

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Wednesday 7th April 2010 at 13:30-15:00
in the Carnegie Lecture Theatre C001

Social Divisions and Social Identities Stream

“Social Justice and Inclusion: Theorising and Researching Difference”

Chair: Professor Kalwant Bhopal, University of Southampton

Anthias, F.

Intersections and translocations: new paradigms for thinking about identities and inequalities

This paper reflects on the concepts of belonging, identity, difference and culture which inform understandings of social relations in the modern era. These have become particularly important in addressing the effects of transnational migration, “ethnic diversity” and racialisation in a range of social contexts. A critique of the ways in which “diversity” is talked about in current debates is also provided.

This paper also reflects on the concept of intersectionality as a means of developing a more integrated analysis of social divisions and identities relating particularly to gender, ethnicity and class. It is clear that once we focus on the intersectionality of social divisions and identities, we can move away from essentialised notions of culture, difference and belonging.

However, the complexity of social divisions and their inter-relations, both as analytical categories and categories of practice asks us to rethink the terms that we use for understanding both identity formations and forms of inequality. A new approach to issues of social stratification is also raised by this exercise. This paper attempts to rethink “identity”, on the one hand, and the parameters of a social stratification analysis, on the other, and considers the utility of a focus on social location (and translocation), process, and context in this exercise.

McGhee, D.

University of Southampton

Complex (In)equalities in Contemporary Britain

There has been a great deal of activity with regards to the development of Britain’s ‘equality policy’ in recent years. This includes the establishment of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the Government’s Equality Office, and reports of wide-ranging reviews, such as the Equalities Review and Discrimination Law Review; not to mention debates on Single Equality Bill and the place of equality (and social and economic rights) in the potential British Bill of Rights and Responsibilities in reports produced by the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the Ministry of Justice. In this paper I will examine the unfolding definitions of ‘equality’ (or ‘an equal society’) found in this archive of policy documents. I will also explore how these documents and the organizations that produce them have attempted to initiate new ways of thinking about (and tackling) inequalities which seem to be pulling equality policy in two directions, that is, towards increasingly formalized standards of equality (for example, associated with debates on institutional and constitutional transformations with regards to the place of equality as either a general interpretative principle or as an actualized human right, in the form of social and economic rights, in a potential Bill of Rights). At the same time ‘equality policy’, especially the drive towards tackling ever more complex and persistent forms of disadvantage is becoming increasingly specific and targeted on particular communities living in particular places. This is evident in the shift away from ‘one size fits all’ approaches to tackling inequalities in government departments, especially the Communities and Local Government Department (CLG). The CLG’s recent Connecting Communities Programme under John Denham offers a prime example of the new equalities strategy in action. In this paper I will examine recent debates on tackling ‘race inequality’ and the Connecting Communities Programme with regards to: (1) the continuing backlash against what has been described as the legacy of multiculturalism; and (2) and the suggestions in the media that the white working class focus of the Connecting Communities programme is, in the run up to the General Election (and in the context of the economic downturn): ‘the latest attempt by Ministers to address fears over immigration in Labour heartlands, and confront the threat from the British National Party’ (Jack Doyle, 30 November 2009, *The Independent*).

Back, L.

Goldsmiths, University of London

Thicker Lines and Globally Distributed Lives

This paper explores the challenges of thinking social divisions on a global scale. Exploring the limits of what Beck called ‘methodological nationalism’ the paper discusses the challenges of contemporary class analysis in the context of gender relations, human mobility and racism. Through using case studies drawn from the EUMARGINS Project - a comparative analysis of young adult migrants in 7 European countries – these issues will be situated in the context of lives that confound staple sociological categories. How do we define the class position of young Albanian migrant categorised as ‘middle-class’ in Albania but after being smuggled in a truck to London ends up in a ‘working class’ school in Dagenham? Or, for that matter who do we theorise the experience of a young educational migrant from Dominica with a first class degree from a British university who is working as a casual night time worker in London’s retail sector? It will be argued it is important to developing new ways to comprehend how social divisions are lived as migrants traverse very different social contexts that read, position and situate them within increasingly thicker lines of social division.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Wednesday 7th April 2010 at 13:30-15:00
in the Govan Mbeki A005

Medicine, Health and Illness Stream

“Health and Suffering”

Chair: Professor Gillian Bendelow, University of Sussex

Bradby, H., Wilkinson, I., Lakeman, R.

