

ISTR PhD Seminar Alumni Quarterly Newsletter



From the Co-Editors

By Anna Reggiardo, Nur Azam Perai & Shiqi Peng

Greetings from Genoa, Kuala Lumpur, and Hong Kong!

Welcome to the tenth issue of our newsletter! We are thrilled to present another edition packed with insightful content and resources for our readers.

In this issue, we feature an insightful article on the transition from PhD to tenure, offering valuable advice for those navigating academic careers. Shiqi brings together two previous features - "Alumni Spotlight" and "Third Sector Career Pathways" - to highlight the journeys of outstanding PhD seminar alumni who have recently transitioned from doctoral candidates to tenure-track faculty members. This issue features Dr. Jeonghwa Yang and Dr. Peiyao Li, who share their experiences navigating the academic job market and offer practical advice for current PhD students.

We also introduce a new section by Ali, who encourages you to write book reviews for third-sector research academic journals. Ali, who serves as the book review editor for Voluntary Sector Review, invites you to contribute book reviews for newly published material on the third sector. He shares the benefits of writing book reviews, from gaining familiarity with the publication process to enhancing critical reflection and enriching your CV - and why not, getting free books!

Additionally, Anna offers a recap of the ISTR webinar on critical perspectives in civil society research and practice, providing key takeaways and commentary. Dr. Andrew Russo and Dr. Billie Sandberg explore the concept of critical perspectives, discussing its origins, key themes, and the value it brings to civil society research. We offer some suggestions for young researchers who would like to, or are already, adopting this research perspective.

As always, our job board and calls for papers sections are updated with the latest opportunities to help you advance your career and academic pursuits. Two of us, Shiqi and Azam, are excited to be involved in activities at the [13th ISTR Asia Pacific Conference](#) and look forward to meeting and exchanging ideas with many of our fellow alumni.

Happy reading!

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Me reading reviewer 2 comments on my paper



Contribute to the Newsletter!

We are seeking expressions of interest from the ISTR PhD seminar alumni network and current members of ISTR to join our team or 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 a column in our newsletter.

Please email the **contributing editors** 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.

From PhD to Tenure: Insights on the Transition to Academia

By Shiqi Peng

This special new column brings together two previous features — “Alumni Spotlight” and “Third Sector Career Pathways”— to highlight the journeys of our outstanding PhD seminar alumni who have recently transitioned from doctoral candidates to tenure-track faculty members. In this column, we invite them to share their experiences navigating the academic job market, strategies that supported their success, and practical advice for current PhD students preparing for the next stage of their careers.

Drawing on responses from a survey questionnaire, we’ve gathered valuable insights from our recent graduates. For this issue, we are proud to feature two of our newsletter’s own contributing editors:

- **Dr. Jeonghwa Yang**, an Assistant Professor of Political Science & International Relations at SUNY Geneseo; and
- **Dr. Peiyao Li**, an Assistant Professor at Sam Houston State University.

Join us for this Q&A as we learn from their candid reflections and inspiring paths to the professoriate!

Q&A Session

Please briefly describe your transition process. Were there any unexpected challenges?

Dr. Yang: I earned my doctoral degree in Public Administration at Florida State University. Managing research, teaching, and job applications all at the same time wasn’t easy since each required a completely different mindset. I had to learn how to switch gears quickly—one moment I’d be deep in research mode, and the next, I’d be writing cover letters or preparing for interviews. Time management became really important, and I had to be intentional about how I structured my days.

Dr. Li: I earned my doctoral degree at Arizona State University. There are no significant unexpected challenges, but with more teaching and service responsibilities, time management is a bit challenging.

What strategies did you find most effective when applying for tenure-track roles?

Dr. Yang: Finding the right fit is everything. When applying, I made sure to tailor my CV and cover letter for each school based on what they were looking for. It definitely took extra effort, but it made a huge difference. I also asked faculty members and colleagues—especially those who had already gone through the job market—to review my materials. The more I revised them, the stronger they became. Reaching out to people who knew about the schools I was applying to was also really helpful since they could offer insights I wouldn’t have found just by reading the job posting.

Dr. Li: Match is the most important factor. Based on my personal experience, all the interviews and job offers I have received strongly align with my research interests. Also, our department is hiring this year; we are always prioritizing the match between research interests and departmental needs, with research capability and other factors as secondary considerations.

How did you navigate the balance between teaching, research, and service expectations during the hiring process?

