



Dr Samuel Kirwan
BA(Leeds), MSc(Bristol), PhD(Bristol)

Lecturer

Area of research

Living in Debt

Office Room 2G7, 12 Woodland Road
School for Policy Studies,
8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ
([See a map](#))

+44 (0) 117 954 6764
samuel.kirwan@bristol.ac.uk

Summary

Biography

I am interested in practices, policies and experiences at the intersection of debt and welfare; where indebted lives are shaped by benefits systems, and where social security is re-framed as a debtor/creditor relationship.

I am currently working as a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow carrying out a project entitled 'A Sociology of Everyday Indebtedness', a project begun at the University of Warwick. The project investigates how households deal with and experience different debts, with a particular focus upon:

- The growing problem of 'priority' debts, principally Council Tax and rent arrears
- Understandings of the Debt Relief Order and other insolvency measures
- How debt shapes familial and social relations
- Changes in the temporal structures of debt
- The criminalisation of debt

Between 2013 and 2016 I worked at the University of Bristol on the "New Sites of Legal Consciousness" Project, looking at the work and experience of advisers with the Citizens Advice Service.

My work draws particularly upon the writings of Lisa Adkins, Michel Foucault and Loïc Wacquant. I incorporate this work into my teaching on the course Key Thinkers in Criminology.

Keywords

- Debt
- Advice
- Governmentality
- Criminalisation

Memberships

Organisations

[School for Policy Studies](#)

Research centres

- [Centre for the Study in Poverty and Social Justice](#)

Recent publications

- Kirwan, S, Dawney, L & Walker, R, 2019, [‘Choose your moments’: Discipline and speculation in the indebted everyday](#). in: *The Sociology of Debt*. Policy Press
- Harker, C & Kirwan, S, 2019, [‘Introduction: Geographies of Debt and Indebtedness’](#). *Geoforum*, vol 100., pp. 236-238
- James, D & Kirwan, S, 2019, [‘Sorting out income’: transnational householding and austerity Britain](#). *Social Anthropology*.
- Kirwan, S, 2019, [‘On ‘those who shout the loudest’: Debt advice and the work of disrupting attachments’](#). *Geoforum*, vol 98., pp. 318-326
- dawney, l, Kirwan, S & Walker, R, 2018, [‘The intimate spaces of debt: Love, freedom and entanglement in indebted lives’](#). *Geoforum*.
- McDermont, M & Kirwan, S, 2018, [‘Assembling Advice: Ethnographic Explorations of the Changing Relationship Between Voluntary Advice Services and the Welfare State’](#). *Qualitative Studies*, vol 5., pp. 110-124
- Kirwan, S, 2017, [‘10. The End of ‘Tea and Sympathy’? The Changing Role of Voluntary Advice Services in Enabling ‘Access to Justice’](#)”. in: *Access to Justice and Legal Aid : Comparative Perspectives on Unmet Legal Need*. Hart Publishing
- Kirwan, S, McDermont, M & Evans, S, 2017, [‘Triaging overflow: A case study of the ‘Gateway Assessment’ in the UK Citizens Advice Service’](#). *European Management Journal*, vol 35., pp. 745-754
- Kirwan, SF, 2017, [‘Law and the ‘Stbx’: Online Fora and the ‘Delegalised Space’ of Family Law’](#). *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, vol 7., pp. 1421-1444
- Kirwan, SF, McDermont, M & Clarke, J, 2017, [‘Assembling citizenship in austere times’](#). in: Vaughan Higgins, Wendy Larner (eds) *Assembling neoliberalism: expertise, practices, subjects*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 109-129

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