



Displaced Childhood: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

[PIs: Nayanika Mookherjee (Anthropology); Gabriella Treglia (History); Simon Hackett (Sociology)]

[with IAS fellow [Dr Noa Vaisman](#) | [IAS Durham](#) (Anthropology, Aarhus) and collaborating researcher [Professor David Brodzinsky - Durham University](#) (Psychology, Rutgers)]

03 June 2025 – 10.00 am - 6 pm; IAS Seminar Room, Cosin's Hall, Institute of Advanced Study.

[Note below the information for the lecture by Dr Noa Vaisman in Anthropology on Wednesday 4/6, 3-5 pm; D110: Chainsaw Politics and Trust in the State: alt-right politics and the work of justice in Argentina]

Displaced Childhood aims to explore the relationship between the memories and life trajectories among adult adoptees who were displaced from their birth families as children and moved into alternative families or institutions, as a result of state interventions. We seek to examine the experiences of adult adoptees who are retrospectively reassessing the stories they have been given to form their life trajectories. The various themes we are interested in exploring in relation to adoption are memory, belonging, mental health, fantasies, bio-social debates, search for natal family/roots and the role of DNA.

Programme: 9.30 - Coffee

10-11: Introduction and presentation by members of the Displaced Childhood project (Nayanika, Noa, Gabriella and Simon). Chair Gabriella Treglia

11-11.15: Coffee

11.15 -1. Roundtable on Interdisciplinary perspectives and Displaced Childhood: Chair Simon Hackett.

Contributors include Shila Khuki De Vries (Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies, Radboud University, Netherlands), Maja Kutlaca (Psychology), Ana Sousa Santos (Anthropology), Alex Easton (Psychology), Sanjana Kumari (Anthropology), Emilija Zabaliute (Anthropology).

Reflections on the morning presentations through various disciplinary perspectives. We are hoping the psychological, cognitive and neuroscience perspective would particularly enhance the historical, political, sociological, anthropological, embodied and emotional understandings of the experience of adult adoptees.

1-2 - Lunch

2-4: Lecture and discussion with Professor David Brodzinsky (Psychology, Rutgers). Discussion and questions. Nayanika Mookherjee

Developmental and Contextual Factors Influencing Adoptees' Internalization of Adoption Trauma.'

The lecture will focus on how the experience of being adopted changes for many adult adoptees as they become more conscious of the personal, familial, relational, and societal factors that impact the meaning of being an adopted person.

4-4.30: Coffee

4.30 – 6: Overview of Debates on Non-consensual adoption and the Plans forward. Led by Shila Khuki De Vries and all PIs.

Brief Bio of Contributors to the workshop on Displaced Childhood:

Nayanika Mookherjee is a Professor of Political Anthropology in Durham University and Co-Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies. She has published extensively on anthropology of violence, ethics and aesthetics and she researches on gendered violence during wars (*Spectral Wound*, Duke UP 2015; graphic novel and animation film *Birangona* 2019), debates on irreconciliation (*On Irreconciliation* 2022) and she is continuing her research on war babies, transnational adoption and conflict (supported by a British Academy fellowship). She is the Co-PI for the project Displaced Childhood with Gabriela Treglia (History) Simon Hackett (Sociology).

Simon Hackett (Sociology) is Professor of Child Abuse and Neglect in the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse at Durham University. With over three decades of experience working in the field of child maltreatment, Simon is particularly known for his research and publications on childhood sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours. He is Board Member and President Elect of ATSA, the Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse. He is past Chairperson of the National Organization for the Treatment of Abuse. In the UK, he is a member of the Advisory Board of the national Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.

Gabriela Treglia (History) is an Assistant Professor and specialises in twentieth-century Native American socio-cultural history. She is preparing a book on the so-called 'Indian New Deal' (1933-1945), in particular the education programmes and professed cultural tolerance implemented by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the gap between its pronouncements and policy implementation, and the reactions and responses from Native communities to these policies. Her further interests are in issues of cultural genocide, cultural perceptions of 'the Other', and Native decolonization, drawing upon archival, pictorial and oral history sources. She is a committee member of the Native Studies Research Network of the UK (NSRN-UK).

Dr Noa Vaisman | IAS Durham (Anthropology, Aarhus University, Durham IAS fellow Easter 2025) is a socio-cultural anthropologist, currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Aarhus University and a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at Durham University. Her research interests are wide-ranging, recently focusing on experiences of justice, imagination, and the rise of the alt-right in Argentina. Her various ethnographic projects in Argentina have led her to explore local ideas of personhood and truth in the case of the "living disappeared", write about social reconstruction after authoritarian rule, and become captivated by the power of creative forms of resistance and refusal that emerge in states of crisis. Her particular interest and focus within the larger project of Displaced Childhoods will be on the memories, fantasies, and life trajectories of the siblings of the "living disappeared".

