

VIEW to the U transcribed
Season 2: Women in Academia; Episode #6
Professors Neda Maghbouleh and Jasmine Rault
Department of Sociology and Institute for Information, Culture, Information, and Technology
U of T Mississauga

[Theme music fades in and then out]

Neda Maghbouleh (NM): This is as our pilot study with Syrian mothers was coming to a close and as fairly mainstream researchers, methodologically speaking in sociology, we dipped our toe into something slightly inspired by a participatory action research (PAR), where researchers and participants are working really collaboratively. Though we didn't do a full on PAR type of a project but we dipped our toe via convening a panel at that conference that included the three professors who had spearheaded the original project, a team of our RAs who had been integral into actually conducting the ethnographic work.

These were graduate students across UofT who speak Arabic and were able to really be these incredible interlocutors without whom we couldn't have done this. We also had the voices of two mothers who were very keen to be part of the research process with us. We had invited the mothers also to join us on this panel. As you would imagine, the audience was vaguely interested in what the profs said, a little bit more interested in what our RAs shared, but keenly interested in the insights from our two research participants, the mothers.

Jasmine Rault (JR): A discovery is one that just kind of keeps happening again and again, the surprising discovery that sometimes your research participants say no and you have to be like, "Oh, that's not just obstructive. Let's think of that as generative in some way." Sometimes they say, "Yes, but," and that "but" is a more complicated and awesome way of saying no. It's like, "Yeah, I'll do that with you if you change everything about your research question." So they say yes but then they entirely change the trajectory of the research. That's the kind of discovery that keeps me interested on a bunch of different scales.

[Theme music fades in]

Carla DeMarco (CD): Beyond Limits.

On today's show it's two for one. Two profs, who it must be said, are not currently collaborators, on one show, talking about some of their successes, inspirations, and unexpected turns along the way in their respective research paths. Today's guests on VIEW to the U are University of Toronto Mississauga Professors Neda Maghbouleh and Jasmine Rault, who define and explore their particular studies that cover topics such as race, immigration, ethics, place, sexuality, archives, and digital humanities.

Today we go beyond limits, not just of race and gender but also moving past some traditional models of how research is realized or conducted, and also beyond the limits of imagination.

We are also expanding into two different departments with the Department of Sociology represented by both profs, as well as the Institute of Communication Culture, Information, and Technology, where one of them also holds an appointment. With the second season of the podcast focused on women in academia, both Neda and Jasmine talk about the importance of sponsorship and cultivating a network of mentors, as well as identifying those who will be part of your significant support system, to see you through some challenges you might face along the way.

Hello and welcome to VIEW to the U, an eye on UTM research. I'm Carla DeMarco at U of T Mississauga. VIEW to the U is a monthly podcast that will feature UTM faculty members from a range of disciplines who will illuminate some of the inner workings of the science labs and enlighten the social sciences and humanities hubs at UTM.

[Theme music fades out]

Neda Maghbouleh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at UTM and the U of T. Her research integrates the study of race with the study of immigration by examining settlement- and discrimination-related challenges faced by Middle Eastern and North African or MENA-heritage immigrants who settle in North America.

Neda completed her BA in Sociology at Smith College before earning her MA and PhD at the University of California Santa Barbara. Prior to joining U of T in 2015, she was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Faculty Diversity.

Neda's first major project on Iranians and race in the US culminated in a sole authored book, *The Limits of Whiteness*, published in September 2017 by Stanford University Press. She is currently the principle investigator on a recently funded five-year SSHRC insight Grant that is a longitudinal study of integration-related stress among Syrian refugee newcomers to Toronto and Peel Region. In 2018, she was also awarded the Ontario Early Researcher Award by the Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Science.

NM:

My name is Neda Maghbouleh. I am Assistant Professor of Sociology and my work broadly is at the intersection of the sociology of race and the sociology of immigration. I have a specific interest in groups from the MENA region, which is the Middle East and North Africa, who migrate to North America. The first project I did, which culminated in a book that came out this past September, was about the case of Iranians in the United States and how both at home in Iran and in America they have been integrated as a white racial group but a wealth of evidence about their racialization and discrimination contradicts that

status. The literature in sociology isn't quite about to account for the experiences of that group. My first monograph looks at some of the nuances of that case. The book is called *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race* and it's out with Stanford University Press.

Throughout the course of sort of finishing up with the book I was really lucky to be here in Canada for that epic federal election in 2015 where we had a regime change here and suddenly this newfound commitment to integrating 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of that year. With Prime Minister's Trudeau's commitment came a targeted research grant through SSHRC and the government of Canada for researchers from any field to do a project related to the wellbeing of Syrian refugee newcomers.