Dr. Yang:

I started by setting long-term goals, like what I wanted to accomplish in a semester or over a year, and then I broke them down into smaller tasks. That helped me stay on track without feeling overwhelmed. Time management was key—I made sure to divide my time intentionally between research, teaching, and job applications.

To stay organized, I planned at different levels: monthly, weekly, and even daily. I structured my days by allocating specific time blocks to different tasks. For example, I dedicated my mornings and afternoons to research, then shifted to teaching-related and job applications in the evenings. If I had service commitments, I scheduled those for the weekends when necessary. Sticking to this structure helped me stay productive without feeling like I was constantly juggling everything at once.

I also realized that taking regular breaks actually made me more productive. I made sure to eat meals at regular times and incorporated exercise into my routine, which helped me disconnect from work and reset. Having that balance kept me from burning out and made my work more efficient in the long run.

Dr. Li:

It was tough. I do suggest that doctoral students only teach one course in the final semester in order to leave enough time for job applications and research. One piece of advice I received from my mentor was that when thinking about a job application as a part-time job, you have to leave enough flexible time to navigate all these balances.

What surprised you the most about your role as a tenure-track professor compared to your expectations as a PhD student?**Dr. Yang:**

Honestly, there's way more to do than I expected. It's not just research and teaching—there are so many additional responsibilities. But at the same time, it's incredibly rewarding. Being able to do work I'm passionate about while also having financial stability is better than I imagined.

Also, the reality of academia really hits—you're no longer just studying because you love it, but because it's your actual job. That adds some pressure, especially when mentoring students and discussing research, but it also makes the work more meaningful.

Most of all, I've been surprised by how fulfilling it is to interact with students and see their growth. Watching them develop their skills and confidence makes me feel incredibly proud, and it pushes me to become a better teacher and mentor. Seeing that impact firsthand is one of the best parts of the job.

Dr. Li:

The surprising part is that after graduation, there are more opportunities to collaborate and be involved in research. Even for our university as an R2, our colleagues always collaborate with each other, and senior faculty members share publication opportunities with our junior faculty members. With support, it is relatively easier to get research opportunities compared with our PhD studies.

Another surprising fact is that the departmental environment really matters. When communicating with colleagues from other departments and other universities, I realized the importance of exploring departmental culture before making a final decision. Whether you can be productive or not is also influenced by department arrangements such as service responsibilities and teaching load. Various management strategies can allow more time for research.

What advice would you give to current PhD students aspiring to become tenure-track professors?

Dr. Yang: If you are in the early stages of your Ph.D.

1. **Build a Strong Publication Pipeline:** I can't emphasize enough the importance of publication, which was my weakness when I applied for a tenure-track job. Think about the key themes and questions that will define your research early on. Start working on research projects that can lead to publications. Even if your dissertation takes time, having side projects or co-authored papers under review will strengthen your CV.
2. **Gain Teaching Experience:** Even if you plan to focus on research, teaching experience is valuable. Look for opportunities to teach or assist in courses, and start developing your teaching philosophy.
3. **Network with Scholars in Your Field:** Attend conferences, participate in workshops, and engage with faculty and peers. Strong connections can provide mentorship, collaboration opportunities, and insights into the job market.

If you are on the job market (or about to enter it)

1. **Identify Your Strengths and Weaknesses Early:** Understanding what you excel at and where you need improvement will help you develop a strategy to maximize your strengths and mitigate weaknesses. If your research pipeline is weak, focus on getting at least one manuscript under review. If your teaching experience is limited, prepare a detailed teaching statement that demonstrates your pedagogical approach and student engagement strategies. Or you could do a guest lecture at least.
2. **Tailor Your Application Materials:** Your CV, cover letter, research statement, and teaching statement should align with each institution's needs. Carefully read job postings and customize your materials accordingly. Apply to positions where your research and teaching interests align with the department's needs. A strong fit increases your chances of success.
3. **Be Resilient:** The job market is competitive, and rejections are normal. Stay persistent, learn from the process, and keep improving your application materials.

Lastly, **take Care of Yourself!** The job search can be stressful, so ensure you make time for self-care. Stay connected with supportive peers, and don't hesitate to seek encouragement from those who have gone through the process.

Dr. Li:

My advice is that five years are not long at all; it is better to prepare for graduation and job seeking as soon as possible. Publication is time-consuming, and teaching is also impacted by external factors. Thus, do not wait until the last minute to submit your manuscript and accumulate teaching experience.

