

# Too much, too little: The politics and cultures of intensity in crisis times

Date/Time: 3 March 2026, 2.30pm-4.00pm

Venue: Research Division Seminar Room, NUS AS7 06-42

Register here: <https://forms.office.com/r/3NrgsYiV3M>



In this paper, I argue that amid the multiple ends and afterlives of neoliberalism in the UK and USA post the 2008 financial crisis we are witnessing a 'crisis of intensity', a crisis of whether life feels too much or too little. Crises of intensity are recurrent features of twentieth century capitalism and have four components: a disjuncture between actual experience and desired experience; judging the present in terms of 'too much' and/or 'too little'; a diagnosis of the present in terms of 'maladies of intensity' (such as burnout, outrage, hype or ragebait); and the proliferation of promises of 'good intensity' (from new types of relaxation through to the excitement of extreme sports). After giving examples of past crises of intensity articulated with the end of the Fordist settlement and expressed through claims of boredom, I will show how contemporary right-wing populism is simultaneously symptom, cause, and promised resolution to a crisis of intensity marked by the indeterminacy of whether life should feel 'more' or 'less'. As well as showing how this promised resolution is articulated with a series of right wing adjacent online cultures, I will speculate on the implications of this present crisis of intensity for transformations in capitalism and the futures of populism.



**Ben Anderson** is a Professor of Human Geography at Durham University. He has published extensively on affective life as articulated with politics, as well as how futures are governed amid uncertainty, and theories of space and time. He is co-author (with Prof. Anna J Secor) of *The Politics of Feeling: Populism, Progressivism, Liberalism* (Goldsmiths/MIT, 2025) and *Encountering Affect: Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions* (Routledge, 2014), and over 90 journal articles and book chapters. As well as theoretical work on conjunctural analysis and attachment and detachment as affective relations, his current research focuses on the politics of intensity in right-wing populism and on climate change disaffection. He currently co-edits *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, having previously co-edited *The Geographical Journal*.