



The Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

Annual Review of Activities, 2025-2026



July 2026

1. Introduction

The Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence (MJMCE) provides a platform for European Studies-related research in Greater Manchester and the North West of England, with partners from the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Europe in the World Centre at the University of Liverpool. The Centre aims to strengthen the intellectual community in European Studies, while also facilitating local, regional and international links with practitioners, researchers, students and others interested in European affairs. Initially created in 2003 with the financial support of the European Commission under its [Jean Monnet Action](#) and co-funded by the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and Europe in the World Centre at the University of Liverpool, the MJMCE relies on subscriptions from its principal stakeholders for its operation and is grateful for their continuing support.

The following pages report specifically on the structure and achievements of the Centre during the academic year 2025-26. The JMCE has had another exciting year, welcoming the Alliance Manchester Business School back into our family and organising joint research events with AMBS colleagues. Our seminar series was again well-attended and engaged colleagues across all our member institutions and beyond. Enhanced cooperation with student-led European Societies at Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Liverpool and the University of Manchester helped us promote our activities better among student bodies and integrate the student perspective into our strategic planning. We supported teaching and research across all member institutions with staff and student bursaries and awards, showcasing a vibrant interdisciplinary research community. Highlights of the year included a joint research seminar with the Manchester Political Economy Centre, welcoming Hallsworth Visiting Professor Stefanie Wöhl from Vienna, a public Roundtable on Free Trade Unravelling bringing together Professor Laura Macdonald of Carleton University and colleagues from various member institutions and beyond, and the University of Manchester's Volunteer of the Year Award being offered to Manchester European Society founder Vuyo Dube.

In the coming academic year, we look forward to expanding our European Studies research network while making it more robust and targeted at the same time. To this end, we have put in place a targeted email list, where anyone who is part of the academic community of our member institutions can participate and be up to date with our upcoming activities and opportunities. The MJMCE board has agreed to ensure that funded workshops will be open to all who are signed up to the research network, which we expect will further enhance the density of our network and help the MJMCE to find synergies among staff and students that already exist but lay dormant. We also aim to make the most for our network members of the British International Studies Association hosting various workshops and conferences in Manchester next year, with plans in place for a MJMCE sponsored Roundtable at BISA 2027.

It remains our strategic priority to promote European Studies in Manchester and the UK, and to promote the standing of Manchester and UK-based researchers in the field of European Studies. As the Director of the Centre, I would be delighted to receive your thoughts and feedback on our activities, past, present and future! I also wish to thank personally all of our stakeholders for supporting the work of the JMCE!



Dr. Silke Trommer

Director of the Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

2. Stakeholders

The Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence showcases European expertise across the main Universities of the city. Its principal stakeholders are:

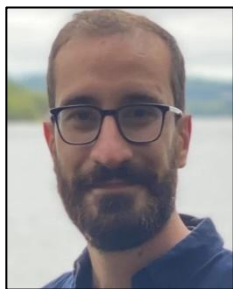
- **The University of Manchester**
 - Alliance Manchester Business School
 - School of Arts, Languages and Cultures
 - School of Social Sciences
- **Manchester Metropolitan University**
 - Department of History, Politics and Philosophy
- **The University of Liverpool**
 - Europe in the World Centre

3. The JMCE Board

The JMCE Board sets and approves the JMCE budget as well as the priorities of the Centre. We met twice in the academic year 2025/26. Our board members are:



Dr. Silke Trommer,
Director (UoM)



Dr. Davide Schmid,
Deputy Director (MMU)



Dr. Eleanor Aspey,
Board Member (UoM)



Dr. Eleanor Bindman,
Board Member (MMU)



Dr Gemma Bird,
Board Member (EWC, UoL)



Dr. Dimitrios Doukas,
Board Member (UoM)



Prof. Kieron Flanagan,
Board Member (AMBS)



Prof. Christian Goeschel,
Board Member (UoM)



Prof. Toni Haastrup,
Board Member (UoM)



Prof. Erika Harris,
Board Member (EWC, UoL)



Dr. Olga Krushcheva,
Board Member (MMU)



Dr. Rahime Süleymanoğlu Kürüm,
Board Member (MMU)



Diletta Pegoraro,
Board member (AMBS)



Dr. Paul Tobin,
Board Member (UoM)



Nelly-Helen Ebruka,
MJMCE Administrator (UoM)

This academic year, the JMCE Board also welcomed the student voice among its ranks. We welcomed to our board meetings and continuously collaborated with the Manchester European Society. The Manchester European Society is a student-led organisation uniting individuals from The University of Manchester and The Manchester Metropolitan University with a shared interest in European culture, research and affairs. Founded in Summer 2025, its mission is to strengthen the European community in Manchester by promoting European culture, encouraging dialogue on European research and fostering meaningful social and professional connections.

The Manchester European Society is a member of the European Affairs Society Network (EASN), a network of European societies from across the United Kingdom. The EASN was established by the European Union Delegation to the United Kingdom in October 2023.



Vuyo Dube (UoM)



Stephen Larker (MMU)

4. Review of Activities

4.1. JMCE Seminar Series and Sponsored Workshops

This academic year, our seminar series and sponsored workshops covered a wide range of fields of inquiry in line with the multidisciplinary tradition of the Centre and our mission to strengthen the intellectual community in European Studies across Manchester and the North of England. Research seminars again took place at all member institutions and provide a platform for active research engagement across the network.

Our research talks covered EU policy areas (trade, migration, digital transformation, health, science, infrastructure, humanitarianism), disciplinary engagements with Europe (history, sociology, political economy, business studies, politics, development studies, gender studies), and thematic focal points addressing current debates (rise of geopolitics, imperialism, care economy, crisis of liberal democracy, EU in the world).