So myself and two colleagues in my department, Professor Ito Pang in Public Policy and Sociology and Doctor Melissa Milkie here at UTM campus who's also our graduate chair, we put together a proposal and somehow got the funding. We did a one year pilot study of stress among Syrian newcomer mothers. It was really cool just to get those sorts of insights directly from the newcomers themselves about the things that were working and working less well in their first 12 months in Canada.

I just recently stepped up as PI on a kind of five year longitudinal expansion of that first project. We got both grants we went out for. We just found out about that, so it's exciting. We have about half a million dollars now both through SSHRC and also the Ontario Early Researcher Award to expand the project and to bring in mothers, teenage children, as well because, surprise, surprise the teenagers were stressing them out. We can imagine that the relationship between parents and teens is fraught in even the best cases but there are particular nuances to the case of refugees that actually really exacerbate that relationship. Yeah, we're expanding the project. Once REB and everything is settled over the summer we are aiming to recruit and begin that study in September.

At this point we are recruiting about 100 families into the study. The pilot study was split between Peel Region and Toronto and we're going to maintain that split because there were really interesting differences between the experiences of newcomers who had settled in, in many cases sort of Arab or South Asian majority neighborhoods in Mississauga or more broadly in Peel, versus folks who are a bit more spread out across Toronto. The composition of those neighborhoods was often really different so we want to maintain that split in the sample.

CD:

Jasmine Rault is an Assistant Professor in the Institute of Communication Culture, Information, and Technology at UTM and has a cross-appointment in the Department of Sociology. Her research focuses on sexuality, gender, race, and ethnicity in considerations of power, cultural change, and aesthetic potential, and incorporates a feminist approach to architecture and design, decolonizing digital research ethics and economies, and the politics of sexuality

in transnational arts and social movements. She completed a BA in English Literature at the University of Alberta before going on to York to do an MA in Women's Studies, and earned a PhD at McGill in Art History and Communication Studies.

Before coming to UTM, Jasmine was an Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies at the New School in New York City. She has been on faculty at U of T since July 2017. Jasmine's first book is *Eileen Gray and the Design of Sapphic Modernity: Staying In*, published in 2011 and reissued in 2016. Her current book projects include *Open Secrets: Technologies of Opacity for Queerly Surviving the Age of Transparency*, and *Checking In: Feminist Data in Networked Publics*, coauthored with collaborator TL Cowan. Jasmine is currently the principle investigator on a 2017 SSHRC funded insight development grant, "Checking In: Building a Digital Research Ethics Collaboratory for Minoritized Materials."

JR:

My name is Jasmine Rault. I'm an Assistant Professor both in Sociology, actually, and cross-appointed with ICCIT, the Institute for Communication Culture, Information, and Technology. My work, broadly I characterize it as queer, cultural, and communication studies but that looks really like putting feminist, queer, and critical race studies, as well as de-colonial studies to bear on questions of cultural practice, of artwork, of social movements.

For me, my first book was on an early 20th-century architect and how she was building sort of a challenge to the gender, sexual, and racial norms of the early part of the 20th century and architectural modernism in Western Europe, how she was designing those into her domestic spaces as well as her furnishings and domestic designs.

My work has gone from there to really different places. Right now I'm working on two or maybe three interrelated projects. One is a collaborative project called the Digital Research Ethics Collaboratory where I'm working with my long-time collaborator, TL Cowan, who's over at UTSC, the Scarborough campus of U of T and Arts, Culture and Media as well as at [UofT's] iSchool. This is an Insight Development Grant SSHRC-funded project where we're questioning the kinds of research ethics we bring to bear as research communities to our use of digital research subjects. That can mean how we're putting materials online but also how we're using materials that are already online.

The question of ethics in our practice of digital research is informed largely by Indigenous and decolonial studies of digital archives, so the recognition that not all things should be shared to everyone. Not all things should be put online. Not all things should be open access as much as we have this as a kind of general sense of a public good to make everything as accessible as possible. Indigenous scholars and people in Indigenous studies and archivists and librarians have been like, and communities have been like, "Well, wait a minute. Our cultural heritage has been stolen for a bunch of years and it's being de-contextualized and put online with absolutely no attention to the kind of cultural, historical, geographic specificity of these artefacts. We've been taking that kind of insight

to think about how queer and feminist and trans-feminist archives can be used and publishing can be circulated online.

We have a project that is the Cabaret Commons project that started with an archive of materials related to, specifically on the Meow Mix Cabaret that was in Montreal for about 15, 20, maybe more than 20 years, '97 to 2015 or so. It was a dyke-centered, queer cabaret that ran every month or every two months. There was a lot of documentation related to it. We were like well, we want to put this material in conversation with all of the other queer cabarets that have been running around, largely we understood North America. So we were thinking Montreal, Toronto, New York, Mexico City, the spaces that we were most, that T.L. Cowan and I were, most familiar with. We were like there's so many of these really politicized party spaces that are performance party spaces and they're leaving these traces that we can learn a lot from and build a lot together with. Learn a lot about a local political situation at the moment but also across these networks to see that people are working on problems, similar problems in slightly different ways in different locations.

