsletter off the ground.

Please share with us what drew you to join ISTR and participate in the ISTR PhD Seminars.

Elaine:
I attended my first PhD seminar and first Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Jakarta in 2017, when I was in the first year of my PhD program at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia. I have been a member of ISTR ever since! I chanced upon ISTR when I searched for academic associations that were focused on third sector research because my supervisors were not working in the third sector. My PhD research was on the charitable fundraising campaigns of international water charities, and I wanted to be connected to scholars and practitioners who were passionate about social, environmental, development, and humanitarian issues. Because my supervisors were not ISTR members or working on third-sector research topics, I had to take the initiative to ‘find my tribe’, and I’m glad I did!

Lesley:
I first attended the PhD seminar in July 2016 in Stockholm. It was the second year of my PhD, and I heard about the PhD seminar from the European Research Network on Philanthropy (ERNOP) a year before. Somebody suggested that the PhD seminar would be a good thing to try. I applied, got a place, and they paid for my accommodation, which was nice. But the seminar was the week after the United Kingdom had voted to leave the European Union, so it was a bit strange for me. I was also considering whether I would continue my PhD at the time. I had, had a difficult “Continuation Review” which is a requirement to progress in PhD programs in the UK. So, the PhD seminar came at a good point in my PhD. It was also the first time I had attended an academic seminar outside of my institution, and it was amazing to have that kind of input and to connect with other PhDs at that level. I’ve been an ISTR member ever since. I think a PhD seminar takes you out of your own supervisory and institutional spaces and helps you to think a little more broadly if you can.

Could you share with us your most memorable memories and experiences at ISTR?

Elaine:
Two experiences immediately come to mind. First, the two PhD seminars I attended during my candidature (Jakarta 2017 and Bangkok 2019) were greatly beneficial to the development and refinement of my thesis’ argument. The PhD seminar mentors who were assigned to my group got me thinking about how to problematise my research and
frame my research findings. Two PhD students I met during the PhD seminars are also the contributing editors of this newsletter — Azam and Jessica.

Second, the ISTR mentoring program has been an absolute gem. I applied to the program four times and were paired with mentors who were further along in their career, and they provided me with practical career, publishing, and research advice. My last two mentors, Professors Tobias Jung and Kirsten Holmes, guided me through two important and critical phases of my career. Professor Jung mentored me when I had just completed my PhD and I was on the job market, and Professor Holmes was assigned as my mentor when I started in my current academic position at the University of Newcastle, Australia. They provided me with useful advice and a listening ear, as well as shared insights into how to build an academic career and balance academic work with my role as a new parent.

Lesley:

This question reminds me of the “multi-disciplinary” nature of third sector research, where researchers are in the school of economics or marketing, or psychology, or whatever our disciplines are. A standout moment in Stockholm for me was talking to a faculty member who told me about a music video about how people found ways to belong.

In the video, a little girl is tapdancing in a bee-suit. Everybody thinks she’s odd even though they like her, but they don’t quite understand what she is doing. And then eventually, one day, she finds this field of other people who are all dancing in bee-suits. Suddenly, she finds her space and goes back to her normal life. That video reminds me of ISTR. You can attend conferences and meet other people who understand what you are doing. And you’re very normal for that period, and you can tap-dance on as much as you like.

In my view, I think that’s one of the most impressive experiences ISTR offers (watch video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qVPNONdF58). At the same time, when you go to conferences, you get to experience the conference itself and the different parts of the world as well, which is great. I now have connections all over the world, which I love enormously.

How has ISTR influenced your work and study?

Elaine:

I treasure the relationships that I have built and the knowledge I have gained through participating in ISTR activities. Going back to the beginning, after attending my first ISTR PhD seminar in 2017, I read my PhD Seminar mentor’s doctoral thesis, and another mentor shared the reading list of their course with me. Since then, I have used ISTR members’ work in my research and teaching. Attending the ISTR conferences, PhD seminars, webinars, etc., also exposes me to cutting-edge work by scholars and researchers and broadens my scholarly worldview. The work of ISTR members helps me to clarify my research agenda and think about how my research fits into, or differs from, the studies conducted in another country.

Most importantly, my interactions with ISTR members, both online and in person, keep me grounded and remind me to put the end-users and beneficiaries of my research at the heart of what I do. When speaking to ISTR members, I have been impressed and inspired by their passion, commitment, and dedication to the communities they work with and that they work within. I also use Google Scholar to ‘save’ the publications of ISTR members and ‘follow’ them to keep up to date with research on a specific topic or country that interests me. This was something I started doing when Azam and I started co-editing the third-sector research column of the ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter, where we feature the works of ISTR PhD seminar alumni. I would encourage everyone to do this!