In recent years, an unprecedented number of publications have advanced the view that social science falls woefully short of providing us with a proper account of the lived experience of human suffering. There is no disputing that a prodigious range of data gathering techniques are at our disposal for documenting the incidence of violence, injury, and oppression. It is also readily acknowledged that a great deal of terminology has been designed for the purpose of drawing aspects of human affliction within an analytical frame; but nevertheless, it is argued that a major deficit remains in our ability to pay heed to what suffering actually does to people. On these grounds, a protest is levelled towards the ways in which the methodological practices and cultural grammar of social science appear to militate against the possibility of attending to the lived realities of pain, harm and material hardship. In this protest there is also an appeal for reform. To this end, in the creation of 'languages of pain through which social science [can] gaze at, touch, or become textual bodies in which pain is written' it is suggested that we advance our capacity for both human and social understanding (Das 1997b). This session explores these developments with reference to the concept of social suffering and offers a critical appraisal of 'social suffering' as tool of social analysis and as a guide to uncovering the moral grounds of social experience.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Wednesday 7th April 2010 at 13:30-15:00
in George Moore M001

Families, Relationships, Lifecourse Stream

“Lesbian and Gay Relationships: Civil Partnerships and Family Living”

Nordqvist, P.

University of Manchester

Managing looks: Negotiating family resemblances and unequal lives in lesbian donor conception

This paper explores the meaning of physical family resemblances in the context of lesbian donor conception. It addresses how physical family resemblances relate to and interconnect with social inequalities in family life, and the social marginalisation of same-sex families. There is evidence to suggest that the social construction of family resemblances informs heterosexual couples donor conception practices. However, considerably less attention has been paid to lesbian couples' perceptions of such resemblances, and it remains largely unclear how lesbian couples negotiate the selection of sperm donors in the UK. Exploring this neglected area of research, the paper draws on a qualitative interview study including 25 lesbian couples in England and Wales who pursue self-arranged and/or clinical donor conception in the context of their relationship. Building on the work by Finch (2007), Marre and Bestard (2009) and Mason (2007), and set in the broader context of anthropological and sociological work in the area of kin and connectedness, the paper examines lesbian couples' conceptualisations of family resemblances in the context of their reproduction. The paper argues that lesbian couples utilise physical characteristics as a way of constructing and displaying family bonds, and that, in doing so, they seek to counteract the discrimination and inequality that they experience as lesbian couples and same-sex families. The paper concludes that family resemblances play a key role in the identification of legitimate families, demonstrating the unremitting hegemonic power of the conventional heterosexual, biogenetic family.

Taylor, Y., Ryan-Flood, R., Gabb, J., Fish, J.

Lesbian and Gay Parenting: Sexuality, Class, Citizenship. Authors (Yvette Taylor and Roisin Ryan-Flood) meet critics (Jacqui Gabb and Julie Fish)

This 'author meets critic' session will provide opportunity to discuss two recent, related publications: *Lesbian and Gay Parenting: Securing Social and Educational Capital*. Palgrave Macmillan (2009, Yvette Taylor) and *Lesbian Motherhood Gender, Families and Sexual Citizenship* Palgrave Macmillan (2009, Róisín Ryan-Flood). *Lesbian and Gay Parenting* breaks new ground by showing the ways social class is central to queer families, drawing upon interviews with lesbians and gay men in the UK. Much current work on lesbian and gay kinship still overlooks the significance of socio-economic status: this book explores the intersections between class and sexuality in lesbians' and gay men's experiences of parenting and the everyday pathways navigated therein, from initial routes into parenting and household divisions of labour, to location preferences, schooling choice and community supports. *Lesbian Motherhood* draws on interviews with lesbian parents in Sweden and Ireland, examining reproductive decision-making, reproductive healthcare, and the everyday spaces of parenthood, providing a resource for scholars within a range of disciplines, including family studies, gender studies and queer theory.