Seminars

Between Layers of Borders:
Reflecting on EU Policies and Asylum Seekers' Journeys after the 2015-2016 refugee 'crisis'

MJMCE Doctoral Thesis Prize Laureate Talk.
SPEAKER
Sarah Elammeri
Awardee, MJMCE PhD Thesis Prize 2025

When: 15th October 2025, 3:30 pm-5pm
Where: University of Liverpool, Rendall Building, Seminar Room 4





Free Trade Unravelling

A Roundtable Discussion on Upheaval and Transformation in Global Trade Politics

Hosted by MJMCE and the Manchester Political Economy Centre

When: 11th November 2025, 1:30 am-3pm
Where: Room. 4.10, Mansfield Cooper Building, University of Manchester

CHAIR: SILKE TROCHNER Director, HURCE	LAURA MACDONALD Canadian University, Canada	ANDRENNIE ECKHARTS Director, Manchester Political Economy Centre
SHAMEL ALZHEH Global Development Institute, UoM	ELLIE GORE Department of Politics, UoM	DELETTA PEGORARO Alliance Manchester Business School





How to Write a Transimperial History of Europe?

SPEAKER
PD Dr. Daniel Hedinger
(Universität Leipzig)

When: 19 Nov 2025, 3 - 5 pm
Where: Samuel Alexander Building A 101, University of Manchester



The Assassination of Emperor Franz Joseph: A Study in Treason

Manchester Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence Seminar

SPEAKER
Mark Cornwall
University of Southampton

Date: 18 February 2026
Time: 15:00
Venue: Samuel Alexander Building A112 (UoM)





Whose Digital Sovereignty?

AI Governance, Security Infrastructure, and the Limits of European Universalism

SPEAKER
Atakan Yılmaz,
Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul

When: 29th April 2026 , 3pm
Where: Room 9.041, AMBS, UoM



Logos: **mjmce** manchester jean monnet centre of excellence, POLITICAL ECONOMY CENTRE, MIOIR, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER 2025, Manchester Metropolitan University.



mjmce manchester jean monnet centre of excellence

Geopolitical Europe: Reshaping Identities and Conflicts on EU Borders

Prof. Bahar Rumelili
Koç University

Wednesday 25th March 2026
GM 342 Geoffrey Manton Building, MMU
1:30-3pm
Refreshments provided from 1pm

Logos: Manchester Metropolitan University, MANCHESTER 2025, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL, Co-organised with the Politics Research Group, MMU.

Workshops

1. **Connecting Europe through Science: Themes, Policies, and Challenges** - Dr Simone Turchetti (AMBS, UoM)

This workshop taking place 11-12 September 2025 explored how science has helped to connect Europe, especially through collaborative programmes. Europe's role in current studies on these programmes has often portrayed the union as a passive actor -- either a 'co-producer' of US power and hegemony and/or an amorphous entity which underwent a process of integration in the sciences as much as in other areas vital to the union.

The workshop instead explored the projects, programmes and area studies that played a pivotal role in setting Europe on a path of collaboration, also seeking to reveal in what ways scientific collaborations played a role in these interconnecting processes. It also examined the science policies that received priority in the changing political context and the challenges at play.

Jointly organized by the CHSTM (<https://www.chstm.manchester.ac.uk/>) with the European Society for the History of Science (<https://eshs.org/>) and supported by the MJMCE, invited speakers explored various facets of these European connections through science with regards to disciplines (from physics to biology to environmental sciences), topical issues (UK-EU relations) and more. For details see [ESHS In-Between Workshop, 11-12 September '25 – European Society for the History of Science](#).

2. **Social Reproduction and/as Infrastructure in Europe and Beyond** – Dr Silke Trommer (Department of Politics, UoM)



Co-organised with the Manchester Political Economy Centre who hosted as Hallsworth Visiting Professor the [Jean Monnet Chair “Diversity and Social Cohesion in the EU”](#), Stefanie Wöhl from the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna, this workshop on 17 October 2025 explored the infrastructural turn in social reproduction research in particular in relation to empirical examples from Europe.

The social sciences have seen an ‘infrastructural turn’ in recent years, with Marxist and other critical scholars showing how states, corporations and

other actors are shaping infrastructures that are crucial to the accumulation of capital in ways that support their interests. They show how infrastructure development can lead to displacement, dispossession, the exploitation of labour, the degradation of the environment, and the exacerbation of class-based, racialised, spatial and other inequalities. Social reproduction scholars have started to engage with the ‘infrastructural turn’, highlighting, for instance, the role that infrastructures play in supporting social reproduction (Ruddick et al., 2018; Gillespie and Hardy, 2021; Horton and Penny, 2023; McFadden, 2025a) and the embodied labour that shapes and is shaped by infrastructures (Strauss, 2019; Vindegg, 2022; Cowan, 2019). Some have gone as far as to say that social reproduction is itself a form of infrastructure, because this labour “does the work of maintaining and sustaining lifeworlds” and acts as an integral cog within the capitalist totality (Hall 2021: 89-90).



The workshop brought together PhD, Early Career and Senior colleagues from across the University of Manchester and the North of England in order to analytically clarify the relationship between infrastructure and social reproduction, and empirically detail infrastructural configurations on the ground, with empirical examples ranging from eco-feminist mothering in Sheffield to housing in Vienna and beyond. Participants shared their research, identified common themes, and discussed what social reproduction approaches can and should bring to the ‘infrastructural turn’.