Lesley:

ISTR offers a space to engage with researchers all around the world who are experiencing and exploring similar issues to ourselves. Compared to other third-sector research associations, ISTR is more transdisciplinary and more localized (regional branches), but still offers opportunities to connect globally. It was at the 2016 PhD seminar in Stockholm that the idea of a seminar alumni network first started being discussed. Prior to that, each seminar group has set up a Facebook page, but none of us were connecting with any other of the alumni from previous or subsequent seminars. I have been involved with ISTR through the alumni network, the Finance Committee and now the Strategic Finance Sub-committee, which is exploring how ISTR will continue to fund its activities, including the PhD Seminar and the alumni network. Even now that I’m not in academia, I’m still in the philanthropy sector and doing research in the third sector. I can still see much value in the space created by ISTR, where researchers and practitioners can benefit from coming together to conduct research about the third sector.
Do share with us your experiences as co-editors of the ISTR PhD seminar newsletter and your vision for its future.

Elaine:

When the call for an expression of interest to edit an inaugural newsletter for ISTR PhD seminar alumni was put out, I jumped at the opportunity to give back to the ISTR community. Then, my PhD had been conferred, and I was looking for opportunities to engage in activities that could ‘feed my soul.’ To be honest, I felt a little burned out after completing my PhD (I was writing up when the COVID-19 pandemic started) and was feeling worn down by the high teaching load of my teaching position. I have fond memories of my two-year stint as the co-editor of the Newsletter (with Dr. Lesley Alborough), not least because it also coincided with two important milestones in my life, namely, starting a new job and having a baby!

Lesley and the contributing editors have been wonderful to work with. Lesley and I have great chats about life whenever we meet to discuss the Newsletter, and we are supported by the ISTR Board Members and staff, who provide advice and the strategic vision for the Newsletter. What binds the editorial team is not simply the fact that we are creating content for the Newsletter but that we are all ISTR PhD seminar alumni who have been positively impacted by the ISTR members we’ve met (or who mentored us) when we were PhD students.

Now that Lesley and I are ending our 2-year term as the co-editors of the inaugural PhD Seminar Alumni Newsletter, I would like to encourage other PhD seminar alumni students to apply to join the editorial team. Promoting the Newsletter to regional ISTR PhD seminar students and increasing the readership and diversity of individuals featured in the Newsletter could be potential items on the agenda. If there are sufficient resources, some columns can be translated into different languages, and the Newsletter can feature the research of scholars from less-represented countries or non-English publications. Take on the challenge, improve, and strengthen what the current editorial team has done, and see this as your chance to create a positive impact on the ISTR PhD seminar alumni communities in different countries!

Lesley:

The ISTR Board has, for a long time, wanted to create and sustain an active alumni network and make sure PhDs and new researchers are more connected and supported. When the Newsletter came along—because I had been at that first attempt at creating this alumni group—I kind of understood that it’s quite difficult to keep people connected and the Newsletter seemed a good way to do so. It takes time and energy to sustain, but I’ve always seen an alumni network as a valuable space. When the advertisement went out for co-editors, I thought it would be nice to be a part of it. At that time, I was also still doing my postdoc. I had recently changed institutions and was working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the support system from the original PhD institution wasn’t there anymore. I was also trying to ensure I stayed connected remotely with this new and unknown support system.

Unlike the hard sciences, where research happens in a laboratory full of other scientists, in the social sciences researchers tend to do their research in their own space. Every now and then, you have a conversation with someone, but not often. The ISTR PhD Alumni Network offers a place for support and to connect with others in our field, even when we change institutions or sectors. ISTR has got a lot of learning, thinking and developing to do about the Newsletter. Even though Elaine and I knew we were appointed for a two-year term, I hope the connections we’ve made, and the development of the Newsletter continues. I’ve got a lot of personal life changes happening at the moment, and I’m involved with two other ISTR committees. There are also new alumni coming in, and it would be good to have new PhD alumni have a chance to be co-editors as well. I believe that other people could probably help move things on and make it better!

Note from the column’s contributing editors: Please get in touch with us if you would like to share your experience about how attending the ISTR PhD seminars and being part of the PhD seminar alumni community have benefitted your research or career. We look forward to amplifying your voices!
Opportunities for Collaboration & Calls for Papers/Applications

By Anna Reggiardo & Nur Azam Anuarul Perai

Have you always wanted to find collaborators to publish a journal article, work on a report detailing best practices, or apply for grants? Would you like to collaborate with other ISTR PhD seminar alumni to write a manuscript, submit grant applications, find guest speakers, or organize a symposium or workshop? Use our column as a resource to find collaborators! This column will list opportunities for our ISTR PhD seminar alumni to connect and collaborate with academic scholars and practitioners/professionals working in the third sector or researching the third sector and its activities.

Calls for Papers and Applications


   Deadline for application: August 15, 2023

   The sociology of constitutions has introduced important methodological modifications in studies of both political and non-political constitutions and constitutionalism in the last decade. Recent research has expanded the concept of constitution beyond its classical juridical meaning and disconnected it from statehood. It has decoupled constitutions from institutional politics and thus looks for new modes of political action and subjects beyond their typically modern conceptualisation in popular sovereignty, nationhood, etc.