We had this Meow Mix collection. We were like 'great, let's put it all up online.' We had permissions from Miriam Ginestier who owns the collection. She was the creator and ongoing curator of the Meow Mix parties and shows. We had all the permissions. We had permissions from photographers. We were like, 'Wait a minute, what about the many, many people who are represented in these videos?' Sometimes a video would be a two hour-long video of people's performances. There'd be anywhere from 10 to 50 performers in a night. We were like, 'Oh shoot, I don't feel comfortable putting that up online without everybody's permission.' Then we started to think, 'well, what are the kinds of presumptions that we have about the inherent good of sharing this materials, and how do we do justice to the kind of really locally-specific politicized intimacies, politicized and eroticized intimacies that make these scenes of interest in the first place? How do we do justice to these scenes at the same time as we circulate these scenes and sort of network them through the affordances of digital network technologies?'

We realized, well, we had to really change the kinds of questions we were asking about what we can put online and how we can put it online. This, on one hand, is largely about a question of consent but it's also moved into how can we build into these digital spaces, these digital architectures for my interest, the kinds of negotiated intimacies that are cultivated on the ground, that have to do with a kind of a rewarding and desire for risk, but also a kind of collective sense of careful risk. The risk can be very broad, risks to health and we know very sexual practice is. But it can also be risk to like social status. It can also be risks around who's out to their kin networks and to their work networks? We don't want to put those people at risk but in these spaces that kind of risk is absolutely, that's what it's about.

The Digital Research Ethics Collaboratory is actually a website that is designed to collect people's stories of dealing with digital materials and when they had

those moment of, 'Maybe we need to think about this slightly differently. When did we come to recognize that this was not just always good to put things online?'

Our tri-council ethics guidelines across NSERC and SSHRC and CIHR, the guidelines that we have for using digital materials that's provided by those basically encourages us to just do it, to just put it up, and also encourages us to just use whatever's online. They have some language around if there wasn't a reasonable expectation of privacy in the conversation that you're overhearing. Well, what's a reasonable expectation of privacy on Facebook or on Twitter? Possibly you and I are friends on Facebook and I'm putting a whole post about like whatever just happened at the party last night but I know you've been at the party. I know you probably weren't maybe last night but you had been at the party before. So I trust you all. Somebody who's not part of those intimate networks can come in, scrape it, put it somewhere else, and that's ethically permissible. Not just permissible but in many ways sort of encouraged by the current digital guidelines, typical research guidelines that we have. It's one large project.

CD: It does make me think about the question, though, is it hard to persuade people to even think along these lines? Because everyone's so used to everything being put up online that I can imagine that you must be met with some people saying, 'Well really, is this...do we have to consider this?'

JR: Well and that question the, "Do we have to consider this? Is this really such a problem?" is a question we have, too, because our impulse was first to put things online. We just want the question to be asked, not for the question to always be, "No, it's not necessary." In some cases we just need to entertain the possibility that it might not be necessary or some different technologies might need to be designed and some different digital architectures might need to be imagined to be able to cultivate spaces online that have various levels of access, graded access.

Mukurtu is the content management software that is putting into play some of the most interesting kind of Indigenous cultural protocols around cultural heritage and community collections. What they're doing is there's traditional knowledge labels. Some things are labeled like, 'This is only to be seen during these seasons of these years.' Or, 'This is only to be seen by men.' Or, 'This is only to be seen by women.' Or, 'This is only to be seen in the context of this ceremony.' There's a certain kind of labeling and context provided for the materials which is one step towards not necessarily saying, 'No, don't share it,' but to share it differently and to make it accessible differently. Some things just really aren't accessible unless you've already been cleared by moderators, which is a model we're all quite familiar with, being cleared by moderators before you can get into it. But those moderators are going to be asking slightly different questions than like, 'Do you like this or that color? Okay, come into our friends of purple group.' It's going to be more culturally-specific questions.

We're trying to think well how can we be, rather than be like it's impossible, to think speculatively around the impossibilities that are built into our current digital technologies and to recognize that those impossibilities are in many ways socially embedded and ideologically informed to make certain ways of related impossible that are not dissimilar to the ways in which modes of sociality and relation have been rendered impossible offline.

