

# **(Micro) Plastic Pollution in the Media: Adventure Documentary, News and Public Understandings”**

Dr Lesley Henderson

Microplastic pollution is now in the public domain as an emerging issue of global concern however there is little known about how this issue is framed within media reporting and also a dearth of studies exploring public understandings of the issue. In this paper, we explore how ideas about microplastics are mediated by culturally embedded notions of what is ‘risky’ or ‘healthy’. Specifically, we explore the wider role of media in telling stories and creating “frames of understanding” about the environmental and health risks of (micro) plastics. This paper builds on a unique interdisciplinary study at Brunel University London. The project involved eco- toxicologists, sociologists, environmental scientists and natural history film makers and used the adventure documentary film about the problem of single-use plastics, ‘A Plastic Ocean’, Netflix, 2017 to explore wider ideas about the problem. This project is the first to systematically analyse media content (across 1 year, 2014-15) and we also used online deliberative survey tools involving a nationally representative sample of the UK population to explore how people engage with media stories about the topic. Additional rich qualitative data were generated in 6 focus group sessions (involving water sports club members, arts students, community workers and young mothers living on a budget). The paper concludes by highlighting how wider public perceptions of risk and health