

Network

Issue 111 Summer 2012

The magazine of the
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The crash: How sociology predicted trouble

Also in this issue:

- Our livelihood is at stake, says Burawoy
- Olympics: a look beyond the pleasure dome
- Crossing the divide on a visit to Palestine
- University league tables 'not valid'

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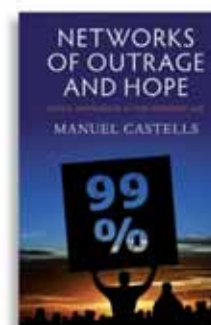
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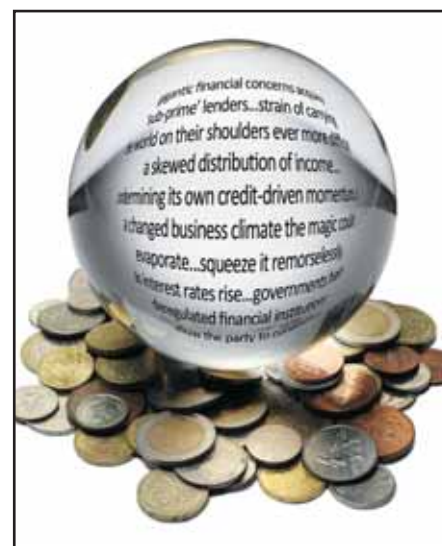
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Text from Professor Robin Blackburn's work on financial sociology, placed in a crystal ball

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Guardian writer is new LSBU professor

The author and *Guardian* writer Gary Younge has been appointed as Visiting Professor of Sociology and Politics at **London South Bank University** and will work with the Weeks Centre.

Mr Younge is the author of books including *No Place Like Home*, *A Black Briton's Journey Through the American South*. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by LSBU in 2007 and spoke at a roundtable discussion 'Race after the election' there.

He will take part in the Weeks Centre's research activities, including speaking at the annual Gender and Education conference which the centre hosts in April 2013, see: <http://tinyurl.com/c4gdtp>

As Visiting Professor he will also teach on various new postgraduate courses.

In other LSBU news, Dr Marisa Silvestri has been promoted to Reader at LSBU, leading the Crime and Criminal Justice group within the Weeks Centre.

The group has offered advice on crime policy to government agencies such as the Ministry of Justice, the Government Office for London, the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Office, as well as London local authorities and voluntary sector agencies.

Dr Silvestri has been invited to contribute to the Independent Police Commission enquiry into the future of policing. For more see: www.independentpolicecommission.org.uk

Dr Silvestri's book *Women in Charge: Policing, Gender and Leadership* (2003) looks at studies on policing and gender, and its findings have been cited by the government Commission on Women and Criminal Justice.

Her latest book *Gender and Crime* (2008, with Chris Crowther-Dowey) extends debates in the field and provides an insight, through a discourse of human rights, into the lives of women and men offenders, victims and



Professor Gary Younge

criminal justice professionals.

Dr Matthew Bond's paper on the House of Lords, which was published online first in the journal *Sociology*, attracted media attention after the BSA issued a press release. An article appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. See <http://tinyurl.com/bqxxxkd>

Professor Yvette Taylor, Head of the Weeks Centre, and Dr Sally Hines, of the University of Leeds, have been awarded ESRC funding to give a two-year seminar series entitled 'Critical diversities@the intersection: policies, practices, perspectives'. The series will strengthen academic work by bringing together leading researchers in the UK and overseas working in the fields of diversity, and by developing dialogue with policy-makers.

Professor Taylor gave the Institute for Social Science Research Weeks annual lecture entitled 'Excessive presences? class, gender, sexuality and the "fit" to place' in June. This tackled class, gender and sexuality during the recession. For more see: www.lsbu.ac.uk/ahs/research/critical-diversities.shtml

Book on hoods punishments wins award

Dr Heather Hamill, of the Department of Sociology at the **University of Oxford**, has been awarded the James Donnelly Sr Prize for Books in History and Social Sciences for her work *The Hoods: Crime and Punishment in Belfast* (Princeton, 2011). This prize is awarded by the American Conference for Irish Studies for outstanding scholarship in Irish studies.

The selection committee said: "Hamill's ethnographically-informed analysis of extra-legal punishment in Belfast is social science at its best."

"She exposes the ways that Catholic and Protestant paramilitary police punish youth in their own communities and she interrogates why such violent social sanctions do not deter 'the Hoods'."

"In this way, Hamill's book opens up new terrain in Irish studies while grounding her conclusions in the cultural and political circumstances of Northern Ireland. It is an extremely well-written academic book that is truly difficult to put down."

Dr Hamill's research looks at the ways in which problems of establishing trust and reputation are solved, particularly in high-crime neighbourhoods and among illegal political and criminal organisations.

She was a British Academy Postdoctoral Research Fellow and has also written *Streetwise: How Taxi Drivers Establish Their Customers' Trustworthiness* (Russell Sage Foundation 2005, with Diego Gambetta).

In other Oxford news, Francesco Billari will join the Department as Professor of Sociology and Demography from August.

Professor Billari is Vice-Rector (Development) at Bocconi University, Milan, and is internationally recognised as a leading demographer, specialising in the family, life-course research and population studies.

He received the Clifford C. Clogg Award for mid career achievement at the 2012 annual meeting of the Population Association of America in May. This is given every two years to honour the outstanding scholarly achievements of population professionals.

The Oxford department has organised a series of events recently, including Astor Visiting Lectures on social stratification and the US Tea Party, and seminars on corporate restructuring and wage inequality, abundance in social theory, and the East German secret police.

The department will hold the 2012 Elections, Public Opinion and Parties (EPOP) conference from 7 to 9 September. The conference features presentations on research into public opinion, elections and political parties in the UK and from a comparative international perspective.

Lesbian and gay project ends

The conclusion of a project carried out by **Newcastle University** and the Weeks Centre at **LSBU** to examine the lives of lesbian and gay people in the north east of England was marked by a 'dialogue day' event held at Newcastle University.

The project, entitled 'Bright lights, big city: transformations and transitions in lesbian and gay socio-spatial sites in the north east of England' looked at Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Northumberland, and investigated social class, gender, and gentrification in relation to lesbian and gay people. The project looked beyond the commercial gay scene to examine lives in urban and rural areas.

The project was funded by the British

Academy Small Research Grant and was carried out by Dr Mark Casey, of Newcastle University, and Professor Yvette Taylor, LSBU.

At the event Dr Casey gave a paper which focussed upon lesbian and gay lives in increasingly gentrified areas in Newcastle. Professor Taylor's paper 'Queer suicide: the life and death of queer futures and failures' drew on her research in the UK and US. See *Desert Island Discourse* page 38

The dialogue day was attended by academics, PhD students and people working in NGOs and local government posts in the UK. The audience discussed the role of academic research in informing NGOs and wider LGBT communities, and their concern for the funding of LGBT community groups.

Sociology staff at Salford escape compulsory job cuts

The threat of compulsory redundancies among sociology and criminology staff at the **University of Salford** has been avoided.

Most of the academic staff at the university have had to reapply for their jobs as part of a restructuring that could result in 25 compulsory redundancies overall.

However, the 13 sociology and criminology non-professorial staff in the School of Humanities, Languages, and Social Sciences have been told that their jobs are not affected by the restructuring.

A university statement said that it had reduced the section by three full-time equivalent posts by not filling vacancies. A union statement said that one senior post only had been lost, however.

Salford UCU union members staged a one-day strike on June 26 in protest at the planned compulsory redundancies, and were due to meet later to decide whether to take further action.

A university spokesperson said: "The news of the results of the UCU ballot was disappointing as we have made significant progress in mitigating compulsory redundancy through our ongoing consultation with the union on the proposals and also in separate discussions aimed at resolving the issues.

"We will continue to talk with all our trades unions over the forthcoming weeks with the aim of mitigating the need for any



Peel Building, University of Salford

compulsory redundancies. It would be regrettable if any action adversely impacted on our students, particularly with regard to the marking of exams or their graduation.

"We are committed to ensuring that there are no detrimental changes to the teaching, learning and assessment of our students.

"The proposed reduction in staffing levels in sociology and criminology equivalent to

three FTE posts has been achieved by removing vacancies and without any compulsory redundancies."

The UCU has set up an online petition at: www.ucu.org.uk/nosalfordcuts

This reads: "UCU understands that universities face tough challenges adjusting to a hostile funding environment, but we think that the university management are rushing through change too fast as a knee-jerk response to government policy.

"Workloads will go up across the university, especially if student recruitment picks up. With the university management's objectives to create money for investing in buildings and new research centres, while getting rid of what it calls 'unsustainable' courses, those who feel safe today will be under the spotlight tomorrow."

The petition called on the university to pause its current redundancy process and rule out compulsory redundancies.

In an email message to Salford staff, Simon Renton, Vice President for Higher Education, UCU, said: "Your dispute is also an issue for the national union. We know that other employers will be planning major changes in our sector and I have no doubt that they will be watching what happens at Salford."

The restructuring is the latest in several rounds of job cuts at the university in recent years.

Academy rejects draft research concordat

The draft concordat on research integrity issued by a group of funding bodies has been rejected by the social scientists' representative body as "hastily drawn up".

The draft was prepared on behalf of Universities UK, Hefce, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust.