   This year’s annual meeting focuses on the concept of the people beyond its common political and juridical conceptualisations and theoretical frameworks. The programme will include opening presentations on the Place of the people in modern political and societal constitutions (Denis Galligan; University of Oxford, Francesco Bilancia University of Pescara); on the Sociological theories of constitutions in the light of the Habermas – Luhmann Debate (Gorm Harste, University of Aarhus and Alberto Febbrajo University of Macerata); on the emergent perceptions of constitutions in legal and political sociology (Hakan Hyden, University of Lund and Jiří Přibáň, University of Cardiff).

   The convenors want to particularly encourage early career and senior legal and political scholars and sociologists engaging in recent sociological and socio-legal research of constitutions. Participants will be invited to present their research in different sessions covering a wide range of themes and problems, such as global legal and political networks, democratic reforms at subnational, national and supranational levels, cosmopolitan constitutionalism and ethics, democratic statehood and its deficits, constitutional populism and democratic backsliding, human rights, law and development, electronic democracy, internet and protest movements, transitional justice, judicial and political constitutionalism.

   Please send your proposed title, short abstract (200 words) and biography to the Working Group Chair Prof. Jiří Přibáň (priban@cf.ac.uk) or to the Fermo Summer School (info@fermosummerschool.it).

   For more information, visit https://www.slsa.ac.uk/index.php/news/events-news.

2. Call for Application: 7th Annual Symposium on Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society, Indiana University’s Muslim Philanthropy Initiative, virtual conference, 30 October 30-4 November, 2023

   Deadline for application: August 15, 2023

   This year’s symposium themes include:
   • Muslim Philanthropy in Sacred Spaces (charity & volunteering at sacred sites)
   • Islamic Finance, Economics, & Development (zakat, waqf, takaful, etc.)
   • Muslim Philanthropy in Asia (broadly defined: South, East, Southeast, Central Asia)
   • Religion, Gender, and Charitable Giving
• Religion, Pluralism, and Civil Society

The symposium will prioritize papers that touch on one or more of these themes. We are especially interested in those papers that seek to expand the concept of Muslim philanthropy beyond monetary giving in order to consider the place of religious discourses, practices, and contexts in which Muslims engage civil society.

We ask that participants submit final versions of their papers for publication in the Journal on Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society, an open-access journal published by Indiana University Press. All submissions will go through a double-blind peer review process before publication. Those interested in participating should submit their paper abstracts by August 15, 2023, and a pre-recorded video presentation by October 16, 2023.

Presenters will receive an honorarium of $250 USD. Authors who submit their final papers to JMPCS by April 1, 2024, will receive an additional honorarium of $500 USD. If submitted by July 1, 2024, the honorarium will be $250 USD. Send submissions to the JMPCS Editorial Team (jmpcs@iupui.edu).

3. Call for Paper: Environmental Politics and Governance Network (EPG) Online Schedule

*Deadline for abstract submission: September 1, 2023*

The Environmental Politics and Governance Network (https://epgnetwork.org), which provides a platform for scholars studying environmental issues to present research, exchange ideas, and collaborate, is accepting submissions for the Autumn 2023 EPG Online schedule. Presentations will be held on Thursdays.

To apply please fill out the form, which is available here: https://forms.gle/ytA8p7lWAwZ7DSi7tT.

4. Call for paper: Housing as a Welfare Policy: Interdependences, Criticalities and Perspectives

*Deadline for proposal submission: September 3, 2023*

Journal: Politiche Sociali / Social Policies

Guest editors: Massimo Bricocoli (massimo.bricocoli@polimi.it), Emanuele Belotti (emanuele.belotti@polimi.it)

This call aims to collect contributions about operational ways, legislative and policy instruments and new governance settings, practices, and emerging challenges, which shape not only the transformations of housing and social policy but also the interdependences between market or social housing and the other welfare areas, and in particular social assistance and social protection policy. How did the interdependences between welfare regimes and types of housing systems change at the different territorial scales? Whether and how did housing become a key aspect of social infrastructure in local welfare policy design? What is the role of housing within the whole framework of social policy and for social assistance (i.e. Social Services)?

Within the framework of the international debate on the European housing and welfare regimes, the Thematic Focus assumes a perspective that shifts the analytical attention from the single welfare areas to the interdependences among them. We welcome comparative studies or analyses of single cases (of significant scale and scope) which, at the local, regional or national scale, explore the processes of (and the obstacles to) policy integration, as well as dynamics and conflicts underlying both social innovations that bridge housing and other welfare policy areas and the (re-)distribution of mutual responsibilities, in the Italian and/or European context. We welcome proposals of empirical or theoretical articles that contribute to enhance the debate on the role of housing (and housing policy) as one of the pillars of the European welfare systems. Main yet not exclusive aspects of interests include:

• Reconfigurations, transitions or persistence of European welfare systems resulting from major transformations in the housing sphere.
• Criticalities and innovations in policies reducing housing deprivation in both rental housing and owner-occupation.
• Criticalities, persistence and innovations in public social housing management in the light of changing housing needs.
• Processes of integration between housing policies, social assistance (i.e. Social Services in Italy) and social protection.
• Interdependences and misalignments between policies for housing inclusion and employment policies for socio-economically vulnerable or deprived groups.
5. **Call for Papers: 2023 ARNOVA-Asia Special Issue of Nonprofit Policy Forum**

*Deadline for submission: September 30, 2023*

The journal Nonprofit Policy Forum invites papers for a special issue dedicated to the theme of the 2023 ARNOVA-Asia conference, “The Roles of Nonprofit Organizations for Sustainable Civil Society”, that took place virtually from Japan on July 7-8, 2023. Note that submission to this NPF Special Issue is open to all authors addressing the theme regardless of their participation in the ARNOVA-Asia conference this year.