Mitchell, M., Dicken, S., and O'Connor, W.

National Centre for Social Research

Equality and social inclusion for same-sex couples in the context of legislative changes

The Civil Partnership Act (2004), the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2003) and the Adoption and Children Act (2002) prospectively created a completed new social environment for same-sex couples and their families. This qualitative research used in-depth interviews with 47 members of same-sex couples to examine how they experienced these legislative changes, in particular whether they felt more socially included in society and their feelings about increased state involvement in their lives. The research suggests that the effects of the legislation are complex and cannot be simply reduced to positive or negative impacts for same-sex couples as a whole. It draws out various policy implications, especially the way in which same-sex relationships and lesbian and gay parenting provide challenges for legal frameworks for 'married' life and appropriate parental role models. It also questions the meaning of equality for same-sex couples and the different ways in which social inclusion and social justice must be understood to take account of the varied ways of living among them.

Einarsdottir, A.

University of Manchester

Marriage Projects: Young Couples' Civil Partnerships

This paper explores the structuring of young couples' Civil Partnerships, and compares them to young heterosexual marriages documented by British research in the 1980s and 1990s and to earlier generations of same sex relationships documented in the 1990s. The paper pays particular attention to how finances, sexual commitments and family-making are organised in formalised relationships. It discusses the preliminary findings of a UK based qualitative research project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, that is studying people who were

aged under 35 when they entered into Civil Partnership. The study involves 60 joint and 120 individual interviews and in this paper we analyse the interview data to illuminate how the structuring of couples' relationships are linked to socio-cultural, biographical and temporal factors. Participants mostly presented their relationships as 'marriages', and we suggest they can be understood as contemporary marriage projects that involve couples negotiating cultural scripts, relational practices and personal orientations. There are some striking similarities between the relationships we studied and the young heterosexual marriages documented by previous research. However, it cannot be concluded (as previous studies would suggest) that gendered biographies are the dominating influences on these 'marriages', or that sexually marginalised biographies are the dominating influence on young couple's same sex relationships. The structuring of young couple's Civil Partnerships points to the multidimensionality of contemporary 'marriages' and the need to develop analytical frames to fully grasp this.

Thomas, M.

Cardiff University

Just married? Negotiating lesbian and gay couple perspectives on civil partnership.

This paper reports on a qualitative research study exploring the strategies and techniques employed by same-sex couples in constructing and negotiating the new identity of civil partner.

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 offers lesbian and gay couples access to a package of rights broadly equating to civil marriage. Although the legislation assumes parity of esteem with heterosexual couples, the research data show that same-sex couples are called upon to perform particular tasks in and accounting for and making sense of their status as civil partners. Narrative analysis of interview data suggests that this work is carried out in a number of contexts, from the highly heterosexualised space of the register office to the home, neighbourhood and workplace.

Whereas civil partnership can be seen as a challenge to heterosexist dominance, this new form of visibility presents a number of challenges and dilemmas. Although couples reported civil partnership as a positive experience, this was often a bittersweet process which itself highlighted the limited acceptance afforded to lesbian and gay couples from family, friends, work colleagues and others. Far from offering a transparent, intelligible form of recognition, the study suggests that civil partnership can also be seen as a marginalised status which requires lesbian and gay couples to reconcile contradictory notions of conformity and dissidence, assimilation and resistance.

This research was carried out as part of ESRC-funded study of legal recognition for same-sex couples in the UK, Canada and the US State of California.