The draft outlines five commitments that it recommends researchers and employers should keep to ensure the quality of their work. These are to: maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity; ensure research is conducted to legal and ethical standards; operate to good governance and best practice; have robust and transparent processes to deal with allegations of misconduct; review progress regularly.

The intention is that researchers will sign up to the final version of the concordat.

In response to the draft, the **Academy of Social Sciences** rejected the document.

A working group of Academicians led by Dr Janet Lewis and including three BSA members – Professor Robert Dingwall, Professor Ron Iphofen and Professor Michael Harloe – stated that they did not

accept that a case had been made for "further quasi-regulatory measures."

"If implemented in its present form, the concordat would significantly increase the overhead costs of research in HEIs through new requirements for training, review, surveillance and enforcement, without evidence of proportionate benefit," the working party said.

"More seriously the concordat appears to have been hastily drawn up without broad and full consultation. Without this there is little hope of achieving any genuine consensus.

"There is no published and peer-reviewed evidence for a lack of research integrity in UK social sciences. The evidence that does exist – mainly from the UK Research Integrity Office – suggests that there may be a problem in some areas that needs addressing. This evidence requires more sustained and systematic investigation together with broader dissemination before conclusions are drawn.

"The Academy also notes that the concordat treats research integrity as an

issue of individual misconduct rather than giving attention to the systemic features of the organization of research funding and research careers that may create the conditions that permit, and the incentives that encourage, deviant behaviour."

The publisher SAGE has launched a new podcast, *Social Science Bites*, a series of interviews with leading social scientists, including sociologists, on different aspects of the social world.

The series follows the success of its podcast series, *Philosophy Bites*, which has had more than 13 million downloads.

The series launched with three episodes: Professor Danny Dorling, of the University of Sheffield, on inequality; Rom Harré, of Georgetown University, US, on the nature of the social sciences; and Professor Richard Sennett, of the LSE, on co-operation.

Future episodes will be released monthly, and will include interviews with other professors in social science. To hear the podcasts visit: www.socialsciencebites.com

The pursuit of happiness: survey tracks it down to Isle of Wight

'Retire to the Isle of Wight and join a club' might be the best advice for those seeking happiness, according to a project set up to measure people's states of mind this year.

Dr Laura Hyman, of the **University of Portsmouth**, is surveying 100 local people during 2012 to ask about their emotional state. The survey is organised with BBC Radio Solent, which will run regular features on the project.

Dr Hyman's survey asks 30 questions, one on the level of a person's happiness over the past week (scored from 0 to 10), and others about emotional state and participation in social activities. She also records age, job status and the area lived in.

Although Dr Hyman's study isn't large enough for statistical significance, she believes it will raise important issues about people's happiness and how it varies during the year.

The results from the first of four snapshots to be carried out found that people's average rating of their happiness was 7 out of 10. Those living in the Isle of Wight averaged 7.6, compared with 6.9 for Hampshire and 6.8 for Dorset. Those who were retired scored 7.7, compared with people who were working, who scored 6.6. Men's average score was slightly higher, as was that for people who were more sociable.

"We know about happiness on a national scale, and it's important to see how people feel about themselves on a local level over time during the recession," said Dr Hyman.

She said that her work pointed to being sociable as a way of becoming happier.

"During a period when people's economic wellbeing is not high it's important to see if we can make them happier in other ways, by creating better social networks, for instance.

"Another thing I want to look at is to what degree the local area people live in affects how they feel. The first results show people in the Isle of Wight score more highly, and that



Dr Laura Hyman

photo courtesy of The News, Portsmouth

may be because they live at a more relaxed pace than those on the mainland. The same reason may be behind the greater happiness of retired people."

Dr Hyman was contacted by the BBC as an expert on wellbeing in the Solent area. Last year she finished her PhD on the different cultural discourses people use when talking about happiness, and she is writing a book on this. She has also worked on quantitative projects on wellbeing.

In other Portsmouth news, Professor Barry Smart, Dr Kay Peggs and Dr Joseph Burridge are compiling a four-volume reference work called *Observation Methods*, part of the SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods series.

The text draws together important contributions on methods of observation in social research, and will cover the central themes and issues. It will consider the historical development of observational

methods, and give examples of results obtained by studies considered to be classics.

Dr Kay Peggs' book *Animals and Sociology* has been published by Palgrave Macmillan as part of its Animal Ethics series. Dr Peggs explores the significant contribution that sociology can make to understanding human relationships with non-human animals, and the important contribution that the study of non-human animals can make to sociology.

Dr Burridge was a guest-editor of a special issue of the journal *Food and Foodways* on the topic of 'Frugality and food'. The issue, published in March, incorporated papers on issues including debt and low-income families, and food rights and climate change.

Dr Kevin McSorley has co-edited a special issue of the *Journal of War and Culture Studies* with Dr Sarah Maltby, City University, entitled on 'War and the body: cultural and military practices' Vol 5, No 1 (2012).

Social scientists get honours in Queen's list

Two social scientists have received OBEs for services to the discipline.

Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby, Professor of Social Policy at the **University of Kent**, and Professor Jeffrey Weeks, of **London South Bank University**, were given the awards in the Queen's Birthday List.

Professor Taylor-Gooby joined the University of Kent in 1979 as a Lecturer in Social Policy and became a professor in 1990. He has written 23 books, 120 articles and 95 chapters, and given more than 100 keynote presentations at international conferences.

Jeffrey Weeks is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at LSBU and author of over 20



Professor Jeffrey Weeks

books and more than 100 articles and papers, chiefly on sexuality, family and intimate life.

• The **University of Manchester** sociologist Professor Fiona Devine has been appointed as an international advisor to the Australian Government. Professor Devine will be a member of the Education and Human Society Committee for the Australian Research Council, the statutory authority within the Australian government's industry, innovation, science, research and tertiary education portfolio. She is one of 147 distinguished researchers called on to assess and report on the quality of research in Australia as part of the Excellence in Research evaluations.

Hi-tech projects take team into world of museums and concerts

Two research projects on how people use the latest technology of websites, apps and touch screens have brought sociologists into the traditional cultural world of classical music concerts and museums.

A team from the **University of Salford** is researching how students use new ways of booking tickets for concerts given by the London Symphony Orchestra and the Aurora Orchestra at the Barbican. It is also working at the Imperial War Museum to see how people use touch screens and mobile apps.

The team comprises sociologists Dr Gaynor Bagnall, Dr Garry Crawford and Dr Victoria Gosling, and Professor Ben Light, a media studies expert at Salford's College of Arts and Social Science.

Its work on both projects is funded by the Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture.

In the first project the team is studying the use of a mobile phone app, known as LSO Pulse, which has been set up to encourage students to book classical music events.

The app gives students discounted tickets, reward points and the chance to win a break in Paris. Students present their ID cards when picking up the tickets as proof of their status.

The researchers are carrying out focus groups just before or after the concerts with a total of 130 students who booked using the system. They ask for students' opinions on the booking system and these are fed back to the developers who can incorporate the changes as they build the online sites.

"We found that the students wanted more information about the concerts, and wanted stronger links with Twitter and Facebook so that they could make it public when they were booking a seat," said Dr Crawford. "We relayed what the students wanted back to the developers and they listened." An average of 100 students book for each of the concerts offered, and the figure is growing.

The Salford team received around £80,000 funding for this work, which began in October and lasts for 12 months. The team will write several conference papers from it, and organise events to disseminate its findings.

Dr Crawford said: "I think the interesting thing is that organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of sociologists and what they can bring to projects like this.

"There is often a lack of awareness of the audience and of users when designing technology and systems.

"There's often an attitude in industry that the artists will create a design and the developers will go out and build it. But



increasingly industry is aware that it needs social scientists to get involved to make sure they understand the needs and wishes of the audience."

The combination of the team's expertise gave them the edge on the other organisations that bid for the project. In their other research Dr Bagnall works on museum audiences, Dr Gosling on social exclusion and Dr Crawford on sport and video gaming.

As part of the research the team attends the classical concerts. "It's an interesting experience," said Dr Crawford. "It's a different culture to the one I'm used to in my other work – much more middle-class and middle-aged. That's one of the reasons the LSO wanted to attract students – they are the audience of the future."

But it hasn't prompted a cultural turn in Dr Crawford's listening experience, however. "I can't say I was won over by the music – I'm really an eighties man when it comes to music – The Smiths, New Order, The Cure – rather than Mozart or Beethoven."

The LSO Pulse sites can be seen at: www.lso.co.uk/page/3321/Students and also at: www.facebook.com/pages/LSO-Pulse/121564727543 and <http://lso.co.uk/page/3645/Pulse-app>

The Digital Fund, which is financed by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and Arts, and Arts Council

England, may extend the system to more orchestras and events in the country.

The second project that the team successfully bid for is to carry out an assessment of the Imperial War Museum's new project, entitled Social Interpretation and Cultural Exchange.

This project, developed with UCL, aims to give the public more information in a simpler way on the Museum's collections, through the use of social media.

The Museum will also set up digital kiosks where people can use touch screens to get more information on exhibits. It also wants to set up a mobile phone app to allow people to comment on the exhibits.

"We were asked to assess this because there is a risk when you allow people free range to comment on sensitive exhibitions, and we need to know how to manage that," said Dr Crawford.