This NPF Special Issue explores the role of nonprofit organizations, civil society, and philanthropy in Asia and welcomes both theoretical and empirical studies from all disciplines with a focus on any of the regions of Asia (West, Central, South, Southeast and East Asia). Questions to be addressed in this special issue may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What roles have nonprofits and/or other civil society actors in Asia played in the policymaking process during this recent – and ongoing – period of pandemic and social justice and economic challenges? How have the unique relationships between nonprofits and the state in Asia affected nonprofits’ roles in the policymaking process?
- In this recent, difficult period, what has been the impact of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) on nonprofits’ sustainability and involvement in policymaking, advocacy, and service delivery in Asia? What are the policy implications of nonprofits’ strategic responses to the challenges they have faced?
- What are recent policies and laws affecting the governance and behaviors of nonprofit organizations and social enterprises in Asia? How do these policies affect the ability of nonprofits and social enterprises to respond to the pandemic and other societal needs?
- What theoretical perspectives best explain the state of and the policies for the nonprofit sector and civil society in a nation or across nations in Asia?

For further information, please contact Tamaki Onishi at t_onishi@uncg.edu


6. **Fellowship Opportunity: The German Chancellor Fellowship for Tomorrow’s Leaders**

*Deadline: October 15, 2023*

*Recommended Period of Sponsorship: October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025*

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants up to 50 German Chancellor Fellowships to prospective leaders from Brazil, China, India, South Africa and the USA—irrespective of their field of work. Together with a German host and mentor of their choice, fellows conduct a socially relevant project they have developed independently.

Due to the war in Ukraine, the German Chancellor Fellowship for prospective leaders is still not open to applicants from the Russian Federation this year.

**Fellowship benefits**

- A monthly fellowship of €2,000, €2,300 or €2,600, depending on the applicant’s qualifications.
- Flexible timing: 12-month fellowship between 1 August 2024—31 March 2026.
- Individual mentoring during the stay in Germany.
- Additional financial support such as mobility allowance, subsidies towards insurances, family benefits and support towards travel expenses.
- Intensive preparatory German course and further language support.
- Joint programme events with an opportunity to meet the German Chancellor, and an invitation to a study tour of Germany.
- The chance to actively participate in a vibrant network and cooperate in peer groups.
- Extensive alumni sponsorship, particularly to help sustain contact with collaborative partners in Germany during the fellow’s entire professional career.

**Application requirements**
• The applicant must be a national of Brazil, People’s Republic of China, India, South Africa or the United States.
• Bachelor’s or equivalent academic degree completed less than twelve years before the beginning of the fellowship.
• A mentoring agreement from the host in Germany.
• A project plan which candidates must draw up independently and coordinate with their host.
• Initial proven leadership experience.

Application
Further information, a list of all application requirements and a link to the online application form are available at www.humboldt-foundation.de/youngleaders.

Advice and contact
Questions regarding the German Chancellor Fellowship Programme can be directed to info@avh.de. Examples of projects conducted can be found on this website. The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany is the patron of this fellowship programme.

Note from the column’s contributing editors: Please email us if you are an ISTR PhD seminar alum or a current ISTR member and would like to find collaborators for projects related to the third sector and its activities. Do also contact us if you want to disseminate a call for papers or grant applications, especially if it is aimed at PhD students or early career researchers 3–5 years post-PhD, and we will publish the information in the next issue of the newsletter.
Studying the Third Sector: methods, theories, and insights

By Elaine Xu & Nur Azam Anuarul Perai

Promote your third sector research and evaluation reports, journal articles, book chapters, or doctoral theses in this column, which will primarily showcase the works of our ISTR PhD seminar alumni. If you have developed tools or created resources to study the third sector and its activities, you are also welcome to promote them. Write to us if you would like to be part of our column’s Q&A on the methodological, legal, and ethical aspects related to studying in the third sector.

Q&A with Linda van der Wijk
(ISTR PhD Seminar Alum 2022, Malaysia)

In this Q&A with our ISTR PhD seminar alum, we speak to Linda van der Wijk who is pursuing her PhD at Thammasat University in Thailand. She shares with us about the challenges of researching the third sector, as well as the connections she formed and the insights she gained at the 2022 ISTR Asia-Pacific Regional Conference in Sabah, Malaysia.

What projects or publications are you currently working on?