CD: You're also raising a really good point, Jasmine, in that I read about this Project Naming, which someone spearheaded at UBC but they are taking all these photos of Indigenous people who had previously not maybe been identified. Maybe they were at a residential school but they were trying to circulate these photos to be able to name the people that were in it, to give them names and sort of more of an identity because there's this whole area of Canadian history that we don't really, I think, growing up in Canada we didn't talk about residential schools and we weren't taught about them. I look at this as a positive that they're taking these photos and people are being remembered and recognized and all this stuff. You're raising the point that this is also then sometimes an infringement on peoples...

JR: There's that study that started at UBC and has been scaled up to the Canadian National Archives. There's the whole Canadian Archives Naming Project. If you go to that archives' website you get to fill out all this information if you wanted to name people that are in the National Archives collections.

But then of course the other step that is not unprecedented and has been done in several places in the US, and I'm actually not sure in Canada, but is about repatriation. The quite simple, well, I say quite simple but the question of like should we as this kind of archive of colonial theft and exploitation still have these photos? Should we have them? Should we clean them? Should we be circulating them at all? Should we be giving them back to the communities of origin, to the people whose image we took, stole, stored, and used as part of our colonial project? So give this stuff back. I say that's a simple question of repatriation but of course it becomes complicated for anyone because you think there's very few of us who actually have the facilities to be able to store some of these archives safely and in perpetuity.

I think that more and more people are starting to ask more complicated questions of what seemed like a really simple technological fix that was enabled by the internet. Of course the internet was never designed for us, it was designed for the military. It's no surprise that it turns into this great big surveillance machine, garbage fire of colonial, racist misogyny.

CD: So this is a feel-good interview. [laughs]

Are there any findings or results that you, Neda, have come across over the course of your work that you have found particularly surprising?

NM:

Sure. There are surprises everyday in this line of work, which I think Jasmine would also say is part of why we do this. But one that sticks out in my brain came from the Canadian Sociological Association congress last year which was held in Toronto.

This was as our pilot study with Syrian mothers was coming to a close. As fairly, I don't know, mainstream researchers methodologically speaking in sociology, we dipped our toe into something slightly inspired by or resembling participatory action research [PAR], which is a different kind of way of imagining the research endeavour as something that researchers and participants are working really collaboratively, that boundary is troubled.

We didn't do a full-on PAR type of a project but we dipped our toe via convening a panel at that conference that included both the three professors who had spearheaded the original project, a team of our RAs who had been integral into actually conducting the ethnographic work, so these were graduate students across U of T who are natives of the region, who speak Arabic and were able to really be these incredible interlocutors without whom we couldn't have done this. We also had the voices of two mothers. There were two mothers who were very keen to flex their sociological imagination and to be part of the research process with us. We had invited the mothers also to join us on this panel.

As you would imagine, the audience was, like, vaguely interested in what the profs said, a little bit more interested in what our RAs shared, but keenly interested in the insights from our two research participants, the mothers. One of the things that the moms, they were full of these incredible insights but one of the things that they said which should not have surprised me, it's like intellectually I knew it. The moms said, "At the same time that these professors were studying us, we were studying them. We were deriving sort of our wisdom or insights about Canada based on how we were being treated throughout this project. We were able to sort of extrapolate different hypotheses or just to draw conclusions about how we could project into our futures based on looking closely at these RAs, looking closely at these profs." Again, that's not a gee whiz moment. It shouldn't have been. But for me that was very profound, that really like the tables had turned and that this was just as much their knowledge production and sort of involvement in the research as it was for us too.

JR:

I love that and it also corresponds with some of the discoveries that I come across. One of the big surprises in doing the Cabaret Commons project, which was also one of the SSHRC-funded projects that we had done for several years and instead of building something we came up with a bunch of questions about building stuff. The questions that we came up with were entirely from our interviews with artists who were performing in these shows. We were like, 'Well, what would you want from another online space to show this work?' As researchers we were like, 'We want every ugly, grainy video. We want every unflattering photo. We want every poster, every playbill. We want every performance name you ever used. We want it all up online.'

The artists, some of whom were like, "Sure, yeah. That's great and hilarious. Put it all up there." Some are like, "I'm a professional working artist. That was a work in progress," or, "That was just a one-off for my friends that night. It was a benefit for their surgery party." Or, "That was a benefit for this like refugee needs." Most of these are benefits or social justice oriented cabarets. They're like, "Don't put that online. Absolutely not." It reaffirmed for TL and I the recognition that we are trained as researchers into an extractive model of research, which is of course this long colonial legacy of most of our universities. This is just go and take and take and take, much more than we give. Also, to forget that our research participants or our research subjects, I suspect is the conventional model, are not just participants but are in fact co-creators of any of the knowledge that we're possibly going to make.