Also, never hesitate to ask if you need more information. People may forget details after securing jobs, so if you share your confusion, concerns, and questions, they will provide you with richer insights.

Summary

Both scholars highlighted the importance of time management during the transition, especially when juggling research, teaching, and job applications. They agreed that finding the right institutional fit is key, and emphasized tailoring application materials to match departmental needs.

Dr. Yang underscored the value of structured planning, self-care, and building a strong publication pipeline early on. Dr. Li echoed the importance of early preparation, advising students not to delay teaching and publishing experiences. She also emphasized that mentorship and open communication are crucial—encouraging students to ask questions and seek advice proactively.

Surprisingly, both found the faculty role to be more collaborative and fulfilling than expected. Dr. Yang spoke of the deep satisfaction in mentoring students, while Dr. Li highlighted the supportive research environment and the influence of departmental culture on faculty productivity.

Their candid insights offer valuable guidance—and encouragement—for PhD students aspiring to join the professoriate.

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Calling for Book Reviews

By Dr. Ali Hamoudi

This is a new section of the ISTR PhD newsletter, where I try to convince you to write book reviews in third-sector research academic journals.

Let me introduce myself first. I am Ali Hamoudi, an ISTR PhD alumnus who recently completed my PhD on civil society social service provision in Iraq. I was also a contributing editor to this newsletter where Shiqi and I diligently interviewed PhD alums in the alumni spotlight article. Due to life-changing events as well as my desire to complete my PhD (finally!), I took a hiatus from contributing to the newsletter for several months. Now, I am back as an early career researcher and junior faculty member at a new university start-up in Baghdad, Iraq.

Let me now return to the purpose of this newsletter section. One of the current academic activities I have adopted is to become a book review editor for Voluntary Sector Review (VSR). In this capacity, I solicit book reviews from researchers such as yourselves for newly published material on the third sector.

A Disclaimer: I have a notable conflict of interest. By convincing you to write book reviews and specifically book reviews for academic journals such as VSR, I am fulfilling my duties as book review editor well. At the same time, I believe writing book reviews is a great idea for PhD students and early career researchers to get involved in, and I will explain briefly why in the following points below.

- Book reviews are an excellent way to become familiar with the publication process. To submit a book review you must go through the same basic steps as you would a journal article, albeit in a much less stringent manner. As such, it could almost be considered a practice run in publishing your longer manuscripts.
- Book reviews in academic journals can be included among your publications on your CV. Certainly, they are not as prestigious as journal articles, but they do demonstrate you have and can publish.
- Book reviews provide the opportunity for you to find your voice as a researcher. The books you review demonstrate the topics you are interested in as well as how you approach research. Do you find yourself more directed toward transformative critical analysis or do prefer to take an objective approach? Writing book reviews allows you to find out about yourself and also demonstrate it to others.
- You gain access to free books. When you review a book, you are given a free copy.

Now that I have successfully convinced you to write (at least one) book review, **where should you start?**

ISTR has excellent book club webinars where you can get an idea about newly published research and speak directly to the authors. Indeed, the latest book club webinar which you can [watch here](#)¹, concerning the newly released book [Handbook of Critical Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizing and Voluntary Action](#)² by some of our own ISTR members is a book we are seeking to review at VSR.

Furthermore, you can follow publications of various third sector research series, such as the [Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies series](#)³ also run through ISTR, the [Routledge Studies in the Management of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organizations series](#)⁴, or the [Palgrave Studies in Third Sector Research series](#)⁵. All the publications in these series would be excellent ideas for books to review.

¹<https://www.istr.org/news/news.asp?id=696833>

²https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/handbook-of-critical-perspectives-on-nonprofit-organizing-and-voluntary-action-9781800371804.html?srsltid=AfmBOopbAjo_Dzto9M3T1FNBWIEET67WdD6ENP_FK5vCjIG_LOPORLiy

³<https://www.springer.com/series/6339>

⁴<https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-the-Management-of-Voluntary-and-Non-Profit-Organizations/book-series/SE0320?srsltid=AfmBOorgBmYhOqYNbmbxY3vlg8jx07Tk8RZc1NRFUwSZTWVlo4Y3xHsD>

⁵<https://link.springer.com/series/16484>

Finally, you could network with authors, publishers, and book review editors (like me at alibakir.ala@auib.edu.iq) and/or contact them directly to gain a better sense of the publications currently available and to formulate ideas for what publications you would like to review.