Bruce, K

University of Southampton

Doing it 'properly': The role of tradition and reflexive coupledom in contemporary wedding and civil partnership rituals

This presentation will reflect on ways in which contemporary weddings and civil partnerships reinforce and challenge heteronormativity through their engagement with tradition. Findings from case studies (in which couples were followed through the process of planning a wedding or civil partnership) and retrospective interviews (with couples who have had a wedding or civil partnership since December 2005), as well as a photograph project carried out with many of the 30 couples included in the research, will form the basis of the discussion. Dominant ideas in sociological theory, such as Giddens' (1992) post-traditional order in which people are unconstrained by tradition and patriarchy, pioneered by gay couples, tend to ignore the socio-cultural constraints on this supposedly all-pervasive reflexivity (Heaphy, 2008). They also neglect the importance of recognising how tradition can take a meaning-constitutive form (Gross, 2005). The new concept of 'reflexive coupledom' will be used to try to overcome the tendency to overlook the importance of emotion in much theorising about intimacy. It will also be used as a way of talking about reflexivity without lifting individuals out of their context in complex social relationships. The following issues will be considered: If couples do follow heterogendered scripts then how do they justify practices that they would not necessarily reproduce in their everyday lives? Do same-sex couples appropriate, reject or create a bricolage of heterogendered ritualised practices such as the white bridal dress and language such as 'bride' and 'groom'? What is the significance of this?

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Thursday 8th April 2010 at 09:00-10:30
in Carnegie Lecture Theatre C001

Theory Stream

“Considering Amartya Sen’s Ideas of Justice”

Walby, S.

Lancaster University

Changing Interpretations of Capabilities: The Contested Neoliberalisation of Sen

Amartya Sen’s early work informed the challenge to the governmental assumption that economic growth was the pre-eminent indicator of progress. His concepts underpinned both the creation of the United Nations Development Project ‘Human Development Indicator’ which included education and longevity alongside income as indicators of progress and also the wide range of aspirations underpinning the UN Millennium Development Goals. In ways such as these, Sen’s work supported global justice projects. But Sen’s work is open to multiple readings. Some recent, more theoretical, interpretations have focused on the elements of choice and opportunity that are also present within his concept of capabilities. This shifts the emphasis away from ‘just outcomes’ towards the prioritisation of choice and opportunity. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is developing a new Equality Measurement Framework, drawing on Sen’s work on capabilities – but which Sen? What is the relationship between the frameworks of equality, human rights and capabilities? Can they be aligned and synthesised; or are there intrinsic tensions between these approaches? What is Sen’s legacy for projects of global justice today?

Mah, A.

Humboldt University

The Global Reach of Sen: Working Lives, Entangled Histories and Social Justice

Amartya Sen’s work has wide-ranging analytical potential for exploring common challenges and issues which straddle different parts of the world. In *The Idea of Justice* (2009), Sen expands and situates the capability approach within a broader theory of justice, stressing the importance of public reasoning and the plurality of reasons in shaping evaluations of justice. With its emphasis on public reasoning and the promotion of people’s capabilities in life and in work, Sen’s Idea of Justice represents an important challenge to the prevailing models, logics and practices of global capitalist development. Some scholars have argued that Sen overemphasises the role of the individual, and that his ideas remain embedded in the political philosophy of Liberalism. However, Sen’s theories of social justice have important implications for public action and social change, particularly in relation to working lives and entangled global histories. Sen’s focus on the removal of injustices as opposed to a Rawlsian ‘perfectly just society’ is an important step towards reducing social inequalities and barriers related to class, gender, ethnicity, caste, location, religion and community. The analytical potential of Sen will be explored through the lens of work, gender and the lifecycle, drawing on comparative, historical and sociological examples from Europe, Asia and Africa.

Bonvin, J.

University of Lausanne

Democracy and Public Reasoning in the Capability Approach: Toward a Sociological Understanding

Sen’s capability approach insists on the tight connection between democracy and social justice. In *Development as Freedom*, three key dimensions were emphasized: democracy as the exercise of public reason (i.e. not reduced to public balloting) has an intrinsic value insofar as the capability to participate into the public debate is valuable in itself; it has an instrumental value since it helps people support their claims and defend their rights more efficiently; and, most important, it has a constructive value in that it allows people to be active participants in the overall social fabric, i.e. in the construction of social values and norms, public policies, etc. This constructive dimension of democracy as public reason is crucial in Sen’s approach, it applies not only to political decision-making but to all exercises consisting in describing social reality (i.e. choosing the relevant information following his concept of “description as choice”) and assessing it.