The project has only recently begun and will last a year and will involve the team talking to visitors to the Museum as they go round the exhibitions.

Photos:

Top: Children using touch displays at the Imperial War Museum

Left: Garry Crawford

Middletown USA is revisited for special issue of journal

Professor Graham Crow, of the **University of Southampton**, has visited the Center for Middletown Studies at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana.

The city has been the subject of more than 80 years' research, beginning with the famous 1929 'Middletown' study by Robert Staughton Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, the husband-and-wife sociologists.

Professor Crow visited Professor Eric Lassiter and his team, whose 2004 book *The Other Side of Middletown* was based on a collaborative ethnography in which a group of students worked for a semester collecting and analysing data on Muncie's African American residents, who had been omitted from previous Middletown research. The book won the Margaret Mead award in 2005. (Professor Lassiter was based at Ball University at the time and has now moved to Marshall University, West Virginia).

The visit was part of work on a special issue of *The Sociological Review* which Professor Crow is co-editing with Professor Nickie Charles, of the University of Warwick – this will be published later this year. The Middletown study is one of several community re-studies that the edition will feature.

In other Southampton news, Professor Ros



Professor Rosie Meek

Edwards has compiled a discussion paper entitled 'How many qualitative interviews is enough?' for the National Centre for Research Methods, with Sarah Elsie Baker, of the Middlesex University. The paper is a resource for students and contains brief pieces of advice from experts and academics in their early career. It is available free at: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/>

Professor Edwards has also published *International Perspectives on Racial and Ethnic Mixedness and Mixing* (Routledge), co-edited with Dr Suki Ali, of the LSE, Dr Chamion Caballero, LSBU, and Dr Miri Song, Kent. The book, which derives from an ESRC seminar series, has contributions which examine notions of racial and ethnic mixedness, and challenges stereotypical assumptions. It illuminates the ways in which these notions shift in meaning in different times and places.

Dr Rosie Meek presented her research on the effectiveness of sport in reducing the rate of reconviction among young prisoners at an event at Twickenham Stadium.

For two years Dr Meek worked with 81 offenders at Portland young offenders institution in Dorset who have taken part in football and rugby academies there. She tracked their progress in prison and after their release. Of the 50 who have been released, only nine reoffended or were recalled to prison in 18 months, a rate of 18 per cent that compares with the national reoffending rate of 48 per cent in a year.

She has since been appointed Professor of Psychology and Criminal Justice at Teesside University.

MYPLACE team completes first year of project

A meeting of project members at the University of Latvia, Riga, in June marked the end of the first year of the **MYPLACE** project – Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement. This is a large multi-partner project funded by the European Commission's FP7 system which runs until May 2015.

The project investigates how young people's social participation is shaped by the past and present of totalitarianism and populism in Europe. It is coordinated by Professor Hilary Pilkington, of the **University of Warwick**.

The project brings together a consortium of 16 research institutions from 14 European countries, as well as 14 museums, NGOs, and archive and document centres.

It is inter-disciplinary and has researchers from social science disciplines including sociology, politics, anthropology, psychology and cultural studies.

The project uses surveys, interviews, focus groups and ethnographic methods of data collection and analysis. More details can be seen at: www.fp7-myplace.eu

At the Riga meeting delegates from the 16 partner universities, made decisions about the future of the work. They decided on a

common questionnaire which will be used for work with 18,000 people aged 16-24 in 30 fieldwork sites across 14 countries later this year. Work on the survey has been led by a team from the Department of Sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University, with the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Tbilisi, focusing on sampling strategies.

A team responsible for coordinating the 900 follow-up semi-structured interviews, led by the Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia in Lisbon, and the University of Debrecen, Hungary, agreed a set of core common questions.

A team led by University of Warwick and the Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave, Slovakia, prepared a template for 15 reports on the transmission of memory and discourse – this links to work with museums and NGO partners in each country.

Another team will complete more than 40 ethnographic case studies of youth activism, which includes researching activist groups, aspiring political parties, occupy movements and indignants. The researchers in this element are led by Professor Pilkington and Dr Phil Mizen at Warwick.

Professor Pilkington, as qualitative lead, and Dr Gary Pollock, of Manchester

Metropolitan University, who is coordinating quantitative components of the project, outlined a vision for analysis which will continue to evolve as the project progresses.

"The process of agreeing common instruments and strategies in a project of this size is rarely straightforward," said Martin Price, Project Manager at Myplace.

"Local contexts must be considered, and the instruments must be flexible enough to allow for local variation, while being rigid enough to allow comparative analysis.

"Mixed-methods interdisciplinary social research on this scale clearly presents many challenges, but it is this same scale which makes the project genuinely exciting."

At the meeting Professor Howard Williamson, of the University of Glamorgan, Catherine Woollard, of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, Marta Medlinska, of the Council of Europe, and Evija Rudzite, of Youth in Action, Latvia, joined Myplace policy co-leads Marti Taru, of Tallinn University, and Professor Mick Carpenter, of the University of Warwick, in a forum, discussing current issues around youth policy.

From information supplied by Martin Price.

Look at her – women use the camera to challenge ageism

A research project entitled Look at Me! features images created by older women in Sheffield as a way of challenging stereotypes about ageing.

The women took part in workshops that encouraged them to use photography, fine art and sculpture to produce images of themselves and their lives. These were exhibited in Sheffield in 2011 and will be shown from 29 September to 14 October this year at City Screen, York.

Dr Lorna Warren, of the Department of Sociological Studies at the **University of Sheffield**, who is the Project Director, said: "We live in a world that's saturated by media images, but for older women those images are often negatively stereotyped. Older women are the butt of humour or are simply absent from the media."

"The project is working with older women using a variety of visual methods so they can produce their own challenging images of ageing."

"This is not a cosy exhibition of images for the mantelpiece – it is instead a very honest, sometimes challenging, sometimes humorous, display of images showing women exploring their own feelings about being or becoming older women."

Dr Warren worked with Professor Merryyn Gott, of the University of Auckland, and Professor Susan Hogan, of the University of Derby, on the project.

Among the findings of the project were that women in their fifties and sixties felt more pressure from media and advertising imagery compared with participants in their eighties and nineties, and that almost nine out of 10 of visitors who came to the project's exhibitions wanted to see more



Photos courtesy of the project

Above: May
Above right: Chris
Right: Shirley

images of older women displayed in public.

The ESRC has released a video about the project, which can be seen at: www.esrc.ac.uk/publications/multimedia/seven-days/monday.aspx

Information about the project and its findings can be seen at: www.representing-ageing.com and also: www.newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/nda-findings-10.html



Liverpool team wins Olympiad study contract

Researchers from Liverpool have won a contract to evaluate the legacy of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, the four-year cultural celebration of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

More than 16 million people across the UK have attended performances, including music, theatre, dance, literature and the visual arts, which are accredited as part of the Olympiad. Its culmination is the London 2012 Festival, which gives people the chance to see free world-class cultural events.

The research team is based at the Institute of Cultural Capital, jointly run by the **University of Liverpool** and **Liverpool John Moores University**. It will spend the next 15 months analysing the impact and legacy of the Olympiad.

Dr Beatriz García, the Institute's Head of Research in Cultural Policy and Impact, said: "We'll be using our expertise to capture the multiple impacts of cultural interventions to find out if the Olympiad has achieved its objectives and explore how it has made a difference to people in the UK, how it has connected communities to London 2012 and how it has created defining national and international moments that shape the upcoming and future story of these games."

Dr García has written, with Professor Andy Miah at the University of the West of Scotland, *The Olympics: the Basics*. In this, the authors call for the establishment of international culture federations to parallel existing sport federations and strengthen

the coherence and sustainability of the Games' cultural work.

The Institute of Cultural Capital is also making an assessment of the value to Liverpool of having World Heritage Site status. The focus will be on an assessment of its impact on the city's image and the citizens' sense of place.

• The engage@liverpool initiative to highlight initiatives in research methods at the University of Liverpool continues to run its 'how to' series of talks, available as downloads, often covering issues of interest to social scientists.

More information can be found at: www.liv.ac.uk/engage/ and at: www.facebook.com/#!/LiverpoolSchoolofLawandSocialJustice

LiverpoolSchoolofLawandSocialJustice

Open access move may 'damage quality'

The BSA has warned the government that a rapid move to open access publishing could damage the quality and productivity of its members' work.

In a letter sent to the *The Guardian*, the BSA, the Political Studies Association and the Regional Studies Association gave their reaction to the Finch report on open access, published in June.

The letter says that "learned societies play an essential role in research architecture through, amongst other activities, our support of specialist groups, conferences, research networks and helping develop the skills base of young researchers. We have a key role in knowledge exchange as we are positioned at the interstices of academia, policy and practice and we do much to promote understanding and access across these boundaries.

"While supporting the broad arguments for the widening of access to government funded research, the impact on revenue for learned societies and on what this is used to fund cannot be ignored. Subscription models for such societies cannot be replicated through article publishing charges. We need time to make the necessary adjustments to our economic structures if we are to avoid damaging the quality, productivity and impact of our member's work.

"Furthermore, critical issues remain, such as who will fund future publishing innovation and how peer review can be protected in a publishing environment where quantity may rule quality. The impact on our members' freedom of choice in venue of publication may also be a challenge.