Again, though I would strongly encourage you to consider publishing your reviews with VSR, several academic journals serve the same purpose. Of course, journals such as *Voluntas* would be an excellent choice as well as *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*.

Most importantly, consider writing reviews as a service to your colleagues. Not only are you helping others find good material to read, but you are also providing much-needed exposure to the researchers who dedicated their time and energy to writing the books. We look forward to your contributions as a book reviewer!

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ISTR WEBINAR Introduction to Critical Perspectives in Civil Society Research and Practice

In this edition, we recap and comment on the engaging webinar held on Friday, 7th march, organized by our ISTR Critical Perspectives Affinity Group. The webinar explored the concept of critical perspectives, with nearly 20 participants eager to discuss this research approach. You can access the [full recording here](#).

By Anna Reggiardo



INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN CIVIL SOCIETY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

with Billie Sandberg

March 7th @ 10:00 AM PST

ISTR

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
THIRD-SECTOR RESEARCH



Hosted by the Critical Perspectives Affinity Group

Figure 1. Screenshot from the ISTR Webinar on Critical Perspectives in Civil Society Research and Practice.

What are Critical Perspectives in Civil Society Research and Practice?

Dr. Andrew Russo, from the University of Oregon, moderated the webinar, illustrating how, after meeting other like-minded scholars, they felt the need to create a specific ISTR affinity group on the topic and then convened at the last ISTR Conference in Antwerp. Dr. Billie Sandberg, from Portland State University, presented this perspective, highlighting its origins and key themes. For the full content of the webinar, I warmly suggest you catch up on it later, along with [the ISTR Book Club held on the 19th of March](#) "*Handbook of Critical Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizing and Voluntary Action*".

First of all, Dr. Sandberg started by reflecting on the reasons that pushed her toward this perspective: the feeling that what she learned in classes about the third sector didn't match her experiences as a practitioner. Thus, she delved into more critical research, starting with the work of Michel Foucault.

Dr. Sandberg, subsequently, defined what "critical perspectives" are. In terms of key themes, she highlights a few points of critical perspectives:

- Dig beneath the surface of social structures - such as those related to politics, economics, culture, discourse, gender, and race - and examine how we understand and take them for granted as a society. This helps illuminate how these structures often lead to oppression and allows us to think about ways to change them.
- Insist on the power of agency, both personal and collective, to transform society.
- Challenge pervasive ideologies.
- View knowledge as being socially constructed and not value-neutral.

She and other researchers affiliated with the critical perspective affinity group consciously choose to adopt the term "perspective", as they recognize that it is a really broad field of research with different voices and themes (for a complete view of different theories: [Agger, 2013](#)).

What value does this perspective bring to civil society research? Dr. Sandberg and Dr. Russo argue that this perspective is perfect for challenging some "taken for granted" concepts that shape the sector theoretically and in practice. It allows scholars to liberate themselves from "discursive traps," unveiling that there are more ways to do things.

This perspective has been used to analyze the evolving relationships between the state and civil society organizations, beginning in the '70s, and from the '90s, analyzing the impact of neoliberal marketization and NGOization. Today, the field is moving toward finding solutions to address this changing landscape, developing formalized counter-narratives and counter-discourses, and other forms of resistance.

Finally, adopting a critical perspective also means reflecting on our own practices. This means that even critical perspective scholars have to reflect on their own field, recognizing, for example, that it is still a mostly Western and white-dominated field that still has a long way to go to enable emancipation and liberation.

Group Discussion

The informal context of the webinar allowed for a friendly and stimulating discussion around some topics related to this perspective.

- Impact on Teaching: critical perspectives can influence teaching methods, encouraging a balance between mainstream and critical materials.
- Engaging with Organizations: researchers must be prepared for uncomfortable conversations that help organizations reflect on their values and practices. For example, these conversations may help in the retention of some volunteers or staff members who feel burned-out because they see that their organization's practices do not reflect its declared values.
- Recognizing Privilege: scholars should acknowledge their power and privilege and communicate it transparently.
- Intersection with Decolonial Perspectives: both perspectives share an attention to power dynamics in colonized spaces.

Why this topic matter for young researchers

Finally, as our audience here is mostly composed of young researchers, they may wonder, what are the consequences of adopting this perspective in their career? What advice can we share with you?