Sen’s fascination for democracy has raised sharp criticisms: real democracy does not match Sen’s ideal at all; such an insistence on process freedom (democracy) has a detrimental effect on opportunity freedom (social justice); only active deliberators would be allowed to enjoy the full benefits of democracy (cf. Cohen’s objection of athleticism), etc. In his most recent book, *The Idea of Justice*, Sen strives to answer these criticisms: he develops and clarifies his notion of democracy as public reasoning, emphasizes the relevance of issues such as the informational role of democracy, tolerant values, the inescapable plurality of principles, the necessity to connect opportunity freedom and process freedom, the focus on the comparative rather than just the transcendental etc. The presentation will assess to what extent *The Idea of Justice* takes up the challenge raised by the criticisms and paves the way toward a more sociological conception of democracy as public reasoning. The potential of the concept of “capability for voice” as a prerequisite for such a view will be explored.

Public Reasoning Without Sociology: Problems in Sen's Theory of Justice

Sen's recent book, *The Idea of Justice*, is about public reasoning and the claims of justice in an unequal world. It is comprehensive in its citation of relevant sources, with the very conspicuous absence of any reference to sociological literature. At the same time, his approach to 'capabilities' makes many sociological claims about inequalities. How are we to understand sociology's absence from Sen's account of public reason despite the relevance of sociology to the understanding of inequalities? I shall address this puzzle in the light of an old distinction between formal and substantive approaches to the economy. Although the 'capabilities' approach makes an overture to substantivism, Sen's location in social choice theory places him in the formal (or analytic camp). Analytically, economics is sympathetic to liberal and utilitarian understandings of justice. Within broader analytic social theories, the utilitarian approach to action has been countered by an approach that stresses lifeworld and communicative action. In this context, the approach to 'rights' in the one form of analytic theory is complemented by 'recognition' in the other. In this presentation, I shall suggest that both approaches squeeze out the role of substantive sociological argument, which would address capabilities as embedded in social relations.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Thursday 8th April 2010 at 09:00-10:30
in the Govan Mbeki A005

Economy and Society Stream

“The social and economic impacts of the current recession”

We are repeatedly hearing contradictory messages about the current recession. It is coming to an end, there are 'green shoots of recovery', retail profits are high, unemployment has recently been falling; on the other hand, the number of people without jobs is rising, debt problems are increasing, the housing market is uncertain, public sector cuts threaten jobs. It is important that sociologists make an input to these debates. This sub-pleinary roundtable will seek to raise issues about the sociological impact of the recession such as: who are the winners and losers? How do current patterns of unemployment reflect existing divisions of class, gender and ethnicity? What is the impact on vulnerable workers? Will job security be diminished? How are households and families responding? What will be the impact on the welfare state? What is likely to be the effect on migration patterns? What are the likely longer-term impacts for the British economy? How do the impacts of the recession vary in other countries?

Speakers:

Graham Crow, University of Southampton

Kevin Doogan, University of Bristol

Anna Pollert, University of the West of England

Chair: Harriet Bradley, University of Bristol

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Thursday 8th April 2010 at 09:30-11:00
in George Moore M001

Social Divisions and Social Identities Stream

“Migration, Race and Social Cohesion”

Solomos, J., Schuster, L.

City University London

Migration, Race and Social Cohesion

In the past decade debates about immigration and race relations have increasingly focused on the question of social and community cohesion. In the aftermath of 9/11, urban unrest and 7/7 there has been a tendency to shift public discourses about race and migration in the direction of talking about social cohesion rather than multiculturalism. This paper will provide a critical examination of key facets of debates around these issues and it will do so by focusing on the changing terms of policy and political discourses about questions of multiculturalism, race relations and British national identity. In doing so we shall be exploring the shifting meanings of social cohesion and the evolving policy agendas in this field.

Bloch, A.