The fact that the mother researchers that you're working with, it turns out that they're coming up with as much or more knowledge than you're coming up with is something that has really informed our direct project when we're like 'okay well, we're trained into just kind of going all over online and let's scrape this hashtag off Twitter or let's Python-script scrape all of this data and take all this data and make conclusions about it.' We forget that the people who are making that data are often way more capable of making conclusions about that material. In fact, we underplay the extent to which their knowledges are formative in what we think of as our knowledges, and that we credit from, and what we benefit from, and that we get a certain kind of academic value and sometimes monetary value from.

A discovery is one that just kind of keeps happening again and again. The surprising discovery that sometimes your research participants say, 'No,' and you have to be like oh that's not just obstructive. Let's think of that as generative in some way. Sometimes they say, 'Yes, but....' That "but" is a more complicated and awesome way of saying no. It's like, 'Yeah, I'll do that with you if you change everything about your research question. If you change everything. If we're not building an archive but instead we're helping to organize the archival materials that are under my bed right now. That we're not putting them online, we're just organizing them and digitizing them and then I'm keeping them.' So they say yes but then they entirely change the trajectory of the research. That's the kind of discovery that keeps me interested on a bunch of different scales.

CD: I love that because I think for both of you, what you've just described is that sort of emphasis on the power of that reciprocal nature of research.

I'm wondering if you could tell us a little bit about how you got into this particular field of study in the first place.

NM: Yeah. Mine is a, I think, quite typical story of someone who goes off to University as an 18 year old and had never heard the word *sociology* but took that first class. It was like worlds opened to me where things that I had observed, or sort of validated as patterns that were linked to structure. I had a

whole new vocabulary, the language to put into words things that had often bothered me or just things that stuck out as intriguing.

That's the genesis of my whole career just was that one first sociology class that blew my mind. I think the reason why I stayed in sociology all the way throughout undergrad through my PhD, and now in an appointment in a sociology program, is I appreciate it's a broad umbrella methodologically, substantively.

I'm thrilled that one of the courses I teach at UTM, which is considered a service course, meaning it's a slog and people typically don't like to teach the class but it's the one that renews my passion for sociology every term, is called Logics of Social Inquiry. It's a sort of survey course where students get a taste of everything from demography and statistics all the way through ethnography and social network analysis – everything in between. So just recognizing that there are this plurality of methods, these means to actually collect data and analyze it. It just renews my passion for SOC and how it's unwieldy, can be troubling, but also it's most exciting thing about it.

CD: I know though you have also an interesting story, if you can talk about it, but for your book *Limits of Whiteness* I remember you telling me that it sort of came about when you were coming to Canada.

NM: Sure. When I had done my PhD in the US, and I was also born in the US so all I had known was the United States really, except for a couple semesters of travel here and there. It had always been kind of this project that I imagined toggling between the racial ideologies and hierarchies that shape the socialization of people in Iran who would then be the immigrants to the United States later, and how they enter a different racial order that sometimes have rules that map onto but also differ dramatically at times from the racial order that people learned back at home. I was still thinking of it in this sort of binary. The home land, the host land, things that trans nationalism had troubled many decades ago. I was trapped there like just such an ugly American, frankly.

Then the simple act of getting an academic appointment in a third country, a different place, and the simple act of crossing the border at Niagara and my own race changed where on the Canadian census Iranians, Afghans, people from that region of the world, like Southwest Asia, technically would occupy the category in Canada called West Asian versus in the US where Arabs, Armenians, Iranians are classified as white. That was a very profound thing. Again, it shouldn't have been my Oprah, aha! moment the same way what I said about the panel we had at congress. It's like intellectually I had read the literature. I knew that this was a thing but it was that embodied act of crossing a border and the way the state made sense of or integrated me. It was different. That animated then all of the revision and really the shape that the book took.

The book was written entirely in three years in Toronto. It was data, the ethnographic data had been collected as a graduate student but everything

from the political philosophy of Charles Mills, who has his PhD from U of T, through just so many different influences. These were my Canadian influences that really actually shaped the monograph that ended up coming up.

JR: When the National Film Board gives you money to make the movie of your life it's going to be, you're going to have that aha moment on the Maiden of the Mist. 'Wait a minute! It's so much more complex' as you follow the droplets of the Niagara diaspora.

NM: As that cultural studies-sociology mix, you're able to really bring it together with this great visual. I love it.

JR: I think that I hear your story of coming to sociology and coming to academia and for me it was certainly not coming to the social sciences. It was definitely the humanities. When I entered undergraduate, my undergraduate at the University of Alberta, I went into English. I was just profoundly attracted to the tools for imagining other worlds that were beyond what were rendered the limits of my current world. I grew up really working class. Alberta, at the time it was profoundly and pronouncedly homophobic. Now it's sort of more culturally homophobic. There was kind of legacy of colonialism so heavy in the racism of Alberta. From the earliest age I knew that that was not a place I ever wanted to stay.

