

# DIVERSITY WORK(ERS) IN GAME STUDIES

- > CHALLENGES
- > OPPORTUNITIES

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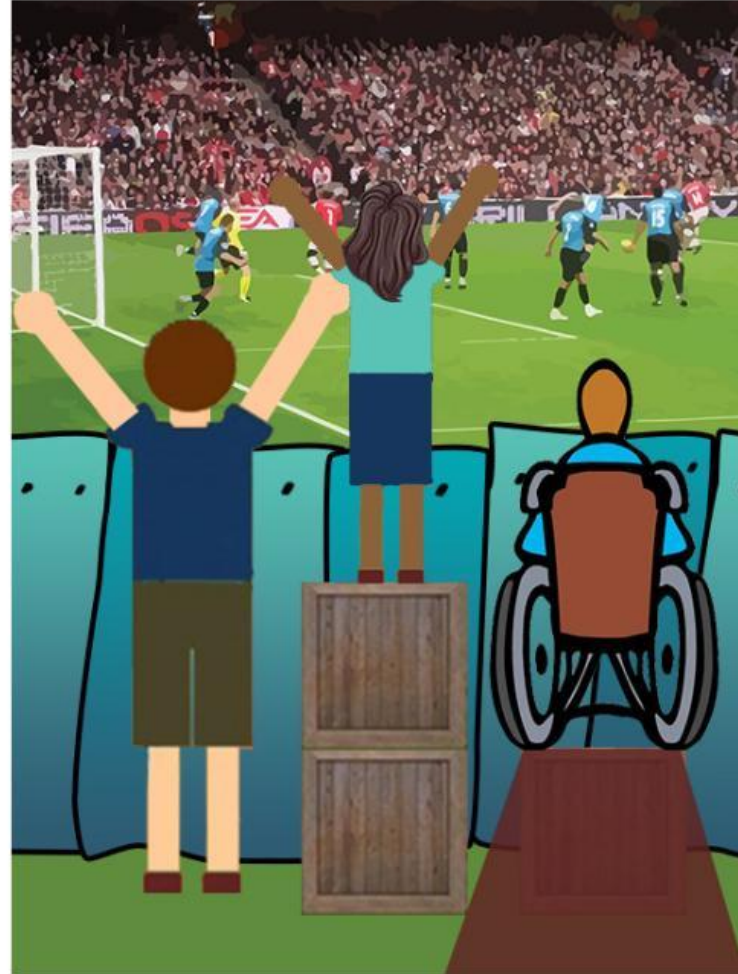
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# Equity vs. Equality



**Same Treatment**



**Equitable Treatment**



**The systemic barrier has been removed. This is Equality.**

## Feminist and Furious: Diversity Work(ers) Against Game Studies of Empire!

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# "DIVERSITY WORK(ERS)"

## "Diversity Work"

- Scholarship, teaching, and service
- Work = Recognition of invisible (affective) and un(der)paid labour
- Often performed by/relegated to people deemed to be 'diverse'

## "Diversity Workers"

- The burden of representation/ difference
- The difficulty of disentangling diversity 'work' from 'life'

Note: a lot of our experiences are based in doing this work in Anglophone countries, especially the United States and Australia.

# DIGRA DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP (2015-)

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- Google Groups: [digra-diversity@googlegroups.com](mailto:digra-diversity@googlegroups.com)
- Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2259195467673373>
- Discord: <https://discord.gg/HzqHcjPx>

Please email us if you'd like us to add you to any of these groups! 😊

# PRECARITY > PRACTICES > POLICY

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## DiGRA Diversity Survey (2017)

- **Precarity** (embodied inaccessibility; performative assemblies)
- **Practices** (of exclusion)
- **Policy** (suggested best practices)

## Key Suggestions

- **Sliding Scale Fees**
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Ombuds Program**
- **Welfare or Diversity Officer**
- **Financial or Funding Officer**

# DIGRA STUDENT OFFICER (2015-2018)

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## DiGRA Couch Surfing

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/340215773020830>

## DiGRA Call For Collaborations

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/129845281013211>

# RECURRING ISSUES:

## THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING A PROACTIVE RATHER THAN REACTIVE APPROACH

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### DiGRA Community

- GAMESNETWORK
  - Harassment (e.g. Gamergate)
  - Bullying and 'scholarly negging' (cf. Amanda Philips, 2020)

### DiGRA Conference

- Peer-review process
- Local organising committees

# DIGRA CODE OF CONDUCT

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- <http://www.digra.org/the-association/code-of-conduct/>
- Drafted by Darshana Jayemanne, Alison Harvey, and Cody Mejeur
  - With feedback from Ombuds team, Executive board, and Diversity Working Group
  - Using existing codes of conduct/ethics as guides
- Emphasizing clear standards and practices
- Avoiding a punitive structure, while having enforceable policies
  - Taking Diversity Worker insights into account
- Applies to community, conferences, and listserv
  - Guidelines for GamesNetwork listserv disagreements



# DIGRA OMBUDS PROGRAM

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- Lack of reporting structure, people avoiding DiGRA
- Supporting conference-goers, giving them someone to talk to
- Organizational ombuds program
  - International Ombuds Association standards: <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/>
  - Independent, objective, \*not\* for reporting or punishing
  - Anonymity for members
- Making sure there is administrative and community support
- Clear communication is key!

# CURRENT PROJECTS

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- Ombuds structures for DiGRA 2022 Conference
- Diversity recommendations for conference organizers and peer reviewers
- Diversity Working Group Workshop
- DiGRA North America chapter?
- An archive or toolkit of diversity best practices, with international differences and insights included
- Graduate student, early career, and job market support

# INTERVIEWING DIVERSITY WORKERS

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- Challenges in finding/using whisper networks, backchannels often used by diversity workers
- Survey of people who self-identified as "diversity workers" (n=16)
- In-depth interviews with five diversity workers
- Critical of buzzword qualities of "diversity"
- Types of diversity work
  - Some held designated and/or paid positions as diversity workers, most did not
  - Through teaching, service, volunteer positions, mentoring, creating new opportunities for underrepresented/marginalized peoples

# CHALLENGES

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- Defining Diversity Work (difficulty quantifying diversity work vs "it's who you are")
- Un(der)paid (affective) labor
  - Respondents worked an average of 40 paid hours per week.
  - Most worked at least 20 additional unpaid hours per week.
  - Average 12 hours per week on diversity work, almost always as part of their unpaid work.
  - Only four respondents said they were paid for their diversity work, and they, were compensated, at most, 5 hours per week.
- Burden of representation/ difference (carer roles/ the second shift/ epistemological exploitation)
- Anglocentrism
- Precarity (tenured academics less likely to be diversity workers; harassment; lack of community support)
- Exploitation of affective attachment
  - "Honestly, [I feel] tired [from diversity work]. I worry that I'm not doing enough constantly and sometimes the whole thing feels like a Sisyphean task. [...] Not only is the boulder rolling back down the hill, sometimes there's actively people on the other side of the boulder trying to push it back down over you."

# OPPORTUNITIES

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- Centering women, people of color, LGBTQ, and/or disabled peoples, and ideally compensating for work and expertise
- Making it count: for promotions, awards, citations, etc.
- Going beyond "Diversity 101" discussions
- Spaces for real affect and care, where expressions of frustration and anger are also ok
- Bringing together early career and senior scholars, developers
- Diversity work is everyone's work!
- Living digital archive/ localized, regional, cultural context-specific discussions on diversity work