"We call upon the UK government to give careful consideration to the critical role of



Judith Mudd

learned societies."

The letter was written by the chairs of the organisations – all professors – Judith Burnett, BSA; Charlie Jeffery, PSA; David Bailey, RSA.

The three organisations belong to the Academy of Social Sciences, whose Chair, Professor Cary Cooper, wrote to the *Times Higher* that it "welcomes the extensive acknowledgement by the Finch report on open access that learned societies contribute significantly to developing scholarly endeavour and public engagement.

"Learned societies are a critical part of the research environment in the UK. It is important that they do not suffer unintended damage as a result of an acceleration in the move towards open access.

"Many are engaged in significant journal publishing, on a not-for-profit basis. Undermining this without replacing it with a sustainable open access publishing model will have significant negative consequences."

WES collection has favourite article choices

In celebration of 25 years of its work, the editors of the journal *Work, employment and society* (WES) asked a number of sociologists to choose a favourite article. This collection includes a range of topics and favourites from the full back catalogue of the journal. For more details see:

<http://tinyurl.com/ca35jl8>

Readers are invited to nominate their favourite WES article. The editors offer free subscriptions to WES for the three most persuasive nominations. Members should send 200 words explaining the choice to publications@britsoc.org.uk

In other BSA news, the Association has recruited a new Communications Officer. Lee Coleman is an experienced practitioner whose role is to develop communication with members and produce copy for the BSA's online and print media. He is the first contact for the convenors of the BSA's study groups and specialist groups, and works with Tony Trueman, the BSA's media consultant.

Lee's priorities are to take forward the redesign of the BSA website, deliver the next membership survey, and produce kits which members will be able to use in schools, colleges and universities to promote sociology.

The 2013 BSA annual conference will have as its theme Engaging Sociology. This will highlight sociology's tackling of topical issues such as the recent riots, the financial crisis, climate change, social mobility, the Big Society, and the London Olympics. The conference will take place at the Grand Connaught Rooms, Holborn, London from 3-5 April. Registration will open in the autumn and the last date for submitting abstracts is 5 October.

Conference on migration of highly skilled is held

Dr Jon Mulholland and Dr Louise Ryan, of **Middlesex University**, organised a two-day international conference in May on the theme of highly skilled migration, attended by over 100 delegates. The conference, held at the university, arose from their ongoing ESRC-funded project on highly skilled French migrants in London's business sector.

The conference brought together scholars from around the world, including Japan, North America, New Zealand, Poland, Finland, France, Germany and India.

The plenary speakers were Professor Louise Ackers, of the University of Liverpool, who spoke on the ways in which internationalisation has become a measure of success in research careers; Professor Jonathan Beaverstock, University of Nottingham, who spoke on the significance

of global talent in enhancing the City of London's competitive status; Professor Adrian Favell, Sciences Po, Paris, on the impact upon cosmopolitanism of a resurgent nationalisation; and Professor Eleonore Kofman, Middlesex University, on gendered aspects of highly skilled migration.

Dr Mulholland and Dr Ryan presented preliminary findings from their research project which looks at the ways in which highly skilled French migrants access business and friendship networks in London. While London's financial environment facilitated business networking, it was more difficult to develop deep friendships, and obstacles were frequently encountered, they said. Their research highlighted the importance of distinguishing qualitative differences among social relationships.

In other sessions, John Salt and Peter Wood reflected upon the impact of the recession on international corporate mobility.

As well as featuring leading scholars, the conference also provided a platform for young researchers to present their research.

The delegates explored the contribution of highly skilled migrants to various economies around the world, and their experiences in places such as Singapore, Geneva and Doha. There was also discussion of the attempts to control migration in countries including Canada, Israel and Denmark.

The conference included a reception to launch recently published books by colleagues in Middlesex's Social Policy Research Centre and Department of Criminology and Sociology. *Based on information from Dr Ryan and Dr Mulholland*

Mapping project shows 3,860 staff with sociology background

There are 3,860 academic staff with sociology qualifications working in UK universities, the BSA's Mapping Sociology project has found. Of these, 55% are women; 57% are aged 40 to 59; 87% are white; 33% work part-time; 14% are professors and 37% work in London or south east England.

The figures come from the latest phase of the project by the BSA being carried out by Hai Nguyen (*below*), an intern researcher who is producing a demographic map of UK sociology using statistics from the BSA, Ucas and Hesa. She will finish the map, and an explanatory report, later this year.

The latest figures refer to all academics whose main higher education qualifications are in sociology, though not all are necessarily teaching sociology or in sociology departments.



In the categories established by Hesa, 41% work in social studies, which includes sociology; 8% in education; 8% in business and management studies; 8% in health and community studies; 7% in nursing and paramedical studies; 5% in humanities; 4% in clinical medicine; 3% in media studies; and the rest in a variety of smaller categories.

Twenty-five per cent work in the north of England; 21% work in the south east of England; 16% in London; 12% in the Midlands; 6% in the east of England, 5% in the south west, and 14% outside England (Scotland 7%, Wales 5% and Northern Ireland 2%).

Five per cent are aged 18-29; 21 per cent are aged 30 to 39; 29% are aged 40 to 49; 28% are aged 50 to 59; and 16% aged 60 to 69.

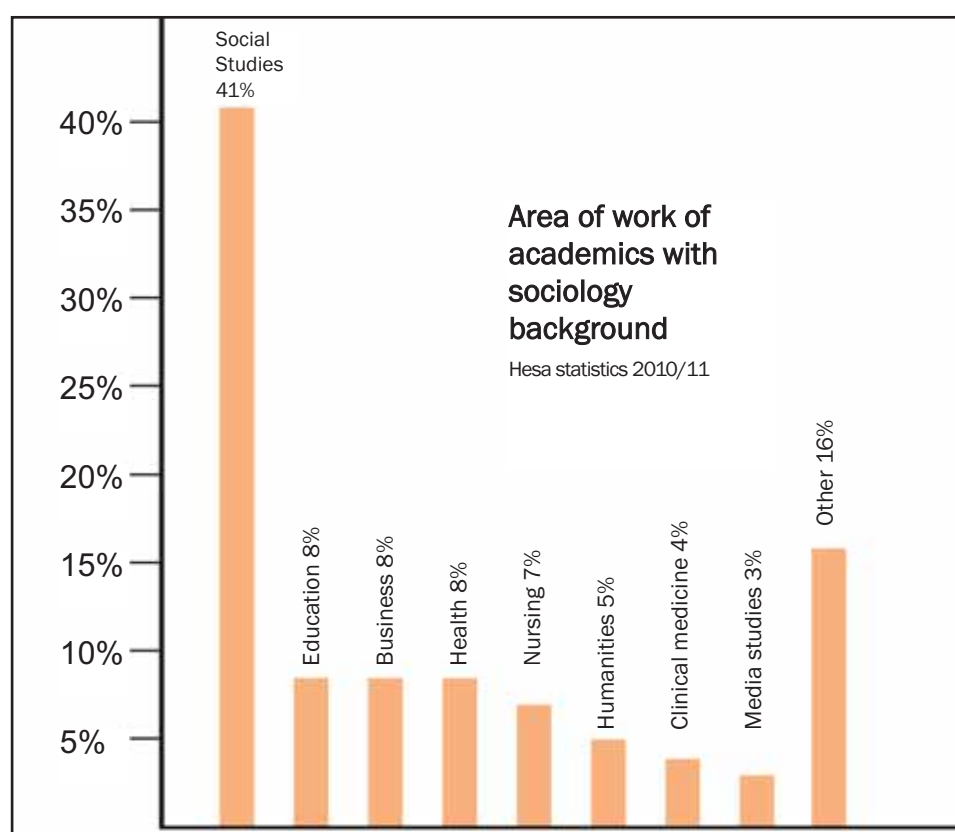
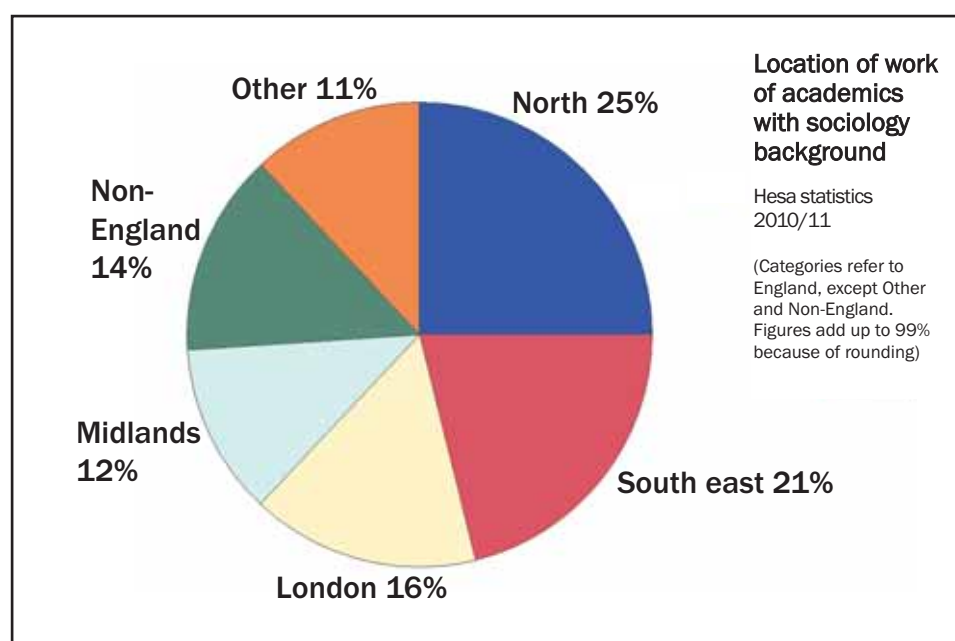
Fifty-five per cent are women. Women outnumber men in all age groups except the over 60s.