Getting into my undergrad was a way of tapping into literature. I just had the most awesome professors in the English department at U of A, especially at that time. It was turning into this center for queer post-colonial feminist literacy studies and film and cultural studies at that time was making a big turn. I just, I got to read the best stuff. I got to read the best post-colonial literature. I got to just watch the best films. To me it was this imaginative capacity beyond what were rendered the limits of my imagination. Then I, like you, had the intuitive sense that there was more, but I never was able to put words to it and put space to it. That hooked me. I did my Masters in Women's Studies out at York University. Then eventually through, kind of a long story, ended up doing my PhD at McGill in Art History and Communication Studies.

So this strange combination that was quite new when I started, I entered the program in 2002, and it had just started its little experiment of being this really unique program. For me, it met my needs perfectly because I wanted to do a kind of cultural study of, and in Canada communications studies is informed sort of horribly and for what it's worth, okay by Marshall McLuhan so what we have is this, in Canada communications studies is cultural studies, which is quite different I think than the US. I always feel like I need to make that distinction. I had a cultural-studies approach to architecture and to architectural histories. That was one of the rare places where I was able to do that kind of work. My supervisors Will Straw and Christine Ross were across the two divisions. It was dreamy for me.

From there I've started to think about what it means to occupy domestic spaces and spaces of intimacy across a bunch of different sites. It's not only about domestic architecture, it's also about party spaces. It's also about the kind of intimate spaces online. Also, I have given a certain amount of thought and some publication to occupying spaces within social movements. How does a social movement shift by bringing in, or integrating, or sometimes being broken apart by, a new set of investigations?

One of the projects that I liked doing most was on sexual politics in Mexico. Looking at how sexual politics came to be articulated as a social movement priority in Mexico in the '60s and '70s. Sort of the history of queer culture and queer politics in Mexico is so different than in Anglo North America and is so much more aligned to sort of Latin America broadly, which means that it's much larger. It's always been co-articulated with a kind of move towards redistribution of resources towards socialist demands for different models of power and towards decolonization.

The politics of sexuality and then the contemporary articulations of sexuality in Mexico are really distinct from Anglo North American or Anglo world histories of sexuality. This kind of starting from architecture and moving into questions of other spaces has been generative for me but it's always been rooted in this humanities question of how do arts get us there? How do arts push our imagination beyond the limits of the possible?

CD: This is a very broad question but I like to ask it because I think it could lead to lots of different answers. But what do you feel is the biggest impact of your work?

NM: I think the kind of immediate feedback I've gotten about my book since it came out in September has made me feel efficacious, I hopefully said that right, efficacious in a way I have not yet felt in this career. Everything from when the book went online for presale on Amazon, and I had sort of a millennial readership begin to post photographs on social media of them holding my book, or going around North America speaking to a variety of communities including university communities but also taking it to retirement communities of older Iranian immigrants. Sort of the way that it's been read by book clubs in my community. I just am totally overwhelmed and shocked by the way it's been taken up by Iranians in Canada and in the United States.

In particular, because I think in some sub-communities or subcultures we sometimes have, and oftentimes deservedly so, a sense that people don't actually show up for you. They say they will but they're not going to put the resources there to support you. We sort of, I think, as artists or scholars can sometimes have an antagonistic relationship to the communities that we belong to sometimes. It was really one of those moments where I felt like people showed up. Even folks that politically or in other ways I thought might not be on board with the project, even though they might not agree with the claims or they try to debunk the evidence, they actually really have showed up for me.

The kind of impact I think it's made in Iranian Canadian and Iranian American spaces, I've had people reach out to say, 'I really want to pursue a Persian-language translation so that this book begins to circulate in Iran because we have cousins or people that we know that really want to learn more about this.' People have said, 'Would you consider recording an audiobook because my parents or grandparents don't like to read?' I've said to them I'll read it to them over the phone but I don't think an audiobook is in the works. Just that's been totally exciting and a kind of immediate sense of gratification for sure.

CD: It's amazing to know that it's resonated with that many people, and as you say, beyond the academic audience.

NM: Yeah, because you always, I think, write with some audiences in mind. I think unabashedly at different points in the writing process I had prioritized this community of diasporic Iranians. There were times where I think other people in sociology either questioned that choice or wanted me to sort of pause and take stock of what I might be giving up to have made that decision. Ultimately I think that it reached the audience that I actually had in mind. Maybe that's not the same audience that other folks in my field more broadly are looking to write for.

CD: That's amazing.

NM: Thanks.

CD: What about you, Jasmine?

JR: That's awesome. I have nothing that feels nearly so *efficacious*.

NM: It's just at top of mind about a thing that's now recently done.

