

**Justin Pickard, PhD** | CV: January 2024 | [jcalpickard@proton.me](mailto:jcalpickard@proton.me)

**Independent researcher and editor, combining ethnography and interdisciplinary collaboration to better understand emerging phenomena across diverse social and cultural contexts**

- Happiest helping others navigate emerging issues and complex sociotechnical phenomena
- Strong advocate of cross-disciplinary thinking
- Enduring personal and professional interest in how people make sense of the world.
- Using ethnographic methods and the anthropological imagination to bridge knowledges, challenge dominant narratives, and uncover hidden meanings

**Research interests**

My research interests contribute to the goal of advancing knowledge in spaces beyond academia, using ethnographic research as an input into, e.g., design, policymaking, activism, and urban planning.

**Infrastructure, technology, and society**

- *Cultural politics of infrastructure*: How cultural dynamics influence the planning, implementation, and impact of infrastructure projects
- *Urban life and sociotechnical change*: The relationship between urban environments, social structures, and technological development, focusing on patterns of continuity and change
- *Technological jugaad, maintenance and repair*: Improvisation and adaptation in technology use, and the sustaining role of maintenance and repair

**Politics, policy, and globalisation**

- *Social movements, activism, and policy mobilities*: Examining the role of activists and policymakers in shaping infrastructure planning, technology design, and social change
- *Worlding, scalar politics, and translocal processes*: How different actors enact their understandings of the world, exploring the interconnectedness of local and global processes in shaping technologies, systems, and the built environment

**Applied and experimental methods**

- *Applied anthropology and fieldwork*: Applying anthropological techniques to exploratory research in diverse contexts, using field methods and in-situ participant observation

- *Gonzo futures and sociotechnical flânerie*: Using mobile methods and performative writing to observe and interpret the past, present, and futures of sociotechnical systems and urban life
- *Collaborative and experimental methods*: Collaborating with diverse stakeholders and within research teams, embracing creative methodologies to explore innovative, contextually-appropriate responses to real-world challenges

## Education

### **Ph.D. in Development Studies**

2022

*Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK*

- Thesis: “Mutability, mobility, worlding: Appropriate infrastructure and urban sociotechnical change in Ahmedabad, Gujarat”
- Supervisors: Prof. Lyla Metha (IDS), Prof. Andrew Stirling (SPRU)
- Examiners: Prof. Laura Watts (Edinburgh), Dr. Saurabh Arora (SPRU)

Doctoral research project addressing the relationship between infrastructure and sociotechnical change in the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The study has practical implications for policymakers and urban practitioners pursuing inclusive, contextually-relevant development strategies. Included overseas fieldwork in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, from January–May 2015, and January–May 2016.

### **M.Sc. in Science and Technology Policy**

2013

*STEPS Centre, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK*

- Dissertation: “Speech acts and space planes: A critical discourse analysis of UK government support for emerging technologies, 2010–2013”

Masters degree covering topics in UK and international science policy, science and technology studies, sustainability transitions, grassroots innovation, and evolutionary economics.

### **M.A. in Digital Media: Technology and Cultural Form**

2010

*Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK*

Masters degree in digital media theory, including elective modules on anthropology and representation, 21st century American literature, public sociology, and cognitive mapping.

### **B.A.(Hons.) in International Relations and Anthropology**

2008

*First Class Honours, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK*

Joint honours degree, with final-year electives on the anthropology of South Asia, religion and ritual, offshore political economy, and the post-Westphalian international order.

## Professional experience

In my professional life, from independent editing to co-founding a research company, I've sought opportunities to bridge academic insights with real-world applications, pursuing an integrative, multi-pronged approach to knowledge dissemination and impact.

Extending beyond my employment roles, this commitment informs my teaching and volunteering engagements. My ability to switch between academic and non-academic contexts has been an asset, bringing rigour to applied research, and helping students or clients engage with diverse publics. At the same time, the methods I teach align with the hands-on approaches I use in my professional roles, supporting a two-way traffic between pedagogy and practice.

## Employment

### Independent Editor and Researcher

January 2019–present

*Freelance, Remote + York, UK*

- Client projects and independent work across horizon-scanning, qualitative and field-based social research, writing, editing, and experimental publishing. Current emphasis on sensemaking and uncertainty, mobilities, community, and urban life.

