



OLLSCOIL NA  
GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF GALWAY

An Institiúid Cúrsa Saoil  
& Sochaí

Institute for Lifecourse  
& Society

ENABLING  
EQUITY  
ACROSS THE  
LIFE COURSE

## Institute for Lifecourse and Society - ILAS *International Research Training Series*



### Enhancing Knowledge Equity through use of Grounded Theory for Social Justice and Decolonisation Approaches.

This seminar explores the integration of inclusive research methods to enhance knowledge equity, focusing on key concepts like epistemic justice. It emphasizes the role of inclusive practices in achieving equitable goals throughout the lifecourse. This seminar introduces the history and development of Grounded Theory (GT) and its variant, Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), highlighting their application in social justice research. Key features of CGT, including coding, theoretical sampling, and participant involvement, are explored with an emphasis on reflexivity and co-constructive principles.

**DATE:** Monday, 31st March 2025

**TIME:** 11:00 - 14:30

**VENUE:** ILAS, Room G006

[Register here](#)

INVITATION



This seminar also addresses the University of Galway's decolonising curriculum initiative, focusing on the development of a toolkit to promote knowledge equity. Participants will engage in discussions on how decolonising practices can challenge traditional structures and foster inclusivity in academic spaces. The seminar invites reflection on the opportunities and obstacles in advancing knowledge equity within the current institutional framework.

# Speaker(s)



**Prof. Caroline  
McGregor**

**Prof. Caroline McGregor** is the Director of the Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) and a Senior Researcher at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. Her expertise is in social work, with extensive experience in teaching, research and publishing on issues related to children, young people, and families. She co-authored "Support and Protection Across the Lifecourse" (2021) with Professor Pat Dolan. Since 2012, she has collaborated on research focused on persons with direct care experiences, family support, prevention, early intervention, and child protection. Additionally, she has worked as an SFI investigator on a CURAM focusing on impact orientation of principal investigators and science advocacy training.



**Prof. Elaine  
Keane**

**Prof. Elaine Keane** PhD, is Head of the Discipline of Education at the University of Galway. Her research centres on social class and education, teacher diversity, and Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT). She has led numerous national and international projects and published extensively in these fields. She is the lead editor of the Routledge International Handbook of Constructivist Grounded Theory in Educational Research (2025) and co-editor of a 2023 book on diversifying the teaching profession. She serves as Co-Editor of Irish Educational Studies, Editorial Board member of Teaching in Higher Education, and holds leadership roles in various academic networks, including the National Initial Teacher Education Diversity Network.



**Dr Tanja  
Kovačič**

**Dr Tanja Kovačič** works at the Office of the VP for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, with a lead responsibility in relation to decolonising the curriculum. Previously a post-doctoral researcher at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, her work focused on a major evaluation of the educational programmes combatting educational inequality in Ireland. Her PhD explored generational growing-up experiences of youth in socialist and post-socialist Slovenia. Her research spans the sociology of youth and educational inequality, using qualitative methods like biographic and narrative inquiry, epistolary, photovoice and collaborative autoethnography. She has contributed to projects on alternative education in Ireland, the deinstitutionalisation of children in care and an EU-funded project on social robot assistance in dementia care. She has extensive teaching experience with diverse student groups and holds degrees from multiple European institutions.

# Schedule

Time	Speaker
11:00 - 11:15	Enhancing Knowledge Equity and Challenging Epistemic Injustice: Opportunities and Challenges. <i>Prof. Caroline McGregor, Director of ILAS</i>
11:15 - 12:00	Constructivist Grounded Theory in Qualitative Research for Social Justice: Purpose, Process, and Promise. <i>Prof. Prof Elaine Keane, Head of the Discipline of Education, Deputy Head of School of Education</i>
12:00 - 12:15	Facilitated Discussion
12:15 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 13:30	Where margin meets the centre: Decolonising Curriculum Initiative at University of Galway, Ireland. <i>Dr Tanja Kovačič Office of the Vice President for Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</i>
13:30 - 14:15	Facilitated Discussion
14:15 - 14:30	Close: Continuing Dialogues towards Affirmative Action. <i>Prof. Caroline McGregor, Director of ILAS</i>

## Contact

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[www.universityofgalway.ie/ilas](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/ilas)

## ILAS Constituent Centres

[Centre for Disability Law and Public Policy \(CDLP\)](#)

[Community Engaged Research in Action \(CORA\)](#)

[Community Engagement](#)

[Health Economics and Policy Analysis Centre \(HEPAC\)](#)

[Irish Centre for Social Gerontology \(ICSG\)](#)

[Irish Centre for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Research \(ICAN\) PPI Ignite](#)

[Speech and Language Therapy](#)

[UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre \(UNCFRC\)](#)

# Seminar Abstracts and Output

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**Caroline** will open the event with an overview of the opportunities and challenges for enhancing knowledge equity through our research methods and practices. An emphasis will be placed on how a focus on inclusive methods can help to achieve the goals of ILAS to promote equity across the lifecourse. Caroline will reflect on how the concept of 'epistemic justice' can help to inform our critical analysis and will identify the obstacles that need to be overcome to achieve greater knowledge equity.

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**Elaine** will commence by briefly exploring the history and development of GT and its variant 'schools', including Kathy Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) school, before examining its core features (including coding, theoretical sampling, analytic mining, and conceptualising), some of which differ depending on the GT 'school' under consideration. She will emphasise constructivist adaptations to the GT process, particularly those relating to the timing and nature of the literature review, researcher positionalities and related reflexivity, as well as meaningful participant involvement which are underpinned by CGT's co-constructive principles. She will then show how Constructivist GT is especially well aligned with social justice-oriented research as they serve mutually complementary purposes. GT methods can assist social justice researchers in making their work more analytic, precise, and compelling. A social justice focus can help grounded theorists to move their methods into macro analyses. In this context, she will draw on CGT research across substantive disciplines to show how the methodology is being employed internationally to further social justice goals. Finally, she will end by highlighting key challenges and important opportunities as we look towards the future use of GT and CGT in qualitative research internationally.

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In line with the institutional Race Equality Framework and Action Plan 2023-2027, the University of Galway has recently embarked on a decolonising curriculum journey, with an initial aim of developing our first decolonising curriculum toolkit. This presentation provides an overview of how this work can contribute to the promotion of knowledge equity across the life course. **Tanja** will discuss how, based on our unique economic, geographical and historical position, the University of Galway recognised the need to look for a shared understanding of decolonising curriculum acknowledging this work as highly contested and recognising the importance of critically engaging with conceptualising curriculum and considering what decolonising might mean in the West of Ireland context. She will present her findings from consultations today by focusing on what has been learned by listening to the stories of our university community so far. Specifically, she will focus on presenting decolonising principles, including co-creating processes with students and community members, teaching with and beyond the canon, inter and transdisciplinary, walking philosophy, and creating safe teaching and learning spaces. Issues around time, working in a silo, resourcing and institutional restrictions connected to payment and procurement will be discussed to show how changes in institutional curriculum need to be considered simultaneously with changes in the academic curriculum. In the end, we will pause and reflect on fundamental questions about where and how far we can travel in the current structural setting of individualised and neoliberal universities.