Shila Khuki de Vries is a PhD researcher (Cultural Anthropology and Development Studies, Radboud University, Netherlands) on transnational adoption system, in particular the different actors in the system and how they contribute to the course of adoptions to the Netherlands. She is also part of an active adoptee community that is working towards a realistic narrative of adoption and the lives of people with an adoption background. Shila was co-organizer of the cultural podium on adoption FAR FROM HERE. In addition, she works at the Advisory Council on International Affairs on independent advice for the Dutch government in the fields of international development and peace & security.

Maja Kutlaca (Psychology)(she/her) is an Associate professor in Social Psychology at Durham University. Maja has background in music and psychology. Her research interests include social change, allyship, morality, and discrimination. Maja co-leads an international network of 300+ collective action researchers. She is co-PI for the project on Reconceptualizing Resistance together with Elizabeth Kahn (SGIA) and Jana Bacevic (Sociology).

Ana Sousa Santos (Anthropology), is a career development fellow and her research explores the politics of memory and legacies of violence in Mozambique and Portugal. Her work investigates the afterlives of violence, focusing on memory, belonging, and ownership in Northern Mozambique. Recent publications include *It's not my story to tell: ownership and the politics of history in Mocímboa da Praia, Mozambique* (JRAI 2021), *Violence, rumor, and elusive trust in Mocimboa da Praia, Mozambique* (Social Analysis 2021), and *Growing apart: the historical construction of difference in Northern Cabo Delgado, Mozambique* (Kronos 2024). Ana's current research with Portuguese ex-combatants examines the connections between silenced war memories, personal trauma, and collective remembrance of war.

Alex Easton (Psychology), is the Director of IAS, Durham University and is a Professor of Psychology with a research interest (among others) in Cognitive Neuroscience of Learning and Memory in episodic memory across human and non-human species and the nature of context in memory and the way in which social context affects learning and memory. He is the President of the European Brain and Behaviour Society and Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* from July 2025.

Sanjana Kumari (Anthropology) is a first-year PhD researcher who is working on psychosocial suffering during life-limiting conditions in a lower-caste informal settlement in India. She has long-term qualitative research experience on questions of public health and informal economy in India.

Emilija Zabaliute (Anthropology) is a career development fellow and her research interests lie in the areas of global and public health, reproductive health, chronicity, and everyday economies in urban poor neighborhoods in Delhi, India. Specifically, she focuses on how care, kinship and forms of relatedness shape healthcare interventions, illness experiences, and vulnerability in precarious conditions. She earned her PhD from the University of Copenhagen, and held a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Edinburgh.

[Professor David Brodzinsky - Durham University](#) (Psychology, Rutgers) Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus of Clinical and Developmental Psychology at Rutgers University (New Jersey, USA). For more than four decades, his research and scholarly writing has focused on developmental and mental health issues related to the adjustment of adopted individuals and their families. He has published numerous journal articles and book chapters on these topics, as well as seven coauthored or coedited books, the most recent being *The Adopted Child* (with Jesus Palacios; Cambridge University Press 2023). Currently, he lives in the Los Angeles area, where he maintains a clinical and consultation practice focusing on the mental health needs of adoptive kinship members.

Chainsaw Politics and Trust in the State: alt-right politics and the work of justice in Argentina

Lecture by Dr Noa Vaisman in Anthropology

[IAS fellow [Dr Noa Vaisman](#) | [IAS Durham](#) (Anthropology, Aarhus)]

Wednesday 4/6, 3-5 pm; D110.

For a long time, we have lived under the sign of transition, that is, the notion that after state repression, violent civil strife and mass human rights violations, the implementation of some measures of “dealing with the past” (couched in the general terms of the Transitional Justice toolkit) will lead to the founding of a trustworthy modern democratic State. In this talk, I want to explore the notion of trust as it exists in state-citizen relations in Argentina. Through a select few historical and more recent scenes and events, I examine the stance many middle-class Argentines hold that the state can be and at the same time cannot be trusted. This paradoxical position, while seemingly incorporating incompatible cognitive and affective dispositions, is key to understanding the imaginaries of the state in the long aftermath of the last civico-military dictatorship (1976-1983). The recent querying of the past through acts of dictatorship denialism and, since December 2023, an alt-right political campaign aimed at dismantling state institutions and political practices that contended with past crimes, raise the stakes even further. Together this historical trajectory highlights the relation between trust, the State and the surprising rise of the alt-right in Argentina.