City University London

Undocumented Migrants in England: Separate Lives and Livelihoods

Drawing on data from in-depth interviews and testimonies with 75 young undocumented migrants living in England from Brazil, China, Kurds from Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe this paper will explore the everyday lives and networks of these young and often marginalised people focusing on the intersection of employment and networks. The paper examines the ways in which not having papers affects employment options, job search strategies and survival strategies when out of work. Young undocumented migrants tend to be clustered in very limited employment sectors sometimes working in co-ethnic businesses and working long hours for very low pay. Jobs are found through limited social networks and it is these social networks, usually based on trust, that often offer support during periods of unemployment. The paper will show how many young undocumented migrants live separate and excluded lives.

Chimienti, M.

City University London

Migration and Health in Europe: Patterns of Differential Access

Since 1980 the admission policy of European Member States has become more selective. As a consequence, irregular migration happens to be one of the last ways to enter Europe. Together with restrictions on accessing their territory, Member States have also developed several deterrence measures (dispersal, limitation of financial aid, detention, etc. of asylum seekers). This paper will explore how in this context different states choose of restriction to deal with migrants' health and therefore the patterns of differential access. Up until recently health has benefitted from an exceptional legitimacy such that its negation is unacceptable. But the irregularity of some categories of the population creates tension between the illegitimacy of their situation of residence and the legitimacy of health. In doing so we shall examine the links between the migratory regimes (admission, inclusion policy and sensitivity towards diversity) and public health policy, exploring whether these policies reinforce or contrast each other.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Friday 9th April 2010 at 16:30-18:00
in Carnegie Lecture Theatre C001

Religion Stream

“Faith, Policy and Action: Reconsidering Religion and Social Justice – how faith communities have been drawn in to the delivery of government policies”

**Dr Adam Dinham, Director, Faiths & Civil Society Unit,
Goldsmiths, University of London**

Religious faith may seem an unlikely starting point for social justice. Religion, along with politics, is frequently cited as a cause of division, oppression and even war, rather than social justice and the social goods associated with it. Yet religious faith has most emphatically re-entered the public lexicon in recent years and is seen, at least from some public policy perspectives, as a force for social good. In particular, faith communities have come to be constructed in policies about them specifically as resources for social justice. This is surprising to many, and in this paper I will explore why, and how this has come about.

My main focus is to consider the things faith communities *do* in relation to social justice, and the challenges and dilemmas posed. Some of these are about the practices of doing social justice. Others are about their implications for the faiths which participate. In exploring what faiths ‘do’ for, or about, social justice, I will also pay regard to the other part of the equation in the title of the conference – inequalities. This has been a flashpoint for faiths in public policy terms and I will look at how and why this should be the case. Some of this is about attitudes and practices towards women, minority groups and human rights. Another element is differentials in power and capacity between faith traditions and I will consider how this risks consolidating existing proxy inequalities, especially race and class, by reflecting them in faith based engagement too.

In summary, my starting point is that, whilst faith may seem to many an unlikely candidate for social justice, a great deal of faith-based social justice activity is going on. While this may be helpful, it is not always welcomed and in this sense it unsettles what had been assumed to be the ‘secular settlement’. Yet a bold and explicit policy context has emerged which engages faiths as civil society actors, and whatever the contests and debates about its legitimacy, it exists and demands a thoughtful response.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Friday 9th April 2010 at 16:30-18:00
in Govan Mbeki A005

Education Stream

“Combating instrumentalism through Learning and Teaching Sociology: Opportunities for and Challenges to the Social Justice Agenda”

This panel of the Researching Students Study Group explores the conference theme of Social Justice and Inequality by focusing on HE lecturers and students engaged in teaching/research and learning respectively. The panel recognises that both groups occupy contradictory positions emphasising instrumentality and possibility. On the one hand, students enter HE after (normally) completing an education that encouraged an instrumental approach to learning (i.e., school testing regimes reinforcing learning to pass exams) which continues into HE, where they arrive aspiring to the credentials (2:1 at least) necessary for ‘graduate jobs’. Similarly, HE lecturers are encouraged to achieve results which will both to their university’s high standing in League Tables and to contribute develop a more employable workforce. On the other hand, HE lecturers want to engage students in learning which values education as transformative deploying a social justice agenda