### Founding Member and Co-Director

October 2014–January 2019

*Strange Telemetry, London, UK*

- Founding member and co-director of a research company exploring the diverse contexts in which technologies are imagined, built, used, and controlled. Contributed to policy and innovation projects for public and private sector clients, including desk research, project management, horizon-scanning, expert interviews, workshops, and report-writing.

### Associate (Futures)

February 2011–January 2013

*Superflux, London, UK*

- Advised on company strategy, conducting desk research and trend analysis to situate client work and self-initiated projects in a wider social, cultural, and technological landscape.

### Wired UK Editorial Intern

January 2009

*Conde Naste Publications, London, UK*

- Editorial internship with the UK version of the monthly science and technology magazine, in the run-up to its domestic launch.

### Community Manager

September–November 2008

*Institute for the Future, Remote + Sausalito, USA*

- Part of an international team working on multiplayer online forecasting game Superstruct. Collaborated closely with the game’s designers to drive engagement, weaving player-created media content into a compelling narrative. Presented findings from the project at the Institute for the Future’s annual Ten-Year Forecast event in Sausalito, California.

## Teaching

### **Mentor (Observational Research)**

April–July 2023

*La Plateforme\_, Remote + Marseille, France*

- Leading observational research track of a 15-week hybrid programme on future social networks and the decentralised web. Teaching observational methods and fieldwork skills, supporting participants with community-based research, and leading discussions on research audiences, workshop facilitation, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Doctoral Tutor**

2017

*SPRU–Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, UK*

- Seminar tutor for Masters-level module “Infrastructure, Innovation, and Sustainability”, facilitating discussion, and using doctoral fieldwork experiences to contextualise themes from lectures.

### **Senior Tutor (Anthropology)**

October 2016–February 2018

*Angewandte, Vienna University of the Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria*

- Part-time tutor on Angewandte’s undergraduate Design Investigations programme, contributing teaching and tutorials on automated systems (2016–17) and climate futures (2017–18). In the second year, participated in programme fieldwork in Vorarlberg’s Bregenz Forest, running a series of micro-briefs, guest lectures, and helping translate student group work into an immersive installation for the 2019 London Design Biennale.

### **Instructor**

June 2013

*Duke University Talent Identification Programme, Durham, USA*

- Teaching on a two-week intensive residential course in foresight, strategy and innovation for gifted and talented high school students, hosted by a leading US university.

## Volunteering

### **Team Ethnography Trainer and Volunteer Researcher**

September 2023–January 2024

*The World Transformed, Remote + Liverpool, UK*

- Training a group of 5-6 volunteers in observational and ethnographic methods for an militant team ethnography of a left-wing political festival, generating research findings to inform the organisers’ strategic decision-making.

## Publications

### Selected Book Chapters and Peer-Reviewed Publications

1. **Pickard, J.** (2023) “Times like these”, in: *Wabi-sabi: Weathering Transience* (Anarchive), ed. Maja Kuzmanović, Nik Gaffney, Justin Pickard, Theun Karelse and Maya Weeks. <<https://anarchive.fo.am/wabisabi/times-like-these/>>
2. **Pickard, J.** (2023) “Everyday hedging”, in: *Crystal: Navigating Uncertainty* (Anarchive), ed. Maja Kuzmanović, Nik Gaffney, Justin Pickard, Theun Karelse, Maya Weeks. <<https://anarchive.fo.am/crystal/everyday-hedging>>
3. **Pickard, J.** (2022–23) “Mud futures”, in: *Green: Multispecies Entanglings* (Anarchive), ed. Maja Kuzmanović, Nik Gaffney, Justin Pickard, Theun Karelse, Maya Weeks. <<https://anarchive.fo.am/green/mud-futures/>>
4. Mehta, L., Parthasarathy, D., **Pickard, J.**, Srivastava, S. (2022, March). “The political ecology of COVID-19 and compounded uncertainty in marginal environments”, *Frontiers in Human Dynamics* 4. <<https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2022.840942>>
5. Karelse, T., Kuzmanović, M., **Pickard, J.** (2022) “Having been there”, in: *Green: Multispecies Entanglings* (Anarchive), ed. Maja Kuzmanović, Nik Gaffney, Justin Pickard, Theun Karelse, Maya Weeks. <<https://anarchive.fo.am/green/fieldwork/>>
6. **Pickard, J.**, Srivastava, S., Bhatt, M.R., Mehta, L. (2020). *In-Focus: COVID-19, Uncertainty, Vulnerability and Recovery in India*, Brighton: Social Science in Humanitarian Action Platform (SSHAP), <<https://doi.org/10.19088/SSHAP.2021.011>>
7. Revell, T., **Pickard, J.**, Voss, G. (2018) “Valuing utopia in speculative and critical design”, in: *Economic Science Fictions*, ed. Will Davies. London: Goldsmiths Press