Sixty-seven per cent work full-time; 39% of part-timers work in term-time only.

Sixty-two per cent carry out teaching and research; 17% research only; 21% carry out teaching only. Fourteen per cent are professors.

Eighty-seven per cent are white: all other categories of ethnicity are under 2%, apart from Other (2.8%) and Not Known (4.8%).

The Mapping Sociology project has also looked at students studying sociology: it



found that there has been a steady growth in the numbers studying the subject at A level, from 27,321 in 2006 to 30,714 in 2011, and from 38,442 AS level students to 53,967 in the same period.

The number of undergraduates studying sociology rose from 26,140 in 2004/05 to 30,285 in 2010/11 but in the same period

post-graduate numbers fell from 5,335 to 4,750.

Of all students in 2010/11, 83% were full-time and 17% part-time; 72% of students were women. Thirty-three per cent were based in London or the south east; 26% in the north of England and 18% outside of England. Seventy-six per cent were of white ethnicity, 8% black and 9% Asian.

Medsoc group takes on weighty matters

The **North East Medical Sociology** group was launched in March at Durham University with an event attended by 50 researchers, academics, PhD students and representatives from policy and practice organisations and the third sector.

The keynote address, entitled 'Weighty matters: health or identity promotion?' was given by Professor Rose Barbour, of the Open University, who considered some weight-management projects she has been involved with.

Members of the group also presented details of their research. Dr Sally Brown, of Durham University, discussed a series of qualitative research projects carried out in Hull on teenagers and sex. She presented key findings and discussed the methodological challenges of engaging young people in this research.

Dr Mick Hill, of Northumbria University, and Oliver Wood, a service user and researcher, discussed current research which looks at effective care coordination and which involves service users, carers, professionals and academics as the researchers.

Dr Fiona Cuthill, of the University of Sunderland, gave a presentation on the work of health professionals across cultures, discussing her research which explored the experiences of health visitors working with clients from cultures different to their own.

In the final part of the event delegates discussed ways forward for the group. Suggestions included holding special sessions where students are given the opportunity to present their work, holding



Dr Fiona Cuthill

quarterly group meetings and developing their web presence with a North East jiscmail list, Facebook page and Twitter account. For more details see: www.britisoc.co.uk/study-groups/north-east.aspx

The Brunel Centre for Sport, Health and Wellbeing, launched by Brunel University last year, held a seminar entitled 'Health matters' at Brunel in June. This explored challenges in addressing inequalities in public health. Dr Louise Mansfield, of the university, was Convenor.

Migration is examined at theory day

The **Theory study group** organised a one-day symposium on 'Race, citizenship and migration: the crisis of Europe' in May at the University of Warwick.

This brought together academics from across Europe who shared an interest in recovering the (post) colonial memories, histories, and solidarities of Europe and critiquing the way that these have been rendered invisible within standard narratives.

The group believes that this theme is particularly urgent during the severe economic crisis, which is facilitating a sharp turn back to nationalism. They argue that it is necessary to protect the cosmopolitan and multicultural projects of Europe.

The group will organise future events on this theme and those interested in participating should contact the Convenor, Dr Gurminder K Bhambra. The group's website is at: <http://bsatheory.org.uk>

The Theory group stream plenary at this year's annual BSA conference was delivered by Professor Saskia Sassen, of Columbia University, on 'Expulsions: a category for our age'.

The talk looked at the ways in which the growth in the numbers of people expelled from various locations signalled a deeper systemic transformation that was a new phase of global capitalism.

The group ran two themed sessions. One, organised by Dr Ana Cecilia Dinerstein, was on 'Mobilization, protest and movements' and examined the global Occupy movements and last year's English riots. The second was on 'C Wright Mills: legacies and prospects' and was organised by Mark Carrigan with contributions from Professor Mike O'Donnell, Professor John Holmwood, and Professor Les Back.

Olympics event looks beyond the leisure dome

The third BSA event focussing on the Olympic Games was a collaboration of the **Sport and Leisure & Recreation study groups** entitled Beyond the Leisure Dome.

This took place at The British Library and attracted more than 40 people, including anthropologists, criminologists, historians, policy analysts and urban geographers, as well as sociologists.

The conference was organised around four themes. The first, 'The Olympics, space and the city,' featured Professor Anne-Marie Broudehoux, of the Université du Québec à Montréal, talking on 'Postcard perfect: image control, city marketing and the making of the new Olympic city' and Dr Graeme Hayes, of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Rennes, France, and Aston University, talking

about 'The systemic contradictions of London 2012'.

The second theme, 'The Olympics, international and transnational development' saw Professor Tess Kay, of Brunel University, discussing 'Olympic legacy through international development' and Jill Timms, of the LSE, speaking on 'The Olympics and campaigns around corporate social responsibility'.

The third theme was 'The Olympics, politics and security' and featured Professor Alan Bairner, of Loughborough University, talking about 'Politics and the Olympics' and Dr Pete Fussey, Essex University, on 'Securing the Olympic city'.

The event concluded with a roundtable discussion on the theme of 'The Olympic games and civil society'. Chaired by

Professor John Horne, of the University of Central Lancashire, who is the Convenor of the Sport study group, this roundtable considered some of the consequences for residents and visitors as the Olympic Games becomes more entrepreneurial and linked to urban economic development strategies.

This session included contributions from a former resident of the Clays Lane Housing Co-operative, and a member of the Manor Gardening Society allotments group. The estate and allotments were demolished in order to make way for part of the Olympics site. Delegates discussed more generally the impact that mega-sports events have on people's lives.

• Members of the BSA can join the Sport study group by sending a message to www.jiscmail.ac.uk/sport-study-group

Religion group event attracts scholars from across globe

The **Sociology of Religion study group** (Socrel) held its annual conference in March at the University of Chester on the theme of 'Religion and (in)equalities'. This looked at the ways in which religion links with many sociological concerns.

The event, organised by Dr Dawn Llewellyn, of Chester, and Dr Sonya Sharma, of Durham University, brought together over 120 scholars from around the world. The three plenary speakers were Professor Tariq Modood, of the University of Bristol, Professor Elaine Graham, of the University of Chester, and Dr Sean McCloud, of the University of North Carolina.

Professor Modood's talk examined citizenship, discrimination and government policy, and the resulting experiences of inequality between ethnic and religious minorities. Professor Graham explored the topic of media and religion, and Dr McCloud's lecture looked at equality and class, showing how American religion has been shaped by an emphasis on free will, choice and the autonomy of the individual.

Other speakers examined religious and cultural plurality in health care, religion in addiction recovery, and chaplaincy in the penal system.

The theme of religion and the body was taken up by speakers examining religion and disability, dieting, and young women's accounts of inequality in religion and culture.

David Perfect, of the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission, and author of the recent EHRC briefing paper 'Religion or belief', considered the unsettled nature of law in this area.

The study group, which has over 150 members, held its 2012 annual general meeting at the BSA annual conference. The winner of the Peter B. Clarke memorial essay competition for post-graduate members was announced as Judith Ann Muskett, of York St John, who receives a cash prize and publication of her paper in the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*.

The meeting ratified the election of three new committee officers: Joanne McKenzie as Postgraduate Officer, Francesca Montemaggi as Finance Officer and Carl Morris in the newly created post of Internet Officer.

The conference ended with a roundtable discussion of a new book, *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (Routledge), co-edited by Professor Linda Woodhead and Dr Rebecca Catto as part of the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society programme. Scholars from a range of fields presented their reactions to the book and discussed how the religious landscape of Britain has changed since 1945. Themes of



A delegate at the annual conference

citizenship and religion, belonging, suffering and wellbeing were also debated.

Socrel's annual postgraduate day was also held at the same venue, with postgraduate members taking part in lectures and training workshops on methods, theory, getting published, chairing conference panels and dealing with the media. This event was funded by a grant from the Higher Education Academy Philosophy and Religious Studies subject centre.

The study group is organising a joint panel with the British Association for the Study of Religions at the latter's annual conference at the University of Winchester from 5 to 7 September.

The panel is entitled 'Public benefit in the study of religion' and has as keynote speakers Professor Eileen Barker, of the LSE, and Professor Douglas Davies, of Durham University. The panel is jointly organised by Dr Bettina Schmidt, Honorary Secretary of the association, and Dr Abby Day, Chair of the study group.

The panel will focus on what is meant by the term 'public benefit' as it relates to the study of religion, how this can it be demonstrated, measured, and communicated, and what issues are raised in doing so. It will look at the theoretical problems of considering public benefit in different cultural and historical contexts, and at examples of how research and teaching about religion contribute to the public good.

The increasing need for social science organisations to demonstrate their work's public benefit to research councils and others provides the backdrop to the panel.