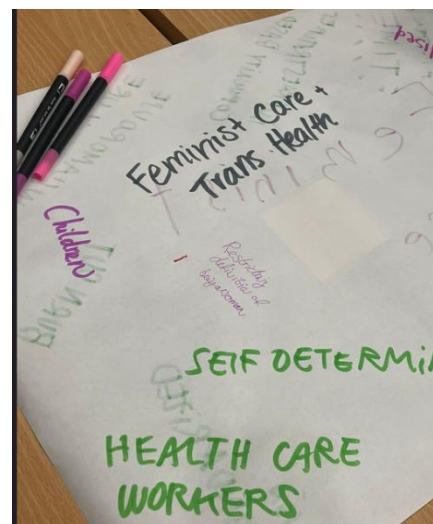
3. Illegitimate Care: Feminist Research and Activist Practice against Fascism in the UK and Europe - Lidia Yanez Lagos (Sociology, UoM)



The event brought together academic researchers and grassroots feminist activists to collectively explore the political potential of care as a form of resistance against fascism and authoritarianism. The workshop centred on Marta Rawłuszko’s concept of *illegitimate care*, which examines feminist care practices that are criminalised or rendered unacceptable by the state. Through high-quality presentations and discussions grounded in both theory and activist experience, the event created a space for meaningful dialogue between academic research and feminist organising. Around 40 participants took part actively, contributing their own perspectives through collective and creative discussion formats.

A key strength of the event was the strong engagement of participants, who approached the discussions with commitment and reflexivity. The workshop fostered collaborative reflection, enabling participants to connect theoretical insights with lived experiences of feminist activism in Manchester and beyond.

Overall, the event successfully built bridges between academia and activism, as well as across geographical contexts, connecting perspectives from Europe and the UK. It opened up promising avenues for future collaboration aimed at articulating academic research with activist practice, reinforcing the importance of collective knowledge production in confronting contemporary forms of fascism and violence.



4. Childhood and humanitarian mobilisations in historical perspectives – Laure Humbert (History, UoM)

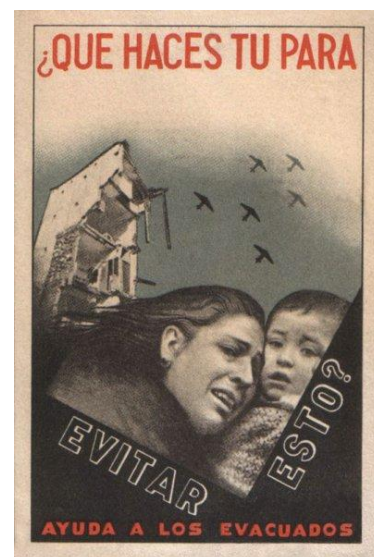
The Jean Monnet Centre hosted a stimulating workshop on the history of child evacuations on 29 April, centred around the work of Célia Keren. Célia Keren recently published *La cause des enfants. Humanitaire et politique pendant la guerre d'Espagne (1936-1939)* [The children's cause. The politics of humanitarianism during the Spanish Civil War]. In this book, she examines the making of a humanitarian cause around Spanish children, which involved a constellation of very diverse and often rival actors, including trade-unionists, Catholic intellectuals, representatives of the Vatican and feminist activists. The event was well attended by students and scholars from the Northwest of England.

The event started with a PGR session, in which Eilidh Hornigold (Lancaster University), Nerea Wachter (Manchester Metropolitan University) and Charlie Gibbs (University of Manchester) presented their doctoral research on the history of humanitarian mobilisations for children. Eilidh Hornigold showcased her research on Basque children experiences of care in Britain. Nerea Wachter followed with a paper on the evacuation of the Gorliz sanatorium, reflecting on what she called ‘unconventional humanitarianism’ and the evacuation of sick and contagious children. Charlie Gibbs ended the session with a presentation on The Chernobyl Children’s Project and the ways in which it mobilised ‘childhood experience’ as a foundation for humanitarian action and anti-nuclear advocacy. Célia Keren offered feedback to the three panellists and concluded with some thoughts for a *longue durée* history of children evacuation.



The afternoon was devoted to a roundtable on Célia Keren’s book. The author first explained her research approach and main insights, highlighting what she labelled a “safe cause”- a form of action (aid to children) which offered a way to act during the conflict, while sidestepping the political dilemmas posed by it. Her presentation was followed by thought-provoking comments by Dr Stephanie Wright (Lancaster University), specialist in the history of disability during and after the Spanish Civil War, Dr Jo Laycock (History UoM), expert in the history of displacement and humanitarianism and Dr Antoine Burgard (HCRI, UoM), historian of childhood and migration. The discussion focused on the best ways to avoid the ‘agency trap’, the genealogies of children’s colonies and recent development in the historiography of the Spanish Civil War.

Overall, the event was a success. It fostered crucial connections between leading academics from the Research Group ‘Europe and the World’ and PhD students in the Northwest working on the history of humanitarianism, refugees, and childhood, which will form the basis of a larger academic conference on the history of child displacement (‘Safe and Sound: Caring for Children Displaced by Conflict during the 20th Century’) organised by the NWCDTP Team Project in September 2026.



5. Polish Studies Group Research Development Workshop – Ewa Ochman (History, UoM)

The Polish Studies Group (PSG) Researcher Development Workshop, held on 21–22 May 2026 at the University of Manchester, delivered an intensive, collaborative programme to support postgraduate researchers and early-career scholars in East European Studies. The event brought together participants from the UK and across Europe in a hybrid format, ensuring broad accessibility and engagement.

The first day focused on a PhD Research Forum where doctoral researchers presented work in progress on a range of topics, including cultural transfer, media history, translation studies, ecocriticism, and current socio-political issues. Each presentation was paired with expert academic discussants who provided constructive feedback and created a supportive space for intellectual exchange. This format was highly successful in advancing the researchers’ development and confidence, while also encouraging meaningful scholarly dialogue.

On the second day, the focus was on methodological innovation and research training. A session on “Digital Transformations and Decolonial Futures in Polish Studies” promoted critical reflection on changing research approaches, emphasizing the role of digital tools and the need to tackle epistemic inequalities in the discipline.