JR: Yeah, no that's so exciting. Hopefully that's just going to keep happening. One of the things that I've realized from my book that came out in 2011, got reissued like a few years after in 2016, but it was about modernist architecture. Architects were not particularly interested in it because I'm not writing for architects. But people who were doing history of sexuality, people who were doing history of design from a kind of more cultural studies angle, they were really intrigued. I thought what became interesting to me was publishing a book, no matter when it's published, you get like waves of interest. I had a few years of people being interested, so going and talking about the book. Then a few years where it died down. Then a few years where it like popped back up again. You're having this moment right now that feels thrilling but even if it feels like it dies down next year or two it's going to come back. That's what's I think amazing about-

NM: Or at this rate with Trump and everything...

JR: Hopefully in not too long from now people are going to be like, 'Racism, what was that?!'

NM: That's so cool that your book was reissued.

JR: Right, yeah. That was nice. It's nice for it to have a kind of revitalized life. I think that, for me, the biggest impact of my work quite honestly is with students. That's less so much my research work, which I see has ripple effects and creates networks and creates shifts in conversations within research communities. It's with students. Being at UTM is really fun for me. I was previously at The New School for Social Research in New York for six years before coming here. It was great at The New School but there is something especially awesome about being at UTM and the students here that are so smart and that don't understand themselves always or necessarily as academically smart. Just to see that moment where students are like recognizing that the value of their ideas are on an equal par with the ideas that were brought into the classroom by the textbooks or by the readings that I'm bringing in.

To have that across any kind of teaching that I did, the fun thing for me is to see the ways in which these ideas transform their lives. It sounds so clichéd and simple or something like that. For me, I see them imagining new worlds for themselves. Again, this imagining beyond what seemed possible. So whether that means students going into grad school, whether it means them taking a job in another part of the world or the country or the city that they hadn't imagined going into, or whatever it means because it means differently across every student. The biggest impact is to just see students' lives be transformed by their interaction with the ideas that come in from the readings I choose and then the conversations that we'd have in the class.

There's something still I find quite magical about classrooms. We don't have anything like that, any other context in the world is like a classroom where the idea is that you're all failing together and perhaps collectively coming up with something slightly better than what you came in with. Where do we have that? When do we most need that than right now in this kind of moment of the most spectacular recent forms of the failures of kind of democracy and capitalism? The classroom has an impact that I'm always surprised by and that I think feels like where my work lands most.

CD: I find that so reassuring because of online classes you can take, which I know that there's value in that too, but I think that there is something about that sort of collective and the connection and the debates, all that stuff that could only happen within the context of the classroom.

JR: I mean sometimes it doesn't happen. Sometimes the failure just stays a failure. But there's a possibility that that failure can completely shift into other generative modes of asking questions or orienting yourself and that is like magic to me.

CD: Yeah. That's great.

[Interlude music fades in]

Coming up, Women in Academia. Neda and Jasmine talk about the importance of cultivating a network of sponsors, as well as identifying those who will be part of your significant support system.

[Interlude music fades out]

CD: The last question I have, I've mentioned this season of VIEW to the U is a focus on women in academia and so the discussion of promoting and supporting women in all careers is an ongoing dialogue, but I was just wondering if you have personally come across any challenges in the course of your career, or if you have words of encouragement, or sometimes what's been brought up in this space is if there was a mentor that sort of inspired you to continue on. Any of that.

NM: Yeah. I think the challenges facing women in academia are connected to the challenges facing women in all career tracks. Some of the specifics may be different but nonetheless, these occupations, these industries, they all were designed to promote and benefit and serve in every case white men. That's all of it. That's not specific to academia. I think at best, this career is one that tolerates queer people. It tolerates women of color. But there isn't anything that I've experienced that resembles kind of acceptance much less thriving. That sounds really negative or cynical but I think that when I look across the character of women's work in a variety of fields that's pretty much the state of affairs.

There was just a study that came out, a report yesterday that said across sort of different occupations in the wider field of higher education, women of color make 67 cents on the dollar to what white men make. That's across administration and faculty and staff. Collectively 67 cents on the dollar.

I think a sociologist might say we could start with the material. We could actually start with equity in pay. I would say what has characterized the better parts of my trajectory in stark contrast to places where I struggled really was about cultivating a network of mentors or even something I'll share which was like a piece of lingo I picked up along the way since starting the job at U of T, which is cultivating a network of *sponsors*.

You can think of sponsors as somewhat different than mentors. Mentors are kind of in the trenches with you helping you through kind of the ticky-tacky of everyday life and your job. It's good to have more than one. You're sort of sharing the load and getting multiple perspectives.

Also, that it's so key in this career to have sponsors. That's someone who sort of would vouch for you. They have access to opportunities or networks that you don't because actually they sort of in power structure occupy a higher position than you. Cultivating a network of sponsors as well who aren't doing sort of the on-the-ground mentoring or peer mentoring with you, but can sort of put your name forward when those little niches or those windows open up, that that's key.

