

BSA study group annual report, August 2026
Work Employment and Economic Life

Name: WEEL

Established: 2004; relaunched 2010

Number of members:

462 subscribers to the Jiscmail list.

Account balance: £366.50

Aims: Key aims of WEEL include:

- Exchange and develop ideas by attracting new and existing BSA members to the WEEL group and its activities.
- Encourage collaboration and lend support within a long tradition of British sociologists.
- Encourage research and publication around the sociology of work, employment and economic life.
- To become the ‘natural’ go-to forum for contacting other sociologists in the field, for advice, requests for information, and exchange of ideas, including regarding pedagogical issues.
- To support PGRs and ECRs in the sociology of work, employment and economic life.
- To develop a programme of events including building on the strength of the WEEL stream at the annual BSA conferences.
- To develop links with other BSA study groups and non-sociologists interested in the fields of work and employment.

Review of the year:

• The study group convened and chaired the majority of the WEEL streams at the BSA virtual annual conference 2026. We received over 200 abstracts for around 78 places, so only around 1 in 3 could be accepted. Many of those submitting an abstract stated they did not want to go on a reserve list, which meant that our reserve list was very limited. There were quite a lot of abstracts switching streams during the review process, which made the process all the more difficult.

Some ideas to improve:

- Abstract lists could be released earlier with the specific aim of checking titles to see whether they need to switch streams.
- Extending the information required to choose a stream. For example, for us, using the stream keyword of Work, Employment and Economic Life to ask for a tick box of which strand(s) do the main concepts in your work speak to.
- Key words -these are not always very useful, but maybe the abstracts could be initially sorted for us by key words? Could one of the key words be more explicit, e.g., main concept. To help grouping, but also so we end up with a balanced programme.

- Clarity on the use of AI. It was difficult to know if we were seeing AI, but some abstracts sounded very polished but had little substance.
- We share a periodic WEEL Newsletter with details of calls for papers, funding opportunities, and other opportunities of interest to WEEL members.
- We actively engage WEEL members during and after the annual conference to explore potential collaborations, such as book proposals, special issue proposals, etc., and are currently working on a book proposal targeting the *Sociological Futures* series.
- WEEL has a bluesky (@bsa-weel.bsky.social) social media account, through which we are looking to increase followers, promote the BSA, and establish links with other BSA study groups. We are currently setting up a WEEL LinkedIn account.

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