Additionally, the workshop included a masterclass by the recipient of the 2026 BASEES PSG Article Prize, offering inspiration and valuable insights to early-career researchers.

The final session focused on digital humanities methodologies, with contributions on data visualisation and digital approaches to studying marginalised communities. These sessions equipped participants with practical skills while encouraging critical engagement with the ethical and epistemological dimensions of digital research.

Overall, the workshop successfully met its main goals of promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, improving postgraduate education, and strengthening networks in Polish and East European Studies. It also underscored PSG's importance as a crucial platform for research growth and intellectual exchange both in the UK and internationally.



6. **'HIV/AIDS and the Boundaries of Europeanness'** - Siobhan Hearne (History, UoM)

On 11-12 June 2026, the international workshop 'HIV/AIDS and the Boundaries of Europeanness' took place at the University of Manchester with generous financial support from the Manchester Jean Monnet Centre for Excellence. The event brought together researchers working within the European HIV/AIDS Research Network on a diverse range of national contexts, including Spain, the GDR, Poland, the Netherlands, France, Russia, Hungary, and the UK, as well as at the supra-national European level. Across two days, the workshop participants discussed the history of HIV/AIDS from a pan-European perspective and collectively thought through how the epidemic has fostered regimes of inclusion and exclusion within European welfare states and political projects. In addition to academic papers, the workshop also included a screening of a short film created by University of Manchester MA students. Entitled 'Positive Living: The George House Trust', the film created by Lucy Chambers, Molly Reece, and Ciaron Clews-Murray focuses on the Manchester-based charity that supports people living with HIV. Overall, the event served to foster new connections and laid the groundwork for a collaborative COST Action application, which we intend to submit in autumn 2026.



7. **Liberal Democracy in Question? Historical Perspectives from Britain, Europe and Beyond** – Stuart Jones (History, UoM)

The workshop took place as scheduled on Tuesday 17th March, 2-5 p.m. in the Ken Kitchen Committee Room. It attracted 20 participants from a range of departments at UoM (History, English, Politics) and beyond (Sheffield). They included academic staff and PGR students. Speakers were those listed in the application:

Arthur Ghins (Political Science, Université libre de Bruxelles)

Stuart Jones (History, University of Manchester)

Tom Arnold-Forster (Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford)

and, as discussant, Emily Jones (History, University of Manchester).

Participants (speakers and others) commented that they thought the workshop had been successful in bringing into conversation three recent books that all highlight in different contexts the place of public opinion in the long history of liberal democracy. The three speakers have remained in contact and are in discussion about the next steps. We are hopeful of a forum in a journal and are currently exploring options.

Funding from JMCE was invaluable in covering the two visiting speakers' travel and accommodation.

8. **Heritage Voices: Supporting Spanish Heritage Speakers through Reflection, Dialogue and Community Engagement** – Susana Lorenzo-Zamorano (UoM, SALC)

This project explored the needs of Spanish heritage language (HL) learners and promoted greater awareness of this often-overlooked group within the University through student reflection staff development, and community engagement activities.

The MJMCE Teaching Workshops Fund primarily supported **Workshop 2**, which featured **Professor Sabine Little** (University of Sheffield), an internationally recognised expert in literacy, multilingualism, and heritage

language education. Her research focuses on the intersection between multilingualism, identity, and belonging, and she has collaborated extensively with organisations such as the National Literacy Trust and World Book Day to support HL learners through identity-focused educational approaches. She is also a member of the **Global HL Think Tank**.



The workshop was announced as part of the Language Teaching Forum series and was very well attended, attracting academic staff from across the Faculty with an interest in multilingualism and language education. Professor Little presented an overview of current developments in HL education, highlighting recent research on heritage identities and the educational needs of HL learners. She also introduced practical strategies for integrating identity work into language teaching, encouraging participants to recognise students' multilingual repertoires as valuable educational resources rather than deficits.

The session generated lively discussion and encouraged participants to reflect on how university language programmes can better recognise and support HL learners.

The project also included a student reflection workshop and a community engagement activity at ALL FM 96.9, where students participated live in *Somos con Cecilia Ramos*, the first Spanish-language radio programme in Northwest England. These activities encouraged students to reflect on their multilingual identities, strengthen their sense of belonging, and engage with the local Spanish-speaking community.



Overall, the project has laid the foundations for developing more inclusive pedagogical approaches to HL education within the Spanish programme. It has also opened new avenues for collaboration with colleagues in the Department of French, with plans to establish an institutional cross-language heritage speaker network and develop a shared programme of workshops and community-based activities. This will provide a permanent space for support, collaboration, and exchange among students from different HL backgrounds.

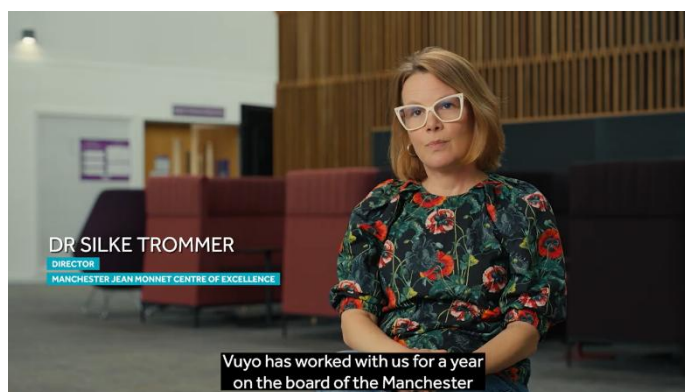
Finally, I am very grateful to the Committee for making this project possible. It has provided an invaluable foundation for future pedagogical work and has helped establish collaborations that will continue to benefit both students and staff.