This is the first time that the association and the study group have collaborated on an initiative, and they hope to repeat this at



Professor Elaine Graham

future conferences. Between them the two professional organisations represent the UK's leading scholars in the study of religion. *For an opinion piece on demonstrating public good see page 40.*

• Members of the BSA can join the study group for free, see: www.socrel.org.uk

The **Race & Ethnicity study group** debated three perspectives on the sociology of race and ethnic relations at the BSA 2012 annual conference. These were: critical rationalism, presented by Professor Michael Banton; Marxism, presented by Professor Satnam Virdee; and cultural studies, presented by Professor Les Back. The study group plans to continue the discussion of what it regards as the fragmentation of work in its field at a meeting at the 2013 conference

PG Forum discusses how to get funding

The 2012 **Postgraduate Forum's** post-graduate and early careers event, held the day before the main BSA annual conference began, was entitled *Our PhDs: Our Futures*. It was the most successful PG Forum pre-conference event so far, with more than 80 people attending.

The event was addressed by Professor Zygmunt Bauman (*right - photo by Grzegorz Lepiarz, photogl.com*), who discussed ways in which sociology could move forward as a discipline. Professor Bauman told the postgraduates that these were times that demanded the attention and imagination of sociologists, and the discipline had to rise to the challenge of equipping people to live in "full knowledge" of their society.

Among the other sessions was a workshop by Mark Carrigan, of the University of Warwick, on academic podcasting. He demonstrated the value of this medium as a means of sharing ideas and interacting with sociologists in and outside academia.

Other sessions included topics such as publishing in journals and getting early career funding from the ESRC.

"The day genuinely delivered a stimulating experience – not least owing to the diverse range of attendees and events," said Sarah Burton, the PG Forum's Co-convenor.

"Professor Bauman's characteristically optimistic and egalitarian outlook, together with his emphasis on connecting academic sociology with ordinary experience, felt particularly encouraging to a bunch of sociologists unsure of where their research and careers are headed, given the current economic difficulties in higher education.



Professor Zygmunt Bauman

"What was especially appreciated was the intimate, personal approach of Bauman and his privileging of a subjective human voice – something also apparent in the premiere of the documentary, 'The trouble with being human these days'. Whilst somewhat dividing the audience between those who considered it an awe-inspiring portrait of a great – and incredibly hard-working – modern sociologist, and those who found it a little too slick for its own good, the film certainly had everyone talking.

"Perhaps, though, the most valuable aspect of the day was the supportive atmosphere of collaboration and the excellent humour and wit in evidence in everything from PhD topics to presentations. Certainly it was greatly beneficial to be part of the lively discussions and sharing of ideas that took place throughout the event."

Bourdieu group is established

The **Bourdieu study group** has been established and has held its first meetings. The Convenors are Jenny Thatcher, of the University of East London, Dr Ciaran Burke, Queen's University Belfast, and Dr Nicola Ingram, University of Bristol.

The group met at the BSA annual conference this year, and held its first workshop in June at the BSA meeting room in London, with Professor Michael Burawoy as the keynote speaker. The workshop, called 'Bourdieu and public sociology', drew postgraduate and early careers researchers together with established scholars to debate issues around public engagement and Bourdieu's legacy. It also included a screening of the documentary film about Bourdieu, 'Sociology is a martial art'.

Recent publications by group members include: *White Middle-Class Identities and Urban*

Schooling by Diane Reay, Gill Crozier and David James, which analyses middle-class parents who choose comprehensive schooling for their children, and *French Post-War Social Theory* by Derek Robbins, which examines the production and reception of the ideas of five social theorists, including Bourdieu.

Future publications include *Class Inequality in Austerity Britain*, edited by Will Atkinson, Steven Roberts and Mike Savage, a critique of the current political climate in relation to class inequality in UK society. It will be published later this year.

The convenors have set up a study group Facebook page: www.facebook.com/bsabourdieu and a members' mailing group.

The convenors can be contacted at: u0933657@uel.ac.uk, churke11@qub.ac.uk or nicola.ingram@bristol.ac.uk

Alcohol group event looks at moral panics

The **Sociology of Alcohol study group** held a one-day conference, 'Folk devils and moral panics: the ambivalence of alcohol', at the BSA meeting room at Imperial Wharf, London, in March.

The keynote address was given by Professor Chas Critcher, of Swansea University, who spoke on the difference between outrage about alcohol drinkers and other moral panics, the hypocrisy of the drinks industry and Government policymakers, and drinking as a leisure activity.

Ten other presentations were given, including one from Amanda Rohloff, of Brunel University, which summed up the theme of the day: understanding the difference between research which looks at the moral panics of alcohol use and that which seeks to remedy alcohol problems.

Professor Chris Hackley, Royal Holloway, described the Russian philosopher and writer Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of 'carnival', relating it to young adults' accounts of their extreme drinking.

Professor Karl Spracklen, of Leeds Metropolitan University, examined the significance of alcohol in leisure and communication in a presentation on whisky tasting, the whisky industry and drinking.

By contrast, Dr Henry Yeomans, University of Leeds, considered the significance of such official warning slogans as 'think before you drink' in promoting social anxieties about alcohol.

The role of the local media in creating attitudes to drinking among young people was examined by Laura Doherty, Canterbury Christ Church University, and by Dr James Nicholls, Bath Spa University.

The issue of alcohol and men was examined by Dr Thomas Thurnell-Read, of Coventry University, and the social pressure on women who drink by Fiona Edgar, University of the West of Scotland.

Rachel MacLean, of Anglia Ruskin University, looked at the role of shaming drinkers in 'The regulatory ghost', while Dr Patsy Staddon, Plymouth University, spoke on how alcohol was a difficult and dangerous way for women to seek belonging and identity away from destructive relationships.

"This was a day packed with interest, from the witty and informative keynote speech of Professor Chas Critcher to the 10 other presentations," said Dr Staddon, Convenor of the study group.

"In just the one day we managed to explore sociological perspectives on tabloid scares, political campaigning, public health interventions and the drinks industry. We are hoping to offer an academic publication based on the papers presented."

Climate group mulls research methods

A **Climate Change study group** conference was held in March at the University of Southampton to discuss the challenges of researching this area.

The seminar was organised by Dr Milena Büchs, Dr Pauline Leonard and Dr Rebecca Edwards of the University of Southampton, and Dr Beth Perry, of the University of Salford.

The seminar brought together academics and researchers with representatives from government and community groups, including the Department of Energy and Climate Change and Hanover Action for Sustainable Living.

The participants reflected on the conceptual and methodological challenges of researching climate change at different levels: individual, household, workplace, community, regional, national and international.

The day began with keynote presentations from Professor John Urry and Professor Elizabeth Shove, of the University of Lancaster; Dr Leonard, Professor Patrick Devine-Wright, of the University of Exeter; and Dr Heather Lovell, of the University of Edinburgh.

They raised questions about the importance of organisational cultures in affecting behaviour, the need to avoid simplistic dichotomies between global and local dimensions of climate change, and the challenges of taking sociology into financial markets.

The second part of the day consisted of parallel workshop sessions for participants to share their own methods and research experiences. These focused on concepts, methods, practices and policies, with each workshop encouraged to identify questions to feed back to the group.



Group members held an outdoor session

Among the conclusions that the event generated was the need to bring together existing knowledge and to work across many academic disciplines and policy areas. Research methods needed to be refreshed to meet the challenge of new research areas. An extended seminar report will be made available on the website.

Further information on the seminar can be viewed at: <http://bsaclimatechangesouthampton2012.wordpress.com/>

• The seminar was supported by the University of Southampton Centre for Citizenship, Globalization and Governance, the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, Mistra Urban Futures, and the study group.

LSE books look at evil and 9/11

The Sociology department at the **LSE** has appointed Professor Mike Savage. Professor Savage has been Director of the multi-disciplinary ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, and has worked at the University of York. His research examines gender relations, social inequality, social protest and social mobility.

The department has also appointed Dr David Madden, of Columbia University, New York, who has written on urban space.

Dr Suzanne Hall, Lecturer in Sociology at the LSE, published her new book *City, Street and Citizen: The Measure of the Ordinary* (Routledge). The book offers an alternative notion of multiculturalism, using a multi-ethnic street in south London to discuss the sense of belonging of people living there.

LSE Cities, the international research centre for urban excellence, and the LSE Sociology Forum, organised a public lecture entitled 'The return of the subject'. Two books were launched at the event: Professor Ash Amin's *Land of Strangers* (Polity), which analyses attitudes towards the stranger in the West after 9/11, and Professor Michel Wieviorka's *Evil* (Polity), which offers a fresh approach to understanding the subject. The authors were joined by Dr Claire Alexander, Professor Craig Calhoun and Professor Richard Sennett in a discussion at the event.

Professor Paul Gilroy gave a public lecture entitled "My Britain's fuck all": zombie multiculturalism and the race politics of citizenship' to mark the re-launch of the journal *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*. To join the mailing list for events, email: sociology.events@lse.ac.uk

Suburbs and estates examined at conference

The **Urban Theory and Research study group** organised a plenary session at the annual conference entitled 'City margins and sub/urban marginality: peripheral estates, spoiled suburbs and outer-inner cities'. More than 30 people attended.

The session looked at the way in which some inner-city areas have become gentrified and the suburbs have become populated by workers, immigrants, the unemployed and the homeless, displaced by gentrification, higher rents and benefit withdrawals.