- When choosing a less explored perspective or field, one must understand that it will impact their career path. This does not mean giving up, but being strategic, finding a community of like-minded scholars, knowing the journals that appreciate and understand this type of research, being ready to “educate” reviewers on less conventional research perspectives, and being prepared to make compromises if necessary.
- A critical perspective does not mean losing hope; unveiling power dynamics and critical aspects aims to critically guide the third sector so that it can be better. Analyzing power struggles can help bring about real change and challenge some taken-for-granted assumptions related to the third sector. Recognizing that injustice, oppression, and power asymmetries also shape the third sector is the first step to addressing these issues.

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Jobs Board

Job Announcements

By Shiqi Peng

Postdoctoral Fellow/Research Fellow Opportunities

1. Postdoctoral Scholar, The Penn State Translational Center for Child Maltreatment Studies

The Penn State Translational Center for Child Maltreatment Studies (TCCMS), a cross-disciplinary research center funded by the National Institutes of Health, is recruiting a highly motivated Postdoctoral Scholar with interests in child maltreatment, child welfare services, and related topics. Applicants with interests or experience working with administrative data (e.g., electronic child welfare system, health care, clinical service, or justice system records) are particularly encouraged to apply. The scholar will be supervised by Drs. Sarah Font in the Department of Sociology and Criminology and Christian Connell in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. Font and Connell co-lead the Dissemination and Outreach Core of the TCCMS.

Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

More information: [Click here](#)

2. McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships Scheme, University of Melbourne

Established in 2010, the McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme is the University of Melbourne's flagship postdoctoral development program that contributes to research excellence and builds the capability of high calibre scholars at the pivotal early career stage. The fellowship is a period of concentrated research time that enables outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their research, generate new projects and collaborations, develop research leadership capabilities, and contribute to the broader research objectives of the University.

Please note that the 2025 McKenzie round will open in mid-March 2025. This webpage will be subsequently updated then.

More information: [Click here](#)

3. Postdoctoral Researcher for the Generating Generosity Project, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The postdoc is a key force in the project “Generating Generosity”, investigating why individuals with more income and wealth in The Netherlands tend to give less as a proportion of wealth and income, and how generosity may be enhanced.

More information about the project is available at: [Generating Generosity Blog](#)

Please apply via the application button and upload your curriculum vitae and cover letter before **7 May 2025**. Interviews are scheduled on **12 May 2025** (first round), and **21 May 2025** (second round). Submitting a diploma is part of the application process. You do not need a recommendation letter to apply. A reference check may be part of the selection procedure.

More information: [Click here](#)

4. **Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong**

The University of Hong Kong is hiring a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration. Applicants must hold a PhD in psychology, social work, sociology, statistics, biostatistics, public health, nursing, or related fields. Fluency in English and Chinese (including Cantonese) is required. Preferred candidates will have experience in social sciences research, advanced data analysis (e.g., SEM, MLM), and strong analytical and problem-solving skills.

Tenure Track Assistant/Associate Professor Opportunities

Application deadline: April 30, 2025

More information: [Click here](#)

5. **Chair Professor / Professor / Associate Professor / Assistant Professor, Lingnan-60 Global Talent Recruitment, Lingnan University**

Lingnan University is one of the eight publicly funded institutions in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and has the longest established tradition among the local institutions of higher education. As its 60th anniversary approaches, Lingnan University has launched the Lingnan-60 Global Talent Recruitment and will recruit over 60 outstanding scholars from around the globe to join the University as tenured or tenure-track Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, or Chair Professor in all academic fields.

Interdisciplinary areas will be focused on that would spearhead a digitalized future for the University's teaching and research capabilities.

Review of applications will continue until the post is filled. Qualified candidates are advised to submit their applications early for consideration.

More information: [Click here](#)

6. **Assistant Professor in Social Policy and Administration, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University**

As one of the largest social sciences departments in the Asian Pacific region, the Department of Applied Social Sciences offers research degrees at MPhil and PhD levels as well as taught programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in various disciplines.

The Department is home to many thriving research and practice units: Centre for Social Policy and Social Entrepreneurship, Child Development Centre, China and Global Development Network, and Professional Practice and Assessment Centre. It is also strongly connected with the Institute of Active Ageing of the Faculty of Health and Social Sciences and other health related disciplines. These provide platforms for collaborative research, practice projects, and policy discussions with government departments and NGOs.

Focused areas of research in the Department include but are not limited to:

- family, child, youth and ageing studies;
- psychology, mental health, and health;
- social work and human service management;
- social policy, social welfare, and community development;
- social theory, and the Chinese mainland and global social development.