4.2. Public and Policy outreach

On 17 March 2026, the Manchester European Society hosted an Erasmus+ Panel Event at the Consulate General of Romania in Manchester on the 17th March, attended by members and the President of the Manchester Consulate Association. The discussion focused on the United Kingdom's anticipated return to the Erasmus+ Programme in 2027. Prof. Dimitris Papadimitriou participated on the panel.



On 5th May 2026, Vuyo Dube received the University of Manchester's Volunteer of the Year Award in the category "students supporting other students" for his tireless work for the Manchester European Society and its impactful cooperation with Liverpool European Society and the MJMCE.



4.3. JMCE sponsored bursaries and awards

This academic year, we funded the following fieldtrips, conference participations and other research activities across our institutional members:

Bursaries

1. **"Don't Hurt Me No More: Harm Articulation as Democratic Justification", European Consortium for Political Research General Conference – Wei Bin Timothy Siew (Politics, UoM)**

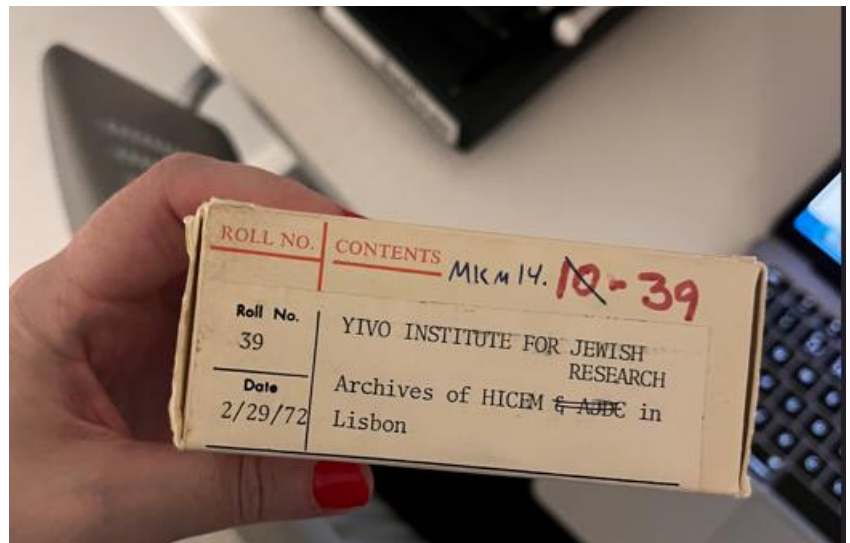
Thanks to funding by the MJMCE, I could give my paper, titled "Don't Hurt Me No More: Harm Articulation as Democratic Justification", at the ECPR General Conference at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki from 26-29 August 2025. My Political Theory PhD research explores what democratic arrangement we ought to endorse if we are to relate as moral equals, in the face of persistent pluralism. At ECPR, I was able to give an account of what I hope to be my first solo publication from my PhD - the argument that I make at the end of

my second chapter, and the foundational arguments that have to be made to arrive at that conclusion - and get feedback from other academics on it. Additionally, I met the other members of the ECPR's Political Theory Standing Group, and managed to make connections with the other democratic theorists doing work in similar areas. Finally, I attended other more empirical panels, to stay up to date with the latest empirical developments in democracy, as an attempt to disprove the armchair philosopher stereotype.

2. **Researching Jewish Refugees in Japan in New York City Archives** - Niamh Hanrahan (Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, UoM)

Funding from the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence enabled me to undertake a one-week archival research visit to New York City as part of my ongoing research on Jewish refugees in Japan during the Holocaust. The trip was undertaken to consult archival collections that remain largely undigitised and are therefore only accessible in person. During the research stay, I consulted collections at the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)

Archives and the Center for Jewish History, including holdings from the Leo Baeck Institute and the American Jewish Historical Society. These archives contain extensive documentation relating to refugee relief operations, emigration, family correspondence, and international aid organisations such as HIAS and HICEM. Access to these collections significantly expanded the primary source base for my research and provided materials that are unavailable through digital repositories.



The visit also provided valuable opportunities for academic networking. While working in the archives, I established connections with professors and archivists affiliated with the JDC Archives and New York University. These discussions offered important contextual insights into the archival collections, introduced me to additional sources that I had not previously identified, and created opportunities for future collaboration. Overall, the archival materials collected provide new evidence on the operations of international Jewish relief organisations and on the lived experiences of refugees who found temporary refuge in Japan before dispersing across the globe. These findings will directly inform my current research, future publications, and the development of a larger postdoctoral project examining transnational humanitarian responses to forced migration during the Holocaust.

3. **From Whitelaw to Mowlam: The Role of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland from 1972 to 1998** – Leo Hardwick (University of Liverpool)



The research funding granted by the Manchester Jean Monnet Centre (MJMC) allowed me to travel to Ireland to undertake archival research at the University of Galway. The archive was fascinating, and incredibly useful for both my PhD, and a journal article I am planning to write. My PhD project is examining the role secretaries of state for Northern Ireland (NI) played in bringing about a consociationalist peace agreement in NI, looking at the years from 1972 to the Good Friday agreement of 1998. Studied as a case study of a peace process, it draws on extensive archival material

to ask why consociationalist power sharing worked in 1998 but not in the 1970s and 1980s, and what significance should be given to political actors over exogenous forces, notably EU integration.

I looked through all of the papers of Ruairí Ó Brádaigh (president of Sinn Féin in the 1970s) and Brendan Duddy (an influential Derry based businessman, who was a contact between the republican movement and the British intelligence services). This trip would not have been possible without funding from MJMC. Having travelled to a few different archives for my MRes and PhD, this trip has easily been the most beneficial and enjoyable. I would like to take this opportunity to thank MJMC.