At the moment I am finalizing some revisions of my research proposal and preparing to start the fieldwork and data collection part of my PhD research, looking at the role of the board in safeguarding accountability, especially downward accountability, in a situation where multiple crises converge. Besides this, I am working on an overview of the third sector in India and the recent changes in laws and regulations impacting the third sector there.

In a recent ISTR webinar, I had the privilege of giving a short presentation on this topic and I am hoping to be able to work on this more and develop it into a paper. While I am becoming more and more involved in academia, I am also still working more or less full time as a third sector practitioner, so that makes for a very interesting combination of activities.

What challenges or dilemmas did you face when researching the third sector or its activities?

One of the challenges faced in my research is the difficulty of doing qualitative research and trying to do multi-site research. I wish I could make it work, but for a PhD project, however, this is not feasible even though there is an increasing demand for Southern-based comparative research. Choosing to limit my research to one country brings with it questions on the added value of the research, but also on how to approach the research subjects, how to make sure that participants, or the organizations they represent do not from the north, am I the right person to do research on this topic in a southern setting, even if all my work experience in the third sector as a practitioner has been in the south? And can this research, which includes questions on the impact of restrictive regulation, be carried out in such a way that the people I speak to feel safe enough to speak openly and frankly?

Since I do work as a practitioner, another challenge, of course, is my bias towards certain types of third sector organizations. This is a bias of which I am very aware, but that I also need to minimize. These challenges sometimes boil down to balancing the use of knowledge for activism and the use of knowledge for building theory.

Are the challenges and dilemmas you face unique to the third sector?

Some of the challenges faced are unique to the third sector, or in this case to the way the third sector is regulated in a specific country. With a government restricting space, especially for certain types of organizations, research on the third sector is not free from tension. If the activities of a sector are contested, so is research on actors in a sector. Furthermore, I think the balance of different forms of accountability, one of my research interests, is more delicate and multifaceted in the third sector than in, for instance, the corporate sector. Of course, challenges of cultural differences and sensitivities are also present in research areas other than the third sector.

How did you overcome these challenges and dilemmas in your projects or publications on the third sector? Did you have to adapt or revise your methodological approaches or conceptual/analytical frameworks?

The discussions at the ISTR PhD seminars in Montreal and Sabah and the discussions during my PhD research proposal defense were very helpful in determining what would be feasible, and whether the methodology I envisioned was suitable for this kind
of research. I think, for any kind of researcher, but especially for early career researchers, it is important to find people to connect with to have these kinds of discussions. Without them, we may not even be aware of the dilemmas that will present itself during the research.

Instinctively the inductive approach to research resonates with me as my drive to engage in research comes from empirical events, from observing phenomena in the field, and the sense of disconnect between academia and “the real world”, which I sometimes jokingly call the lack of translation. I see things happening, and I have noticed that there are perhaps patterns in the occurrence of phenomena or events, or behavior.

However, I do want the results of my research to have meaning and contribute to “the field” and therefore have to design it so that, even if predominantly inductive, it cannot be purely descriptive.

I have had to understand that sometimes the inductive approach is too apolitical. Further, the research I want to do, which is looking at the role of nonprofit board governance in authoritarian regimes, can be highly politicized. At the same time, the deductive approach may result in a lens that is too theoretical in its research design, causing it to be too removed from the social context and from the field.

This has led to consideration of a third possibility, that of the abductive approach trying to design the research so that it leads to knowledge with social and political utility as Krase (2018) and Nichols & Guay (2021) propose.

**What advice would you offer researchers who are studying the third sector and its activities?**

Maybe I am still too new to the research field to give advice, but I have realized, thanks to my supervisor, that finding your “tribe” is important. You need to put yourself out there in the research or academic community and not be afraid to be vulnerable. The feedback you get when you open up to others is priceless and helps to sharpen your ideas. Whether it is writing, presenting, asking questions or talking about the issues that the third sector currently faces in many countries, your knowledge will deepen, even—or especially—if you don’t agree which each other. You must still cultivate the ability to listen and try to understand each other’s viewpoints, too.

Linda has a master’s degree from the University of Groningen in Management and Organization and is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Innovation and Sustainability at the School of Global Studies, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand. She is the director of a Dutch NGO and still works in the field. She can be contacted by email (Linda.w@sgs.tu.ac.th) and via LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/in/linda-van-der-wijk-9911593).

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**Work Published by Our PhD Seminar Alumni**

**JOURNAL ARTICLE**


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**Note from the column’s contributing editors:** Please email us if you would like to promote your publications about the third sector. We will prioritize the promotion of works by our ISTR PhD seminar alumni (self-nominations are welcomed).
“Dear Faculty / Practitioner”

By Mercy Kibe

This column offers a space for young scholars and junior faculty to tap into the wisdom and experiences of seasoned scholars and experienced practitioners as they advance in their career and scholarly journey. It is well known that PhD students, recent PhD graduates, and junior faculty face a myriad of challenges that can impact on their dissertation writing, research projects, or career development. Often, they do not find or develop the support system they need to excel in their academic or career pursuits. Here, we offer an opportunity for them to ask questions and seek advice or guidance.