The first speaker was Dr David Smith, of the University of Greenwich, whose paper explored the enduring stigma of the St. Helier estate in South London. Dr Smith explained how the reputation of different parts of the estate were established early in its history and have been relatively impervious to attempts at regeneration and rebranding.

Distinctions between residents on the estate were shaped by housing policies, such as slum clearance, and by a succession of austerity budgets that had had an uneven impact upon the social and physical character of the estate.

Dr Paul Watt, of Birkbeck, followed with a paper entitled 'Living in an oasis: from elective to selective belonging in suburban Essex'. Dr Watt showed how affluent incomers into a middle-class enclave symbolically and practically disengaged from local places – notably shops, pubs and schools – because of their association with and proximity to a nearby council-built housing estate.

Dr Gareth Millington, of the University of York, argued that "metropolitan space had cosmopolitized with centres and peripheries internalising one another. Centres resembled pacified playgrounds for the wealthy while the periphery had become increasingly

urbanised, not least in terms of diversity and deprivation. This presented challenges not only for urban scholars but also for communities that often feel inclined to resist cosmopolitization through xenophobic responses or strategies of disaffiliation."

A discussion followed on topics such as the contribution of contemporary urban sociology, the effectiveness of urban policies on gentrification and marginality, and how positive scholars should be about the urban future.

The group is convened by Dr Robin Smith, of Cardiff University. More information on the group is available at:

www.britisoc.co.uk/study-groups/urban-theory-and-research.aspx

From material supplied by Dr Millington, gareth.millington@york.ac.uk

The full version of this article can be seen at www.britisoc.co.uk/members/network

All around the world

Network takes a look at sociology beyond our shores:

Daughters born in droughts

When food is in short supply in China the proportion of daughters born increases, a sociologist has found.

Nature reports that Shige Song (*below*), a sociologist and demographer at the City University of New York, analysed data on more than 300,000 Chinese women who gave birth between 1929 and 1982. This period included the Great Leap Forward famine in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which resulted in millions of deaths.

Professor Song found a decline in the proportion of boys being born – falling from 109 boys born for every 100 girls in April 1960, to 104 boys for every 100 girls by October 1963, two years after the famine ended. The ratio did not return to pre-famine levels until 1965.

Professor Song's analysis supports the idea that species alter the sex of their offspring in response to environmental conditions, according to *Nature*.

Unhealthy, poorly nourished males tend to have fewer offspring than similarly undernourished females, so the hypothesis predicts that to keep populations up in times of famine women should give birth to fewer boys.

The data that Professor Song analysed were collected in 1982 as part of the national one-per-thousand-population fertility survey by the Chinese State Family Planning Commission, which asked women about their childbearing history.



Russians get religion

The number of Russians who go to church has increased from 57% to 71% over the past 16 years, *Interfax* reports.

Seven per cent of respondents to a poll go to religious buildings at least once a month, 30% go to religious buildings from time to time, and 34% go to religious buildings rarely. The number of Russians who do not go to church has decreased from 42% to 26%, the All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM) told *Interfax*. Its poll was conducted in 138 populated areas in 46 regions, territories, and republics in Russia.

Death penalty ineffective

There is no association between the administration of the death penalty and subsequent murder rates in Trinidad and Tobago, sociologists have reported.

Researchers at New York University and Virginia Tech University examined more than 50 years of crime statistics in the country, reports *Health Canal*.

"Over a span of 50 years, during which these sanctions were being deployed in degrees that varied substantially, neither imprisonment nor death sentences nor executions had any significant relationship to homicides," wrote the study's co-authors, Professor David Greenberg of NYU, and Professor Biko Agozino of Virginia Tech.

They argue that it has been hard to measure any deterrent that capital punishment might have in the US because the death sentence is administered infrequently. By contrast, Trinidad and Tobago has had high rates of death sentences and executions. (This high rate came to an end after a court ruling and no death sentences have been carried out in more than a decade.)

The researchers note that homicide rates were relatively stable in Trinidad and Tobago between 1955, when they were 4.44 per 100,000 people, and 1980, when they were 4.34, despite executions ranging from a high of 16 in 1969 to zero between 1980 and 1993.

(In 2007, 391 homicides were recorded – a rate of 29.4 per 100,000. This compares to a US homicide rate in the same year of 5.6).

Sociologists top Spain poll

Two sociologists were among the three most cited Spanish social scientists in 2011, reports *PR Newswire*.

Sociologist Manuel Castells (*below, photo by Maggie Smith*) tops the list, with three times as many citations of his research as the second-ranked, Juan J. Linz, a sociologist and political scientist. The third spot was claimed by the economist Andreu Mas-Colell.

Professor Castells' most influential research focuses on urban social movements, the rise of the network society, and the role of cities in the information-driven global economy.

Professor Linz's research deals with the sociological aspects of political regimes, transition to democracy, and the advantages and disadvantages of presidential versus parliamentary democracy.

The citations list is compiled by the Lauder Institute of Management & International Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, based on data tracked to the end of 2011 by the Institute for Scientific Information.



World...

Links to online articles about these topics can be found at
www.britisoc.co.uk/members/network



Syrian dissident steps down

Burhan Ghalionun, the head of the Syrian National Council, has formally resigned from his post after weeks of tension within Syria's main opposition group. He had said he was ready to step down for the sake of unity among dissidents. Professor Ghalionun, who worked at the Université de Paris III Sorbonne University, had been criticised for an alleged failure to strengthen ties with anti-Assad forces inside Syria. He is the author of numerous books dealing with sociological and political issues of the Islamic world.

And on a lighter note...

A mention of the surname Kirk to sociologists will probably bring to mind the sinister and scheming academic in Malcolm Bradbury's 1975 novel, *The History Man*.

But according to the *Daily Telegraph*, it was very nearly James T. Kirk, or at least the Star Trek series, that set the discipline's image in the minds of the public eight years earlier.

The paper reports that an episode of Star Trek written in 1967 had been due to feature the character of "a deluded sociologist who the crew of the starship Enterprise must stop from disrupting natural social development on the planet Jugul".

The episode, entitled 'He walked among us,' never went into production because the writer, Norman Spinrad, objected to changes to his script made by the Star Trek producer, which he felt made it an unfunny comedy.

According to an online review by 'Leo', in the script "a renegade Federation citizen, Theodore Bayne, has installed himself as a god to rule over a primitive civilization. On closer inspection it is discovered that Bayne is an anti-scientific fanatic with quack medical beliefs. His vegetarian dictum has led to his people becoming malnourished, improper crop rotation techniques have left the arable land depleted, and his commandment forbidding polygamy has resulted in social unrest." www.goodreads.com/review/show/290506517

Leo quotes some dialogue which is surely an early example of medical sociology championing alternative treatments in the face of orthodox scepticism:

DR MCCOY: He's one of those screwballs who thinks he can cure cancer with lots of cold water baths. He's been thrown off of every civilized planet he ever landed on...

BAYNE: By blind, stubborn, misleading and mistaken colleagues of yours, Doctor. If you would only realize that nature heals, nature cures, that in the great order of things all mistakes are eventually put to right. You and your pills and potions – poisons, Captain!

Iranian sociologist arrested

The sociologist Saeed Madani, who was arrested by security forces in January, remains in solitary confinement, his wife has told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran (reports *Iranian.com*).

Security forces arrested Mr Madani, a member of the Nationalist-Religious group and the editorial board of *Iran-e Farda* monthly, and transferred him to Evin Prison.

His wife, Mansoureh Ettefagh, said: "We were on the street when the forces came forward showing an arrest warrant for Madani and for searching the house. They entered the house and took away all Mr Madani's research works, the computer, my daughter's and my laptop computers."

Mr Madani, of the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, Tehran, has worked on child abuse, addiction, HIV/AIDS and violence.

He was one of several members of the Nationalist-Religious group previously arrested in 2000 on charges of membership of illegal groups, collusion with the intent to commit a crime, and "propagating against the regime". He was released on bail after serving a year in prison, five months of which were in solitary confinement.

Trust in science falls in US

A study says that trust in science among conservatives and frequent churchgoers has declined sharply since 1974.

Dr Gordon Gauchat, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, found that liberals continued to trust science, with 47 per cent reporting a "great deal" of trust on average in 2010, *LiveScience.com* reports. This was similar to the level found in the 1970s.

Only conservatives showed a change over time: at the beginning of the survey in the 1970s conservatives trusted science more than anyone, with 48 percent saying they had a great deal of trust. By 2010 only 35 percent said the same.

Dr Gauchat noted the conservative movement had expanded substantially in power and influence, creating an extensive apparatus of think tanks and media outlets.

Science has increasingly come under fire, he said, because its cultural authority and its impact on government had grown. For years the role science played was mostly behind the scenes, creating better military equipment. But scientists had now begun to play an important role in developing regulations, for instance on climate change.

Prescient articles warned of folly in the markets

On August 9 2007, bad news from a French bank triggered a collapse in confidence in the financial markets – and within weeks long queues were forming outside Northern Rock branches.

Five years on and the effects of that summer still dominate the headlines, with sociology itself in the news. (See www.britsoc.co.uk for links to two Guardian articles, and a letter and opinion piece from the BSA in reply).