4. **Urban regeneration and ageing in place: How can we better integrate older residents' perspectives into policy?** – Pippa Winship (Sociology, UoM)

The Jean Monnet Centre for Excellence Student Research Bursary supported a short research visit to Switzerland for three weeks in March. I attended a programme of fantastic field visits, meetings and discussions with policymakers and practitioners involved in designing and delivering age-friendly initiatives. The programme was organised by Professor Matthias Drilling, the Head of Institute for Social Planning, Organisational Change and Urban Development in the Department of Social Work at Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), and provided an opportunity to collaborate with my colleague from the Marie-Curie Doctoral Training Network, Anna Fatima Salomoni.

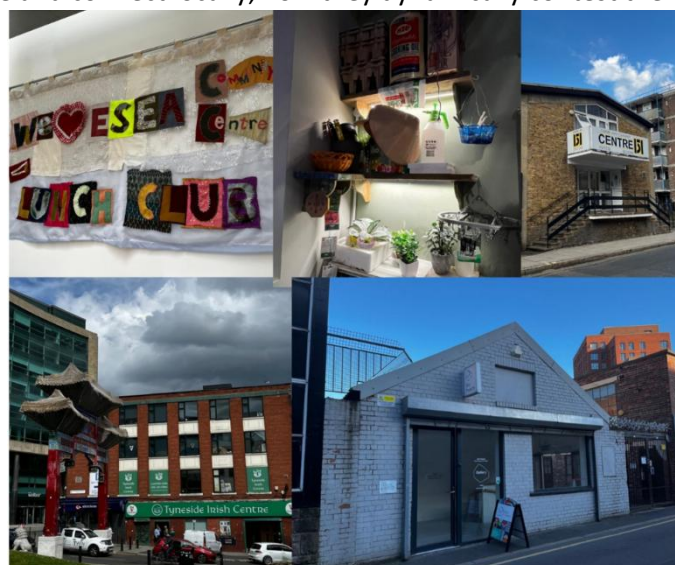
During the visit we met with community centres, neighbourhood organisations, housing cooperatives, and NGOs working directly with older people and marginalised groups. These visits explored everyday practices of participation, care and intergenerational living in neighbourhood contexts across Swiss cities and towns. We also undertook field visits and walking tours with planners, researchers, and social workers involved in urban design, densification, and intergenerational housing. We discussed how direct democracy creates ownership and delegates responsibility in planning processes, and considered what meaningful participation might look like in the UK context. Finally, we visited and had discussions with representatives from national and international institutions shaping ageing and urban policy, including the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and local municipalities. We explored the political potential of human-rights based approaches and discussed the challenges and possibilities of linking local practice with global policy agendas. These conversations inspired an ongoing collaboration with my colleagues on several policy briefs.



5. Multiethnic alliance network among East and Southeast Asian communities in the UK - Shengjun Zhang (Sociology, UoM)

I was honoured to receive the generous support from Manchester Jean Monnet Centre for Excellence to cover the early stage of my PhD fieldwork, which aims to explore the multiethnic alliance network among East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in the UK. With the Student Research Bursary, I was able to travel to Sheffield, Newcastle, and London to engage closely with community organisations. Without this fieldwork, I would not have gained a more nuanced understanding of how minoritised communities live and connect locally, how they dynamically contest their identities, how East and Southeast Asian communities expand their art and creative networks transnationally with European and international artists, and how transnational migrant histories shape the networking patterns of those living in Europe and the UK.

I compiled five photos from my research visits. From left to right and top to bottom, they are ESEA Community Centre (London), Museum of the Home (London), Centre 151 (London), Newcastle Chinatown (Newcastle upon Tyne), and Bloc Projects (Sheffield). These were all meaningful experiences where I enjoyed a community lunch, watched grandmas singing karaoke, attended film programmes about migration, and visited local art centres and felt inspired by their creativity. Thank you MJMCE!



9. The Quest for Economic Security: the UK Business Community's Response to China in Africa - Kohei Takeda (UoL)

Awards

Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

We are delighted to announce the winner of the 2025/26 MJMCE UG Dissertation Prize, which recognises and celebrates excellent research produced by undergraduate students on matters related to European history, politics, culture and languages. The winner of this year's prize is **Tom Finlayson** for his dissertation titled *"Elles sont unies ne les divisez pas": French Women, Media and the Unifying Project of the Return from Germany, 1945'*. Tom completed a BA degree in History and French at the University of Manchester in 2026. The judges were particularly impressed by the rich use of primary and secondary sources, the clarity and elegance of the writing, and the important contribution the dissertation makes to the understanding of an important juncture in European history.



In accepting the award, Tom said: *'After seeing images of "femmes tondues" – French women who had their heads shaved publicly as punishment for accusations of collaborating with German occupiers during the Second World War – I was drawn towards studying how French society moved on from the complexity of wartime occupation, persecution and collaboration. Focussing on the return of 2 million French men and women from Germany as the war ended, I sought to interrogate the post-Vichy government's attempt to orchestrate the return as a unifying project under the banner "Ils sont unis, ne les divisez pas!" My dissertation examines how women were represented in Henri Cartier-Bresson's 1946 documentary 'Le Retour' and across French newspapers from 1945, arguing that figures like the waiting wife and the martyred deportee simultaneously reflected the unifying project and exposed its contradictions, while racial deportees and stigmatised female labourers were rendered largely invisible. Its contribution lies in treating media as a primary object for analysing gender and national reconstruction, extending Pieter Lagrou's work on victimhood by showing recognition was shaped representationally, not just administratively.'*

Considering the very high standard of the submissions received, the judging committee also decided to award three Special Commendations to **Archie McConnell** (UoM, History) for a dissertation on *'Operation Reinhard and the Historiography of Erasure'*, to **Catarina White Wandschneider** (UoM, Politics and Social Anthropology) for a dissertation on *'Sounding the Nation: Afro-Portuguese Youth, Music, and Belonging in Contemporary Lisbon'*, and to **Eve Kirwan** (UoL, Politics) for a dissertation on *'What gendered framings are used in the UK mainstream media reporting on refugee crossings and how have these framings changed between 2022 and 2024?'*

Master's Dissertation Prize

We are delighted to announce the winner of the MJMCE Master's Dissertation Prize for 2024/25, which recognises and celebrates the excellent research produced by Master's students in the area of European Studies. The winner of the prize is Mia Costello with a project titled *'Language of Protection: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Anti-Transgender Government Rhetoric in the UK'*. Mia's dissertation, which was completed as part of the MA Political Science – Governance and Public Policy at the University of Manchester, examined the construction of anti-transgender rhetoric by government actors in the UK.