Difficulties Recruiting Participants for Research

Dear Faculty,

I’m currently deciding on my fieldwork and data collection method.

I am currently thinking of doing a comparative study of two cases. In each case, I aim to conduct one focus group. Is this enough data collection or should I be considering more? And how best do I justify limiting data collection to 2 focus groups? This, at the moment, is largely a pragmatic choice rather than an academic choice, and is determined by my limited resources.

Are there any similar studies I could draw on for guidance? Or should I be revisiting my research strategy?

From Anonymous

Reply #1:

There is no one best way to carry out your research.

1. Use of focus groups is one method, though it certainly should not be your only one—in addition to a thorough literature review. A focus group has the benefit of hearing (if recorded; or—less effective, taking notes) what a number of people, usually in the same location, think about a topic. The challenge is choosing members for the group. What is your criterion? If they are known to each other, they may be candid in responses. If they are not known to each other, they may well be reluctant to be totally honest, especially if the topic is controversial and/or political.

2. You are working with two groups of people comparing them in a case study. Relying on just one focus group in each case is not sufficient. It could be one element of your study but cannot be the only element. More focus groups would be better.

3. Even with more focus groups. You need additional methods. Other methods include: interviews with individuals directly on the scene, participant observation (joining group activities and observing how they work); examining documents of the groups. I suggest you locate a book on five qualitative methods, including case studies (third edition is best).

4. Finally, go to the scene; don’t try it from a distance. Too many studies are done remotely, and they usually lack precision and a clear understanding of what’s happening in the group.

Prof. Bob Press
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Reply #2:

I would like to know the details of your study, but it seems unlikely that the two focus groups will provide you with sufficiently rich data for the empirical side of your PhD if they are your sole data source. If, however, you triangulate your focus group data with data you obtain from other methods, you may indeed have enough information for your case comparison.

There are many other supplementary research methods that you may consider for triangulating the data you obtain from your focus groups. Bloomberg (2023) describes these methods in “Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Road Map From Beginning to End”. You could refer to other texts too.
Research methods that may work for you include reviewing key documents of the two cases for greater insight into their histories, contexts, financial details, etc., if relevant. A couple of in-person or online in-depth interviews of key informants could assist you if you can arrange these. You may also consider an observational approach, if possible. And, if appropriate, an online survey may provide valuable large-scale data for mixed-methods research.

Remember that the success of focus groups is not guaranteed. Whoever is facilitating the groups will need to ensure a safe and trusting environment in which the participants feel free to interact and express their views and thereby provide you with the data you require. So, in summary, it is advisable to introduce triangulation of information sources.

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Note from the column’s contributing editors: Please email the contributing editors of this column if you are an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus and would like to submit a letter and seek advice from an academic or professional in the private and third sectors, or if you are a current ISTR member (academic or professional) and would like to respond to a letter.
Tips for Thesis Writing & Examination
By Jeonghwa Yang & Peiyao Li

This column aims to provide valuable information and beneficial suggestions for doctoral students to better prepare for both the thesis examination and writing their thesis. Graduate programs show significant diversity around the world. We plan to describe different systems of doctoral examination and thesis in multiple countries/contexts by checking program descriptions in different countries and collecting information from ISTR PhD seminar alumni. Additionally, postgraduate students sometimes have difficulties obtaining sufficient information related to these tasks and struggle with moving on. In order to better understand their challenges in preparing for examinations and developing theses, we plan to interview junior PhD students to collect their needs and then interview senior PhD students and faculties to provide tips for them. Recommending books or articles about how to write a thesis is also part of our column.

PhD Programs and Dissertation Process: A UK Perspective

In the winter issue of the ISTR PhD alumni newsletter last year, we introduced the general PhD programs around social science in the United States. In this summer issue, we delve into PhD programs in the United Kingdom. PhD programs may vary depending on the country and institution offering the program. Additionally, the requirements of these programs can differ from school to school and from field to field. Therefore, in this article, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of PhD programs and the intricate dissertation process specifically within the realm of social science.

To offer more informative advice, we interviewed Dr. Lesley Alborough, a social research specialist at Wellcome Trust. She completed her doctoral program in sociology and social policy at the University of Kent, UK, and has extensive experience in various research jobs.

Process of PhD Programs in the United Kingdom

In this article, we focus on majors in social sciences, economics, marketing, business schools, and humanities. The duration of these programs typically ranges from three to four years. Students join the program after submitting a research proposal and securing two to three supervisors who will guide them throughout their PhD journey. Dr. Alborough emphasized the significant role of supervisors in guiding and ensuring progress throughout the research. The main supervisors, also known as chairs, provide regular support and feedback to students, and the relationship with supervisors is crucial for the successful completion of the research.

Students in UK PhD programs have two main options for their dissertations: a monograph or a three-paper format. The monograph offers ample space to explore complex ideas, while the three-paper format requires published or publishable papers as part of the thesis. The dissertation work process depends on the methods students employ. For qualitative researchers, data collection, particularly interviews, can be challenging due to time constraints and extensive data to manage. Dr. Alborough emphasized that students need to be well-prepared and emotionally ready for data collection, balance the number of interviews in a day, and have multiple recording options. Researchers should also plan for data analysis before collecting data.