### Selected Conference Papers

- **Pickard, J.**, “Stepwells, tanks, and cisterns: Regularising water supply in Ahmedabad, Gujarat”, *STS-CH 2021*, Lausanne, Switzerland, 15–17 February 2021
- **Pickard, J.**, Kasprzak, M., “Views from the edge: Prototyping rapid ethnographic methods in Madeira”, *EASST 2018*, Lancaster, United Kingdom, 25–28 July 2018
- **Pickard, J.**, “This was supposed to be the future”, *Future Matters Collective International Crwdd*, Cardiff University, UK, 14 September 2016
- **Pickard, J.**, Voss, G., “Between open hardware and grassroots innovation: The case of the Global Village Construction Set”, *Third International Conference on Innovation and Creativity at the Grassroots*, IIM-Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India, 19–22 January 2015

## Research Grants

### Discretionary Fund

January–March 2024

*Prof. Laura Forlano, Northeastern University, Boston, USA*

- Secured funding to participate in a 2-week collaborative prototyping project on large language models and intimacy at Medialab Matadero in Madrid, supporting conceptual work on technology, intimacy, field philosophy, and autoethnographic methods

### EASST Fund

May 2018

*European Association for the Study of Science and Technology*

- €1500 grant for 10 days of field research with collaborator Michelle Kasprzak on the island of Madeira, resulting in a co-authored conference paper on rapid ethnographic methods

### ESRC 1+3 Studentship

2012–2016

*Economic and Social Research Council, UK*

- Postgraduate funding covering tuition fees, an annual stipend, overseas ethnographic fieldwork in Gujarat, and additional support for specialist training, including 6 weeks of intensive Hindi language study in Uttarakhand, India

## Invited Talks

- **“Technology and its contexts”** (Invited Talk), *Nurturing Leonardos*, Singapore, 8–9 May 2015. Invited talk for a general audience, using concepts from STS to scrutinise the different contexts in which contemporary technologies are imagined, built, used, and controlled.
- **“In sync: Uncertainty, expectation, and the practice(s) of foresight”**, *Data Ecologies*, Linz, Austria, 23–24 May 2014. Survey of futures concepts and foresight practices as part of Future Fabulators, an EU-funded project on foresight and participatory design
- **“Reality Check”**, *Improving Reality*, Brighton, UK, 5 September 2013. Invited conference talk, surveying efforts to ‘improve reality’, comparing cases from philanthropy, international development, open hardware, and product design.
- **“Dionysius’s plastic hat”**, *Lift13*, Geneva, Switzerland, 6–8 February 2013. Invited digital innovation conference speaker, giving a talk on additive manufacturing, with a focus on implications for sustainability, creativity, and education.

## Workshops and summer schools

- **LAB#03 Synthetic Minds**, MediaLab Matadero Collaborative Prototyping Lab, Madrid, Spain, 24 January–10 February 2024. Collaborative team residency, contributing to interdisciplinary inquiry and prototyping on intimacy and generative AI.
- **FIELDWORK Expedition**, Abandon Normal Devices Festival, Castleton, Peak District, UK, 23–24 September 2017. Invited workshop on multi-disciplinary artistic practice, digital culture, and complex problems.
- **Peaks, Sites and Cycles**, DEMAND Centre Summer School, Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK, 14–16 July 2015. Intensive short-term residential programme, involving lectures and workshops on infrastructure, resource demand, mobilities, and social practice theory.

## Skills and additional training

### Core skills

- Applied ethnography
- Editing and proofreading for diverse audiences
- Observational methods
- Research design

### Communication

- Writing (academic, journalism, creative)
- Experimental publishing
- Editorial strategy
- Workshop facilitation

### Collaboration

- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Collaborative and cross-functional leadership
- Rapid and team-based research

### Teaching

- Online teaching
- Curriculum and syllabus development
- Experiential, site-specific, and problem-based learning