



Theorizing from Lived Experience: A Roundtable on Activist Scholarship

A BSA Theory Study Group Event

12 May 2026 (4.00-5.30pm BST)
Online

About the Event

Many social theorists and sociologists worry that relying too heavily on the first-person vantage point for theorizing can lead to an uncritical subjectivism that mistakes specific experiences for generalizable ones. Such concerns should certainly give social theorists pause. Abstractions that misrepresent or misunderstand what is shared about an experience can function ideologically in the sense that they conceal more than they disclose. And yet feminists, antiracist scholars, ethnographers, and scholar activists remind us that theorizing from lived experience remains a vital source of knowledge, especially when it comes to challenging the “inert violence in the order of things” (Bourdieu 1999, 64) and revealing emergent sites of injustice, oppression, and unfreedom.

This online roundtable explores the co-constitution of activist knowledge production and scholarship and how it contributes to social theorizing. Join us on 12 May 2026, from 4.00-5.30pm UK time to explore the advantages and limits of working from lived experience to advance social critique. This roundtable is co-organised by the BSA’s Theory and Activism, Social Movements and Revolutions study groups.

Speakers

- Akwugo Emejulu (Sheffield)
- Panos Theodoropoulos (KCL)
- AK Thompson (Movement-based scholar and organizer)

This is the last in a series of three roundtables that explore how lived experience informs and contributes to social theorizing. The first seminar explored what phenomenology offers sociologists and social theorists in February, and the second seminar in April focused on how feminist and queer scholarship contributes to theorising from lived experience.

Registration

This event is free to attend but registration is required.