I realize in my trajectory the places where I had momentum and where I just felt like I had synergy between my life, my goals, my career were these moments where mentors and sponsors either revealed themselves to me or it was serendipity we found one another. Then there have been times throughout the career track where the mentors or even sort of peer mentoring, colleagues, that has felt more fraught or more frayed, those connections. Yeah, to the extent that women or other marginalized people in whatever occupation can lift one another up and find one another and cultivate those sorts of relationships I think is really key.

It's interesting right now as Assistant Professor to be stepping into a more mentoring function for scholars who are coming up through undergrad or graduate school, post-docs. Right now I kind of feel like I'm in between. I still need some mentorship profoundly, but also I'm being asked to mentor in new ways that are really challenging and interesting too.

CD: Thank you.

JR: I was thinking about the question. I was like oh, there's so many ways to answer this question but I was so happy the way that you answered it, Neda, because it's like exactly the same. I was like, well, I think the only problem with being a woman in academia is if we forget that kind of misogyny and racism and homophobia and transphobia and a profound classism, we forget that they're as strong here as they are anywhere else. So that I think one of the myths that we as academics need to fight against is that we are somehow some exceptional space. That is often what leads to, I think, some of the more kind of violent and egregious experiences of sexism and racism where we as sort of like a church, academia operates often like a church where we're like this is a place that I should not happen. We all can agree on that.

So when somebody says, 'Hey, it's happening all the time. It's derailed my career. It's made it impossible for me to finish this class. It's made it impossible for me to have a life as faculty, as staff, as student.' Often the university's answer, and sometimes it comes in the form of individuals answers is, 'It should not, so it is not.' Then we deny it and we cover it up.

But if we can just be more clear and more honest and more communicative about the ways in which it's absolutely here, that we are deeply imbricated in the logics, the power structures of misogyny, and colonialism, and racism, and all the things that form in that larger culture that we're a part of and that we're

born of and that the university was in fact invented to sustain. That I think it's no different. I have nothing worse or better academically than I have in any other job or any other experience in my life.

Then the other thing that I was just going to say is like yeah, you gotta find your people. I think Neda put it much more systematically to be like okay, you find your peers. You find your mentors. You find your sponsors. I like that way of thinking about it. Those are the only ways that any of us are going to get by. I think it's the same for the white dudes who we sometimes are going to paint white straight dudes going to be like 'oh they're fine, they're flourishing.' But no they're only, if they flourish, because honestly academia is a lonely alienating and often really disempowering place, if they're flourishing it's because they found their people. We just need to name that. They found their people, and those people are sustaining a particular kind of logic that sometimes works against the possibility of our sustaining. We need to find our people. It's no different than what anybody has ever done academically or, like you say, in any kind of profession.

One of the things I tell graduate students is that you might have differences with your cohort and you might around the seminar table really want to fight it out over ideas, interpretations of text, directions you want to take your project, but remember those are your people. Cultivate that. That's going to be the strongest, it's conceivably. It wasn't for me because I didn't get this kind of advice but I've seen other people really take this seriously. That cohort can be your champion and can be your place to process whatever's happening to you throughout wherever you take that PhD. Keep that cohort close even if you have difference with them because I've had several different jobs at several different universities, and each time I seek out my people I've been lucky enough to find amazing people, including at U of T.

One of the reasons why I like it here so much, on top of the UTM students, is that I've been lucky enough to find amazing network of scholars who are doing the kind of work that I want to see in the world, all across U of T and in the larger kind of GTA. That's the only way that I've ever been able to feel like 'okay, this place is liveable.' Liveable is not quite it but I can do my work despite so many of the things that discourage us.

CD: That's great. It's a good, I think, note to end on. There are other things we could say on this topic but we will stop on a positive note.

I just wanted to thank you both so much for coming in today.

NM: Thank you.

Jasmine Rault: Thank you.

Neda Maghbouleh: This was really fun. I'm glad I got to do it with you, Jasmine.

Jasmine Rault: Me too.

Carla DeMarco: I would like to thank everyone for listening to today's show.

I would like to thank my guests Neda Maghbouleh and Jasmine Rault for coming in to speak about their respective work and projects in the Department of Sociology and in the Institute of Communication, Culture, Information, and Technology at UTM and for making it such a fun chat.

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Please consider taking a moment to rate the podcast in iTunes. It helps others find this show.

Feel free to get in touch with me, my contact information is on our SoundCloud page, if you have feedback or if there is someone from UTM that you'd like to see featured on VIEW to the U in the future.

Lastly and as always, thank to Tim Lane for his tunes and support.

Thank you.