Both groups are also more poorly resourced than previously, which results in their work intensification. Students, especially from more diverse backgrounds, often have to work to pay rising HE costs. Lecturers operate in a less well-resourced system with rising student numbers and higher levels of accountability whilst (especially in new universities) facing growing research, administrative and teaching demands. Despite these constraints, a small, but growing, proportion of lecturers and students are developing a commitment to issues of social justice. Papers for this panel explore current challenges to teaching and learning sociology that promote social justice and that seek to engage lecturers and students’ political awareness and activism in and outside the university.

Public Sociology and Social Justice

Badcock, M., Canaan, J.

Birmingham City University

In recent years higher education has seen a renewed interest in more activist and interventionist approaches to teaching and learning. Resisting pressures to intertwine these developments too much with the skills and employability agenda, this more creative approach to student learning can contribute directly to promoting social justice amongst students. Directing students to engage in the world around them through their studies adds a previously lacking critical dimension to studying Sociology. This is a particularly timely issue; encouraging such an engagement with issues of social justice, political awareness and activism is extremely pertinent given the current global economic crisis and its local implications for the cities our students live, study and work in.

Based on the experiences of teaching a new Public Sociology degree programme, this paper explores intersections between higher education teaching, student activism and social justice, using case studies to draw out issues that have arisen through the practical teaching of this programme. After outlining the degree programme, this paper will focus on one core module which introduces students to Public Sociology. This module draws on ideas from critical pedagogy and popular education to discuss service learning, activism and political engagement in the context of the neoliberal university, challenging students to think differently about the social world around them and their role in it. The paper will consider how successful this module has been in repositioning Sociology undergraduates, evaluating the potential of programmes such as this to bridge the gap between higher education studies and the public sphere.

Diversity? Transformations in the Demography and Values of Teaching Sociology Undergraduates.

Jenkins, C., Swirsky, R., Wright, D.

University of Westminster

The successful implementation of any teaching and learning strategy depends upon a clear understanding of the needs of students from non-traditional backgrounds which is integral to our University’s Widening Participation policy. However, assessment of students’ needs must be based on

accurate identification of the student population, which official data failed to provide. In 2005/6, we first examined the impact of the changing student population on how we teach Sociology. Demographic evidence from this research showed a definite shift over the last 10 years from over 50% White to over 50% Asian students, but within this latter category there is considerable ethnic diversity of which we are only vaguely aware. Moreover, staff perceptions do not accurately match the demographic data as they perceive more homogeneity than diversity in their classrooms. Whilst there is more homogeneity regarding age and gender, it is more complicated regarding ethnicity. A primary concern was how little staff felt they knew about current students and their uncertainty about how best to provide appropriate teaching and support. Specifically, there is a gap between lecturers' expectations of students' knowledge and experience and the 'reality'. This may be due to differences in cultural background, prior education, or the age gap between students and staff - or all three, raising issues about teaching and learning, in particular a possible epistemological clash between student cultures and that of sociology. Without an understanding of lecturers' perceptions, any strategies for WP and more critical engagement with students are a shot in the dark.

The Self as Student: variations in the trajectories of first-year university students

McLean, M, Abbas, A., Ashwin, P., Filippakou, O

University of Nottingham

The 'Pedagogic Quality and Inequality' Project is a three-year ESRC funded research project, which employs the conceptual framework of the educational sociologist Basil Bernstein to examine the effects on students of the teaching, learning and curricula in undergraduate sociology and allied subjects in four universities in England that have different reputations. In the first year of the project, a combination of approximately 90 lifegrids and interviews with first-year students allowed the researchers to analyse the complex relationships between students' backgrounds, their experiences of higher education and their wider lives. The codes agreed on by the research team covered the aspects of students' lives that they talked about: personal circumstances; previous education/employment; peers; educational programme: pedagogy and content; the wider university; current identity; future identities; and, relationship to wider world. Analysis was undertaken with Nvivo and aimed both for a sense of each student in relation to these themes; and pooled the data to look at themes. The 'self as student' emerged at the centre of narratives about varying trajectories shaped by evoked pasts, experienced presents and imagined futures.