In the final defense, known as Viva Voce, examiners ask questions about the thesis. Depending on the performance of the candidate, examiners may offer feedback and recommendations for either minor or major corrections to be addressed before the coveted PhD degree is awarded. A candidate who does not successfully defend their thesis may still be eligible for a Master’s degree.

Tips for Success

Obtaining a PhD in the UK involves a journey of dedicated research, data collection, and extensive writing. The support of supervisors, proper planning, and a balanced approach are keys to a successful PhD experience.

Completing Dissertation

- Start building ideas for your thesis early on in your PhD journey. The earlier you begin this process, the more time you have to refine and develop your research focus.
- Be prepared for data collection, and plan how to process and analyze the data. Proper preparation will enable you to navigate potential challenges with ease.
• Choose the dissertation format that best suits your research and career goals. Consider the advantages and limitations of both the monograph and the three-paper format before making your decision.

• Communicate regularly with supervisors and submit draft chapters to receive feedback. Share your progress, challenges, and draft chapters with them to receive timely feedback and constructive criticism.

**Time Management**

Dr. Alborough rightly points out that starting a dissertation may seem easier than finishing it. The last part of the dissertation writing process is particularly challenging, requiring the consolidation of different research elements and lines of inquiry pursued over the years.

• Overestimate the time it will take to write up your dissertation. Planning for a longer timeline will help you manage unexpected challenges effectively.

• Set aside short bursts of focused writing with breaks in between. This strategy can be more effective than attempting to write for eight hours straight.

• Communicate effectively with your supervisory committee to ensure timely feedback on your work. Understand their needs and timelines to optimize the collaboration.

In the latter stages of the dissertation process, Dr. Alborough offers advice on aiming to complete the writing well ahead of the final submission deadline. She also emphasizes the need to allocate ample time, preferably three to four weeks, for the crucial tasks of editing, formatting, and finalizing the dissertation. By adhering to these recommendations, you can ensure that your work is polished and meets the highest standards before submission.

**Other Suggestions and Book Recommendations**

Beyond her invaluable advice on writing a dissertation, Dr. Alborough shares insightful suggestions that resonate deeply with aspiring PhD students. She encourages PhD students to relish and enjoy every aspect of their PhD journey, embrace the unique experience of being a PhD student, seize the opportunities for focused research, and cherish the luxury of time devoted to intellectual exploration. Taking moments to revel in the process, such as basking in the sunlight while reading outdoors, is beneficial. She also mentioned that the precious time as a PhD student will never be replicated, making it even more crucial to savor every moment.

To further support PhD students on their journey, Dr. Alborough recommends the book “PhD: An uncommon guide to research, writing, & PhD life” by James Hayton. This book provides valuable guidance on managing the PhD journey from research to writing.

Writing a PhD dissertation is a challenging and rewarding experience. Remember to manage your time effectively, communicate with your dissertation community, and enjoy the journey. While it may be tough at times, the unique experience of being a PhD student is something to cherish. We hope you found this newsletter helpful on your academic journey. Best of luck with your academic journey, and remember that every step forward brings you closer to achieving your academic goals.

*Note from the column’s contributing editors: Please email us if you would like to be interviewed or share your experience with thesis writing, defense, and examination with the PhD students and faculty in our alumni network.*
The aim of this column is to profile and highlight various existing and emerging jobs boards within academia and the third sector across various regions. We also hope that, in time, this space will become a “go to” for those seeking their first role post-PhD or just their next step in academia or research within the sector. We will also provide CV, resume and application advice that is relevant to the parts of the world the alumni will be job seeking in whether this is in your home country or further afield.

Finding an Academic or Third-Sector Job in the U.S.

Welcome to Summer 2023’s exploration of third sector research jobs opportunities in a country near (or not so near) to you. The aim of this column is to take readers on a journey through different countries and regions and explore the type of third sector research roles that exist and how to prepare for your job search.

We head to the USA for this edition—at a time when many in the sector are looking for their first opportunities post-PhD. Not as easy as it seems, as Dr. Seth Meyers—this edition’s interviewee—notes: “sometimes the hard part when you’re going from a PhD to an academic position is what do I do next?” However, Seth notes there are numerous opportunities in the USA, if you prepare yourself well and will look beyond the obvious.

Seth is a 2016 ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni. He got his PhD in 2018 after having worked in the non-profit sector as a social worker for several years. Seth’s PhD very much focused on questions about the absence of research and literature related to his experiences in the sector. However, as his post PhD-career has developed, so have his research interests. He now researches LGBTQ and social equity issues.

This very much reflects Seth’s advice when preparing for the job market. Seth got his first role post-PhD at Bridgewater State University, MA. He notes this is a largely teaching position, not at a top-tier university and he has had to actively carve out his research space at Bridgewater. But he notes that he made the decision to find a university he liked and that was close to where he wanted to be located, near the people he loves. Establishing what kind of lifestyle you want, how flexible you are willing and able to be about that and whether you are willing to move and how far to get it is vital, says Seth, if you are to thrive in your new role.