In accepting the award, Mia Costello said:

"Having attended a research seminar on femonationalism, I found myself questioning someone who suggested that 'LGBTQ+' people as a broader community are constructed as vulnerable subjects in the same way women are within nationalist rhetoric. With the notable global rise in anti-transgender politics, my motivation was to explore anti-transgender rhetoric and how it presents trans people as a counterhegemonic group that pose a threat to those politicised as being 'vulnerable'.

The focus of this dissertation was to construct a novel specialised diachronic corpus of anti-transgender rhetoric within UK parliamentary debate, following this up with a rhetorical political analysis of the data produced. In particular, my rhetorical political analysis utilised discourse analysis and utilised 'Speech Act Theory' in order to explore how language used within parliament not only constructs meaning but promotes/legitimises restrictive legislation.

As such, this project has provided various contributions to knowledge. Firstly, in constructing my corpus, I have contributed a greater understanding of this global phenomenon through providing data on a case outside of the US. Furthermore, in focusing on its intersection with femonationalism and homonationalism, this project contributes to

existing knowledge through furthering theoretical understanding of anti-transgender rhetoric, in particular highlighting how it operates within a wider 'logic' of national security."

The judging committee has also decided to award a Special Commendation to Dominika Miskova (MA Politics, University of Manchester) for a project on *'Unpaid work in Central Eastern Europe: The impacts of rising social conservatism and increased neoliberalisation on unpaid care labour in Slovakia and Poland'*.

Doctoral Thesis Prize

Winner of the MJMCE Doctoral Thesis Prize Announced

We are delighted to announce the winner of the third MJMCE Doctoral Thesis Prize, which recognises and celebrates excellent research produced by doctoral researchers on matters related to European history, politics, culture, law, and languages. The winner of the 2025/26 prize is Dr Panagiotis Karagkounis for his thesis titled *'Hellenising Refugeedom, Refuging Hellenisms: Humanitarianism, Refugees and the Making of Modern Greece, 1919-1955'*. Dr Karagkounis completed a PhD in Humanitarianism and Conflict Response at the University of Manchester in November 2025. The judges found this project to be especially notable for the rigour and nuance of the analysis, the richness of the archival material examined, and the importance of the original contribution the thesis makes to the understanding of histories of displacement, humanitarianism, and Greek nation-building.



In accepting the award, Dr Karagkounis said: *"My doctoral thesis explores the entwined relationship between nation-state-building, forced displacement and transnational humanitarianism in Greece between the 1910s and the 1950s. Taking my cue from the post-2015 'European Migrant Crisis' moment and the central role of Greece in the European response to it, I sought to historicise the management of displacement and humanitarian sentiments in Greece from the early 20th century onwards. Rather than being a backwater or the 'sick man of Europe', the Greek state adopted humanitarian institutions almost concomitantly with Western Europe while crafting transnational networks which aided Christian refugees during the failed Greek irredentist ventures in the Ottoman lands during the 19th and 20th centuries. Greece was a ground where Greek and foreign humanitarians, experts and refugees interacted and navigated recurring crises. Although Western imperial politics characterised most international humanitarian operations, Greek actors promoted their own*

agendas without merely following or replicating imported methods of refugee management. Overall, my thesis builds on a burgeoning body of historiography, which highlights the role of 'marginal' or 'small' European states in the wider European history. The phenomena of displacement, humanitarianism and nationalism have a long overlapping history, which requires further analysis to understand the world we live in today."