Addressing the Hidden Curriculum in an Increasingly Regulated Higher Education System

O'Donnell, M. H.

Westminster University

This paper has two aims. The first is to describe key aspects of the transformation of the hidden curriculum in higher education from the early nineteen nineties. It is argued that the hidden curriculum contributes to a now dominant educational discourse termed market managerialism. This phrase indicates characteristics associated with both quasi-markets and with the rise of professional and administrative tiers of management. It is proposed that this system is reshaping the hidden curriculum and relatedly increasing inequalities. The concept of performativity is employed to analyse the operation of the hidden curriculum at the micro/meso levels. A counter view that the new system 'frees up' academics to teach and research is addressed. Second, is to outline a different discourse and practice than the dominant one. Reference is made to Gleeson and Knights' (2006) suggestion that academics should mediate between the public and private sectors. Arguments favouring more critical education are discussed although unqualified support is not given for a revival of professional authority. The terms progressive and (participatory) democratic indicate a promising direction of reform albeit that they are unfashionable and appear unappealing to those in power. However linking them with citizenship education and competence in civil society may revitalize them. The focus of the paper is mainly on organisational structures rather than formal curriculum-content because it is through structures that the hidden curriculum operates.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Friday 9th April 2010 at 16:30-18:00
in George Moore M001

Families, Relationships, Lifecourse Stream

“Moments of intimate citizenship in multicultural Europe: the FEMCIT project”

Roseneil, S.; Crowhurst, I.; Hellesund, T.; Santos, A.C.; Stoilova, M.

Birkbeck Institute for Social Research

Social theorists have identified the post 1960s women's movement as a key driver in the transformation of intimacy in Europe (Castells, 1997; Giddens, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), but there has been little research that explores the role that women's movements, and other movements for gender and sexual equality and change, have played in reconfiguring personal life. The "Intimate Citizenship" workpackage of the EU-funded FEMCIT research project is investigating, across four contrasting European nation-states, how intimate citizenship, as state practice and lived experience, has been affected by feminism and other social movements, particularly for people living outside the conventional western nuclear family. Using the biographical-narrative interpretive method, we have carried out 64 interviews with single people, lesbians, gay men, and those in same-sex relationships, people in living apart together relationships, and people living in shared housing, from majority national/ ethnic groups, and from minoritized/ racialized groups, in Bulgaria, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

This panel consists of five short, interrelated papers. The first, by Roseneil, sets out the questions that have driven the research, and outlines the research design and methodology. This is followed by papers by Stoilova, on Bulgaria, Hellesund, on Norway, Santos, on Portugal and Crowhurst, on the UK, which present findings of the research, focusing on the analysis of "moments of intimate citizenship" and interrogating the ways in which feminism and other social movements might have impacted on the biographies and narratives of the interviewees.

SUB PLENARY EVENTS

Friday 9th April 2010 at 16:30-18:00
in George Moore M137

Open Stream

“Meet the Authors”

Van der Veer, K., Hartmann, A., Van den Berg, H. (eds), Galtung, J., Diez-Nicolas, J., Wilberg, H. (2009) Multidimensional Social Science; An inclusive approach to social position and inequality. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers.

This session will revise and expand Johan Galtungs' initial Social Position Theory how to present the main results of our project during the conference.

This event will focus on the following three topics dealt with in the book publication “Multidimensional Social Science; An inclusive approach to social position and inequality”:

- 1) The explanatory power of the ‘classic’ Social Position Index – as developed by Johan Galtung in the late sixties - in empirical research on social values.
- 2) The renewal of the Social Position Theory as proposed in our book publication.
- 3) The intriguing question why multidimensional approaches of social inequality are so absent from the current sociological research agenda and why single-issue sociologies are so prominent.