Consideration of applications will commence on **27 February 2025** until the position is filled.

More information: [Click here](#)

Lecturers, Researchers & Executives**7. Executive Director, Cary Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy & Nonprofit Studies and Women's Philanthropy Board, Auburn University**

The Cary Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy & Nonprofit Studies encompasses teaching, outreach, and research, thus supporting the tripartite mission of Auburn University. Its work focuses on philanthropy, wealth management, mentoring and nonprofit studies, serving a variety of students and other audiences in a real and virtual community.

The Cary Center supports teaching and learning in the College of Human Sciences academic programs which focus on the art and science of philanthropy as applied to the nonprofit sector. The center provides mentoring for students, professionals, and communities in the areas of economic sustainability and philanthropy. The Cary Center includes three divisions: Community and Collegiate, Youth, and Adult, which includes the flagship program, The Women's Philanthropy Board and the men's auxiliary group, the Phils.

Review of applications will continue until the position is filled.

More information: [Click here](#)

8. President, Rockefeller Archive Center

The Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) was established in 1974 as the result of efforts by the children of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to gather in one institution the records of their family's philanthropic work and to stimulate research into the ways in which these philanthropic efforts had impacted the nation and the world.

Since that time, the Archive Center has grown substantially, so that it now holds the archives of a large and growing number of philanthropic institutions including the Ford Foundation, the Knight Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation, and many other foundations and civil society organizations, as well as the papers of individuals associated with these organizations.

The Board seeks a successor to the retiring President, who will build upon a solid foundation and position the RAC for the future opportunities and issues facing archives, research, and philanthropy. The new President needs to embrace how the past can inform progress in the future.

How to apply: Please send nominations or applications, including cover letters and CVs, to Jane Phillips Donaldson and G. Angela Henry at RAC@PhillipsOppenheim.com

More information: [Click here](#)

9. Director, Indiana University Public Policy Institute

The Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs ("O'Neill School") at Indiana University (IU) seeks an accomplished scholar and visionary leader to serve as the director of the Indiana University Public Policy Institute ("PPI") and join the faculty as a full-time, tenured Full or Associate Professor.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a premier policy institute at a top-tier urban research institution, driving high-impact policy analysis and public engagement at local, state, and national levels. The O'Neill School has a presence on both the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses, with PPI operating across both locations. The faculty position (including the tenure home) will be based on the Indianapolis campus.

The O'Neill School seeks a dynamic and forward-thinking leader to advance policy research, secure external funding, and foster partnerships that translate academic insights into real-world impact. The director will be responsible for setting strategic priorities, developing and securing competitive external grants, overseeing research initiatives, and building cross-disciplinary collaborations.

The director will engage with policymakers, government agencies, nonprofits, industry, faculty, and students to ensure that PPI's research informs decision-making and contributes to effective policies that benefit society. A strong emphasis is placed on evidence-based solutions that address critical public challenges.

Review of applications will begin on **March 24, 2025** and will continue until the position is filled.

More information: [Click here](#)

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Opportunities for Collaboration & Calls for Papers/Applications

By Anna Reggiardo

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

1. CFP: 6th African Philanthropy Conference

Deadline for submission: 30th April 2025

The African Philanthropy Conference is an annual gathering of practitioners, civil society policy influencers and stakeholders to share experiences, reflect as a collective and unpack the impact and way forward for philanthropy on the continent. The 6th African Philanthropy Conference focuses on “Sustainable Financing for Development in the Majority World,” exploring models for African economic sovereignty and sustainability. The APC has carved out a distinct niche within the philanthropic landscape, strategically focused on a South-South agenda. The APC is intentional on finding ways and means to address the most pressing challenges specific to Africa. Since its founding in 2019, the APC has steadily grown in influence, convening thought leaders across sectors and gathering in locations that reflect the vast regional diversity pervasive in the continent. With each iteration, the APC has refined a vision of philanthropy that moves beyond traditional aid, positioning it as a strategic driver for self-reliance and sustainable development. By rooting its agenda in African values and prioritizing Indigenous knowledge, the APC continues to build a uniquely African approach to philanthropy, one that empowers the continent to lead on its own terms and sets a transformative precedent for the Majority World. Scholars and practitioners are invited to submit abstracts on decolonized financing, ethical philanthropy, climate resilience, digital finance, and community-led development.