More importantly, Seth advises that you give thought to the wider experience your PhD provides. What interests you, what did you find interesting and might you want to explore further: “… a lot of it is looking for the opportunities and kind of figuring out what interests you beyond just your PhD. When you are post-PhD, you’ll probably have a couple of different [research] products exploring what else needs to be researched, what else interests you.” This, in combination with knowing where you want to be located, will determine your job search parameters—needed in a big job market such as that in the U.S..

Once you have done this, make sure you prepare a good CV and collate all the corresponding paperwork you might need for various types of application. Then prepare a strong covering letter—about 2 pages long - which will introduce you and lay out your stall. After introducing yourself and your qualification, concentrate on developing a paragraph for each of your more relevant and important research projects to date. Outline what each project was/is, the theory and the methods used, what you’ve produced, published or plan to publish. You should have a paragraph that outlines what your teaching experience has been and another to outline your service to date (this includes volunteering, networks, etc.). Round your letter off with a closing paragraph of how you hope to develop your research in the future.

It’s this last paragraph that is the most important and that will make you most attractive, as Seth notes: “I read over a lot of cover letters and stuff for people and one of things I always find is people focus on what I’m doing a PhD. That’s lovely and good, but people want to see, OK, what are we going to be investing in you as an academic? What are you going to do next? How are you going to push the field forward next?”

Once you’ve prepared all of this, you should be able to confidently start your search. Seth recommended keeping connected to others via social media such as Twitter, Linkedin and suggested expanding your search beyond the usual academic jobs websites. Two sites he recommended for our sector are https://www.publicservicecareers.org/ and https://careers.cswe.org/.
If and when you do get invited for an interview, remember that the team will be interested in seeing how you work with others and will fit into and enhance the department you are applying to. Those interviewing you will not just be interested in your PhD, but all the things that will make you a good colleague, a good teacher as well as a forward-thinking researcher.

Our conversation moved onto the groups we belong to and the conferences we attend. Seth spoke about the connections and opportunities to be made via networks such as ISTR with those who will support you in your career. Seth noted that it’s good to look back and see how he’s developed as a scholar—recognizing he’s not quite a senior scholar yet, but not far off. He remains part of ISTR, and he encourages PhD students and post-PhDs to reach out to people like himself within the network for ongoing support and connection: “You know, don’t just reach out to senior scholars. I also say reach out to mid-level scholars, those associate professors, those assistant professors...”

**Note from the column’s contributing editor:** If you would like to share job opportunities related to the third sector (though not necessarily in the third sector) or would like to dispense advice on job search and applications, please email me. We are also looking for another contributing editor for this column. If you are interested in taking on this role, please email the newsletter’s co-editors at istr.phd.newsletter@gmail.com.
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Please email the contributing editors if you are an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus or a current ISTR member and would like to be featured or contribute content. You can also nominate a current ISTR member or an ISTR PhD seminar alumnus.

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Alumni Spotlight: Stories from the Field

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Studying the Third Sector: Methods, Theories, and Insights

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We are looking for another contributing editor.
About ISTR (https://www.istr.org/)

Founded in 1992, the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) is a major international association promoting research and education in the fields of civil society, philanthropy, and the nonprofit sector. ISTR is an organization committed to building a global community of scholars and interested others dedicated to the creation, discussion, and advancement of knowledge pertaining to the third sector and its impact on human and planetary well-being and development internationally. As an organization, ISTR is recognized and respected for its global vision, its commitment to excellence, its collaborative approach, and the values of diversity and pluralism with which it pursues its mission.

About the ISTR PhD Seminars and Our Alumni Network (https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging)

ISTR aims to nurture early career third-sector researchers and practitioners through targeted mentorship and investment in their development. We also present the biennial Emerging Scholar Dissertation Award to dissertations contributing to the comparative study of civil society organizations, philanthropy, voluntarism, non-governmental organizations, and related issues. Through the PhD seminars and mentoring program, we support young scholars and practitioners who examine the role and functions of third sector organizations in their countries and communities. We know our efforts will bear fruit in the social, humanitarian, policy, scientific, and cultural spheres. We hope that our PhD seminar alumni will continue engaging with the ISTR network, become lifelong members of ISTR, and build the field of third sector studies.

ISTR Regional Networks and Affinity Groups

- [ISTR Africa: African Civil Society Research Network](https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging) [publishes a monthly newsletter, available online]
- [ISTR Asia Pacific: Asia Pacific Researchers Network](https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging) [publishes a monthly newsletter, available online]
- [ISTR Latin America and the Caribbean](https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging) [publishes a monthly newsletter, available online]
- [ISTR Europe and Neighbors](https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging)
- [ISTR Affinity Groups](https://www.istr.org/page/Emerging) (Law and Regulation; Research on Volunteering; Teaching and Learning — each has a Google group)
- Social Innovation [Coming soon!]