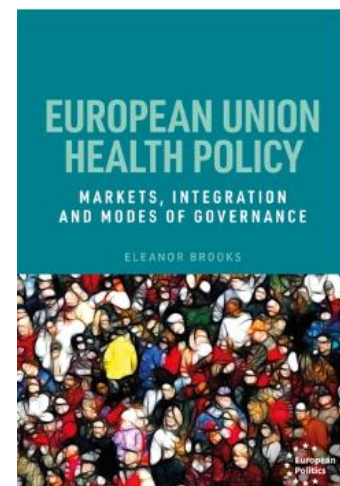
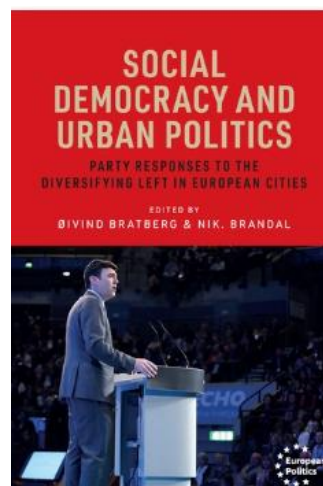
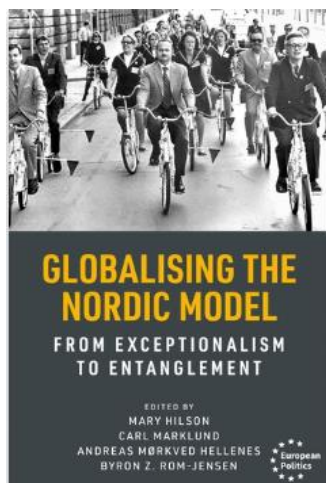
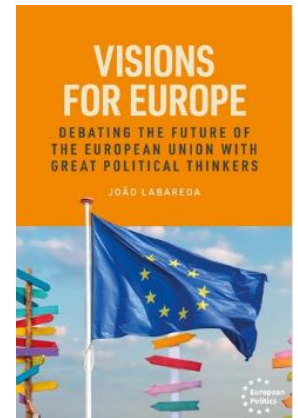
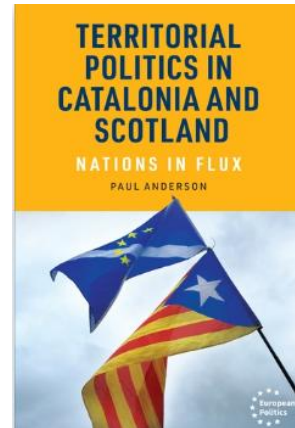
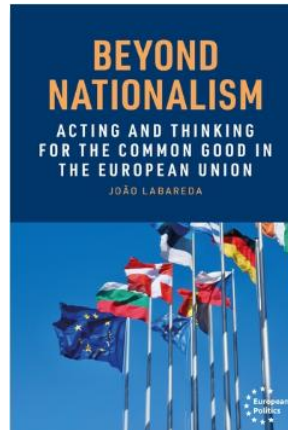
Considering the very high standard of the nominations received, the judging committee also decided to award two Honourable Mentions, to **Dr Niels Weijenberg** for the thesis *'Adam's Alphabet: The quest for the universal language in visual print culture from the Low Countries, c. 1560-1650'* and to **Dr Parveen Morris** for the thesis *'Modern Slavery and Transparency: An Exploration of the Promises and Pitfalls'*.

4.4. The JMCE-sponsored Book Series on European Politics (MUP)



Prof. Papadimitriou, Dr. Simpson and JMCE board member Dr. Tobin are the series editors

Since 2019 senior members of the JMCE's Board have teamed up with Manchester University Press to relaunch the European Politics Series. The JMCE is actively sponsoring the series, both in terms of editorial guidance and promotion. It has been an excellent year for the series, with six new books published!



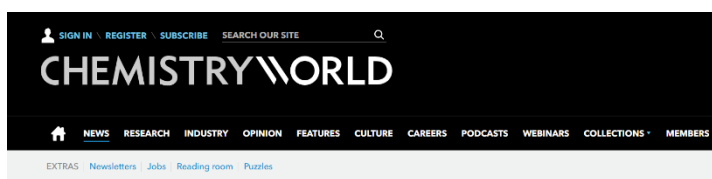
For more details visit: <https://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/series/european-politics/>

5. News

5.1. JMCE Members in the Media

JMCE board member Dr Eleanor Bindman (MMU) commented on the Russian war on Ukraine on LBC, BBC Scotland and BBC5 Live.

JMCE board member **Prof Kieran Flanagan** (UoM, AMBS) commented on science policy for various news outlets.



NEWS

Brexit led to decline in UK participation in EU research programmes, report finds

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NEWS | 06 February 2026 | Correction 09 February 2026 | Correction 10 February 2026

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Rush for funds to relocate laboratories to Europe is latest sign of a US brain drain.

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NEWS FEATURE | 23 June 2026

Europe as science superpower: what it will take to rival the US and China

Amid chaos in US science and geopolitical turmoil, Europe wants to position itself as a research haven – but questions about funding and innovation remain.

MJMCE board member **Christian Goeschel** and Daniel Hedinger (ReCentGlobe, Universität Leipzig, and a visiting speaker at the MJMCE in 2025) published *München 38: Die Welt am Scheideweg* in February 20206 with CH Beck, Germany's most prestigious publisher with a broad public appeal. Leading German media including the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and Deutschlandfunk Kultur gave it broad and positive coverage.

In June 2026, the Landeszentralen für Politische Bildung, the official civic education institutions of the German states, published a special edition of 1,800 copies which teachers and students can obtain for free.

- In March 2026, Christian Goeschel and his co-author were invited to launch their new monograph at the Leipzig Book Fair.
- On 27 February 2026, a long interview with Christian Goeschel and his co-author about their new monograph *München 38* was published on Germany's most influential news website: https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/ausland/krisen/id_101144322/adolf-hitler-bis-angriffskrieger-putin-wie-mit-despoten-umgehen-.html
- On 24 February 2026, an interview about Christian Goeschel's research on Mussolini was published in *The Times*. The story was also syndicated in *Geo*, among Germany's most popular magazines.
- On 16 December 2025, Christian Goeschel gave a live radio interview on diplomatic gifts with Evan Davies on BBC Radio 4's *PM* programme.
- On 5 December 2025, Christian Goeschel gave an interview for Deutschlandfunk on the state visit of Germany's president to the UK in the flagship Friday evening slot: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/christian-goeschel-ueber-den-staatsbesuch-des-bundespraesidenten-in-grossbritannien-100.html>

- On 22 September 2025, a major interview with Christian Goeschel appeared on Euronews, the pan-European news channel, on the history of appeasement: <https://de.euronews.com/2025/09/23/trump-putin-nato-ukraine-russland>

5.2. Save the Date!

- **September 2026:** Watch out for the announcement of our targeted emailing list and for the publication of our seminar series and joint events!
- **1st October 2026:** MJMCE board member Erika Harris will launch her new book at the University of Liverpool!
- **15th - 16th October 2026:** MJMCE will support students participating in the International Political Economy Group workshop of the British International Studies Association, taking place at the University of Manchester. MJMCE director Silke Trommer will launch her new book during BISA IPEG!
- **Academic Year 2026/27:** Watch out for JMCE-funded Workshops, Postgraduate Research Bursaries and BA, MA and PhD Dissertation Prizes!