Conference Details:

- **Dates:** 27th–31st July 2025
- **Venue:** The American University in Cairo (AUC)
- **Host:** John D. Gerhart Center

Submission Guidelines:

- Abstracts: 300–500 words in English
- Include key arguments, methodology, and contributions
- Accepted abstracts require full paper submissions

Important Dates:

- **Submission Deadline:** 30th April 2025
- **Notification of Acceptance:** 15th May 2025
- **Full Paper Deadline:** 30th June 2025
- **Presentations:** 27th–29th July 2025

For more information, please visit the conference website.

2. CFP: 14th Annual Symposium on Public Policy for Nonprofits

Deadline for submission: 2nd May 2025

This year's theme, "*Breaking Through the Noise: Assessing and Communicating the Impact of Nonprofits and Philanthropy*," focuses on how the nation's nonprofits and philanthropies can better measure and convey their contributions to policymakers, the media, and the public.

Research shows Americans trust nonprofits more than government, corporations, and the media. Yet nonprofits and philanthropies often struggle to convey their value to key stakeholders. The current administration's push to reduce government spending — including contracts with nonprofit service providers — highlights the need for nonprofits to strengthen their storytelling, use data more effectively, and communicate their valuable contributions strategically.

The policy symposium annually brings together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to explore key public policy issues affecting nonprofits and philanthropy. Participants also consider whether additional research is needed to create better policies to sustain vital institutions, meet social needs, and support civil society in the years to come.

For more information regarding this year's guidelines for proposal submission and the proposal review process, please visit George Mason University's symposium page as well as the Independent Sector's website.

For questions or further information about the symposium, please contact Emily Rogers at emilyr@independentsector.org or Mirae Kim at mkim216@gmu.edu.

3. Call for Papers: ERNOP Conference 2025

Deadline to Submit Abstracts: 10th May 2025

12th International Research Conference of the European Research Network On Philanthropy
Philanthropy by the people, for the people? The roles, organizations and motivations of philanthropy in contemporary democracies and social structures

When: Pre-conference 'Safe Spaces' & PhD Workshop: 24th September 2025. Main Conference: 25th–26th September 2025

Where: University of Heidelberg, Germany

More information [\[https://ernop.eu/conference2025/\]](https://ernop.eu/conference2025/)

4. Applications Invited for PhD Scholarships in Community Connectedness

Deadline for submission: 17th April 2025

Applications are invited for PhD Scholarships in the Centre for Collaboration in Community Connectedness (C4) at Sheffield Hallam University, commencing 1st October 2025.

Are you passionate about building strong, cohesive, and resilient communities? Are you committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion through local community or social action? Are you interested in how this can be supported through genuinely collaborative research within communities?

If so, this unique opportunity allows PhD students to undertake interdisciplinary research into creating and sustaining communities with high levels of participation and social connectedness. Prospective students are encouraged to propose their own research areas, particularly in:

- Social and community infrastructure
- Cultural, physical, and natural assets
- Relationships across the life course
- Digital and technological innovation and inclusion
- Systems, markets, and institutions
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion and their relationship with identities and place

Successful applications will emphasize 'what works' for different communities, develop new research methods, and demonstrate a commitment to community involvement and co-production.

The studentships are linked to a major investment in a new Research Centre funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), involving various academic, community, and policy partners.

For further information and to apply, visit: *PhD Scholarships in Community Connectedness*

For questions, email: [Social-economic-pgr@shu.ac.uk] (<mailto:Social-economic-pgr@shu.ac.uk>)

5. Call for Practitioner Experts: ERNOP.EU

Deadline for submission: Open call

Most academic research is underutilised, while on the other hand, there is a need for practitioners to learn from academics. Given limited resources within the academic and philanthropy community, academic insights should be used as much as possible. However, practitioners rarely have time and access to the work published in academic journals. Besides, not all content of academic papers is relevant for practitioners. At the same time, academics often do not have time and/or skills to make their work accessible for practitioners and, what's more, they get little rewards for doing so as the number of individual publications is often too limited to build a constituency.

The European Research Network On Philanthropy (ERNOP) - the academic network of philanthropy researchers in Europe - aims to develop the ERNOP Research Notes. Here their call: "Are you passionate about advancing philanthropy? Do you have expertise in fundraising, impact measurement, NGO management, volunteering, or other philanthropy-related topics? We invite you to join our Practitioner Expert Database and contribute to ERNOP Research Notes - short, easy-to-read, and visually engaging two-pagers summarising academic articles by ERNOP members".

For the first 2025 issue of the ERNOP Research Notes, they are looking for Practitioner Experts in the areas of volunteering and NGO leadership and governance.

More information at: <https://ernop.eu/information-for-practitioner-experts/>

6. 2025 Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference

Deadline for abstract submission: 12th May 2025

This year's Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research conference seeks to explore different ways of thinking and organising, acknowledging, whilst also looking beyond, borders and boundaries. This might include exploring alternative organisational forms, collaborations of different kinds between different sets of actors, the adoption of more movement-based approaches within and beyond voluntary organisations, or what systems change means in theory and in practice. Looking beyond sectoral and organisational boundaries raises questions about how to organise in such spaces and how resources are used and distributed. It encourages us to explore how to build infrastructure, capacity, and support to do this work, how to put people in the centre of design and delivery, and how to research and learn from more experimental approaches.

The Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference 2025 (VSVR '25) invites participants to explore these issues associated with the conference theme, whilst also hearing about the latest research covering a wide range of topics relating to the voluntary sector and volunteering. Through plenary sessions, papers, panels, and workshops we challenge presenters to help us to think as broadly and creatively as possible about the potentials, limits, and connections between the voluntary sector and volunteering working together and with others to create change through collaborations, networks, movements, and systems.

Date: 3rd and 4th September 2025

Theme: Creating Change Together: Civil society working beyond sector and organisational boundaries

Location: Bayes Business School, City, University of London, London, UK

More information at: <https://www.vssn.org.uk/2025-voluntary-sector-and-volunteering-research-conference/>

7. CFP: Special Issue in *Voluntas* - The Nonprofit Sector and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

Deadline for submission: 15th June 2025

VOLUNTAS invites researchers to submit papers for a special issue focused on "*The Nonprofit Sector and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)*". This issue will explore how nonprofit organizations engage with ESG principles in management, collaboration, and advocacy.

Guest editors Hui Li and Wai Fung Lam from the University of Hong Kong aim to examine the integration of ESG frameworks within nonprofits, their collaborations with governments and businesses, and their role in promoting sustainability. The issue welcomes diverse methodological approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and theoretical studies.

To participate, submit an extended abstract of approximately 1,000 words detailing your research questions, methodology, data, findings, and expected contributions. Send your abstract via email to the guest editors by 15th June 2025. Selected authors will be invited to a workshop at the University of Hong Kong in December 2025, with travel and accommodation expenses covered for one author per paper.

For more information, please contact the guest editors, Hui Li (lihuipa@hku.hk) and Wai Fung Lam (dwflam@hku.hk).

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News & Announcements

14th ISTR Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference

The conference, titled "Governance, Innovation, and New Collaborative Forms for the Common Good in Latin America and the Caribbean /Gobernanza, innovación y nuevas formas asociativas para el bien común en América Latina y el Caribe" will be held at Anahuac University, Mexico. North Campus, Mexico City Metropolitan Area. The conference dates are July 2-4, 2025, and the PhD Seminar will take place on July 1-2, 2025. The event aims to explore how governance, innovation, and new collaborative forms can contribute to the common good in the region. The call for abstracts is open, and submissions are welcome in Spanish, Portuguese, or English. The conference will cover a broad range of topics, including voluntary actions, social movements, governance and management of civil society organizations, critical philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and more. More information at: <https://www.istr.org/page/LACRegional>.

PhD Student and Early Career Scholars in Third Sector Research: Joys, Challenges & Completion Rates (online)

This survey aims to gather insights from international PhD students and early career scholars on their experiences, including the joys and challenges they face, as well as their completion rates. This information will be invaluable in shaping our understanding and supporting our PhD community more effectively.

Please reply here: <https://forms.gle/jj1TtAwwnqJufNUM6>

Thank you for your time and participation!

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About ISTR

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

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. It is our 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 African Civil Society Regional Network — Publishes a monthly newsletter, available online.

ISTR Asia Pacific Regional Network — Publishes a monthly newsletter, available online.

ISTR Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Network — Publishes a monthly newsletter, available online.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Network

ISTR Europe and Neighbors Regional Network

ISTR Affinity Groups — Critical Perspectives; Decolonized Research; Gender; Law and Regulation; Research Centre Directors; Research for Practice; Research on Volunteering; Social Innovation and Impact; Sustainability; Teaching and Learning — each has a Google group.

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