Here Tony Trueman takes a look at the issues:

Among the few people to emerge in credit from the near-collapse of the world's economic system were a small group of people who were acclaimed for sounding a warning of problems before the crash.

Vince Cable's rise to the position of Business Secretary was helped by his warnings about the growth of personal debt in Britain. Gillian Tett, the Financial Times reporter who highlighted the faultlines in the market, subsequently won the Journalist of the Year award at the British Press Awards. Nouriel Roubini, the economist who also foresaw trouble, is now regularly consulted by finance ministers round the world.

We should add another name to the list: Robin Blackburn, the sociology professor at the University of Essex. More than a year before the crisis began, his words were prophetic: "It was striking to see the eagerness with which gigantic financial concerns like Citigroup and HSBC sought to acquire consumer finance operations and even 'sub-prime' lenders (loan sharks), which they would previously have regarded with disdain. Borrowers who can only negotiate a sub-prime mortgage have either poor collateral or poor income prospects, or both, and so are required to pay over the odds... With a sagging dollar, an oil price shock and rising interest rates, American households – the consumers of first and last resort – are likely to find the strain of carrying the world on their shoulders ever more difficult. Financialization promotes such a skewed distribution of income that it ends by undermining its own credit-driven momentum."

These words of concern appeared in *New Left Review* in May 2006. In 2007, Professor Blackburn wrote that sub-prime mortgage

lending had been "very profitable, but in a changed business climate the magic could evaporate. Instead of helping to sustain demand, it could squeeze it remorselessly, as interest rates rise and bad debts inflict losses on the holders of the CDOs [collateralized debt obligations]. Regrettably, elected governments have only deregulated financial institutions to allow the party to continue." (*Daedalus*, summer 2007, written in the spring).

Professor Blackburn is an expert on pensions, and his research on how the financial system is failing to provide for people's old age had led him to his "rather prescient" warning about the financial markets. "I was during all these years also working in New York at the New School for Social Research and that was immensely helpful because there are a lot of very good economists there, and economic sociologists, and I was able to discuss things through with them and begin to make sense of a lot of these goings-on on Wall Street, which was just 15 blocks downtown."

His work, which continues to the present day, is worthy of quotation because it is just one example of the diverse research of sociologists looking at the origins of the crisis, work which is not as well known as it should be.

It's helpful to put some perspective on this with a little history. The study of the cause of recessions and financial crises from a sociological point of view is part of economic sociology, which can be seen as having broad phases, beginning with the classical works of writers such as Weber, Simmel, Durkheim and Marx.

Dr Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, of the LSE, sees economic sociology as going "back to the very origins of sociology" and featuring a

variety of approaches and arguments. Weber had studied stock exchanges, prices and economic action; Durkheim had looked at the moral constitution of the economy; Marx attributed the origin of economic crises to the inherent instability of capitalism.

"The field was active, however fragmented it may have been, for a long time," said Dr Pardo-Guerra. "But from the 1980s to the present, it has consolidated into something clearer." This consolidation had followed several methodological innovations, one of which was the rise of social network analysis, important in the emergence of what was called the 'new economic sociology'. This arose from the idea that, in its reliance of abstract modelling, conventional economics misses some key social phenomena that need to be considered. The new economic sociology sought instead to place economic action within its social context.

Dr Pardo-Guerra went on: "More recently there's been an interesting intersection between science and technology studies and economic sociology, which has been very prolific in terms of studies of markets and the economy. It is quite interesting because it is a complementary perspective to existing forms of talking about the economy."

Dr Pardo-Guerra is one of a number of successful former students of Professor Donald MacKenzie, the influential financial sociologist at Edinburgh who has pioneered this link between markets and technology, in what he terms 'materiality'.

Professor MacKenzie said this included not only the informal ways that traders have communicated, such as by hand signals and by voice, but also "the role of technical systems in markets, technical procedures and

mathematical models”.

An example of this was the development of computers to automate areas of market trading. Mathematical formulae are programmed into computers (algorithms) and used for trading and to assess the riskiness of an investment. This can make markets simpler and cheaper for traders and bankers to negotiate, but can also oversimplify risks and exaggerate shifts in trading, and so exacerbate crashes. This explanation needs to be put alongside the conventional one of greed and risk-taking as factors behind the crash.

Professor MacKenzie said that this area of research was growing. “This field’s got a certain buzz to it, and people in management schools are waking up to the importance of it.” He recently won a European Research Council grant of £1.7 million to investigate the cultures and organisational styles that influence the way high finance works. (*See Network Spring 2012, page 11*) and has a steady stream of PhD students in this area who have now almost all gone on to teaching.

As an example of materiality, one of Professor MacKenzie’s main areas of research has been to look in more detail at the now-common idea that sub-prime mortgage lending led to the crash. As part of this he made a study of a particular class of very complex financial products which turned out to be the most toxic of all market innovations.

We all understand the concept of the mortgage, a particular type of loan. Banks and building societies package groups of mortgages together into what are called mortgage-backed securities which they sell to investors in the markets. Until a dozen or so years ago investors buying into these securities understood the risks of homeowners defaulting because they knew the market.

The difficulties started in the late 1990s when mortgage-backed securities were themselves bundled together with other forms of debts that were being traded on the markets, into much bigger and more complicated packages called collateralized debt obligations (CDOs). These, Professor MacKenzie has found, were much harder to assess accurately for their risk to investors as the assets were not simply mortgages but included other types of securities such as bonds.

For financial institutions to have fully assessed the risk of investing in these CDOs would have required an enormous amount of extra computer power, so much so that the air conditioning in their computer rooms would have broken down from the heat generated if this were tried. Also, investors were now several steps away from those repaying the mortgages, and were less wary of the risks.

The result was that the credit agencies did not fully analyse the risk involved and often underestimated it. In particular they did not entirely allow for the way that the risks were interrelated: if one mortgage payer defaulted, many others could too at the same time, because lying behind the default was often a common



Photos:

Above: Professor Robin Blackburn

Above right: Professor Donald MacKenzie



This article is a condensed version of a longer piece which has been posted on the BSA website at:
<http://tinyurl.com/89wadmw>

problem, such as a rise in unemployment.

But CDOs appealed to the market, and trading in them expanded and came to dominate. It was only after the market had turned did institutions realise they had invested huge amounts in risky products, and this shattered the confidence needed to make the world’s finance system run smoothly. In this sense it was not just simply greed that caused the problem, but a technical issue of how complex products were assessed.

Materiality is also the approach adopted by former students of Professor MacKenzie. Dr Pardo-Guerra studies both the technologies and the makers of those technologies, including the way that much of the trading on the market has been automated and can take place within fractions of a second. This automation was a factor in the 2010 ‘Flash Crash’ in which a US stock market fell and recovered nine per cent within minutes.

“You get a sense of inevitability in crises which are related to the sheer complexity of the system,” said Dr Pardo-Guerra.

“There’s no equivalent of the old-style trading floor now. Because when there were trading floors and you had relatively small markets, owned by locals, there was a sense in which you could read the faces of people who were on the floor and get an idea of what the market was like. But that is no longer the case. Trading is now done by complex forms of data-mining and statistical modelling. And it moves at tremendous speeds.

“This has made the system more successful at producing higher returns, and reducing the costs of borrowing in the market. So there are some positive things associated with this automation, with the negative being potential events like the ones we have observed.

“Part of the conclusion is that maybe we shouldn’t think of a world in which there aren’t

such events. Rather we should think of a world in which we should be prepared for such events.”

This area of research has grown in scope in recent years. A conference in June in Edinburgh on ‘The credit crisis, five years on’ organised by Professor MacKenzie and Dr Iain Hardie brought together around 90 people including Andrew Haldane, Executive Director for Financial Stability at the Bank of England, as one of the main speakers. It also drew representatives of the Bank of Scotland, Dow Jones, Barclays and Standard Life, among others, a sign that sociology has become influential among important organisations within finance and business.

The conference is also a good indicator of the way that other social science disciplines are interested in sociology’s take on the crisis: 25 of the 40 academics and students attending the conference were from disciplines such as business, finance, accountancy, computing and human geography.

It’s not just conferences: sociologists have moved into inter-disciplinary work or to employment in business schools. The porous nature of the discipline can be seen as a strength as it widens its influence of sociological ideas.

It’s a point made by economics lecturer Dr Andrew Brown at Leeds, who jointly coordinates the FESSUD - Financialisation, Economy, Society and Sustainable Development - project. This has a budget of 8 million Euros, funded under the EC’s FP7 framework, and was set up to change the role of the financial system to better serve economic, social and environmental objectives. Members of the UK team are not sociologists, but have published in sociological journals including *Work, employment and society*.

(Article continues on next two pages)

Sociology warned about the

(Continued from previous page)

In his teaching Dr Brown covers the major strands of sociology, and he says that FESSUD's work engages with sociologists such as Professor MacKenzie as integral to inter-disciplinary research. Another example of strong interdisciplinary work is LSE researchers who study accounting from a sociological point of view.

The porous nature of the discipline can, however, make sociology's contribution less obvious, at least to a superficial survey. This may be one reason for recent coverage in *The Guardian* criticising the discipline for not looking at the crisis.

The two opinion pieces by *The Guardian* columnist, although they raised an important issue, lacked rigour and balance and it's not hard to find flaws in them. They criticised the BSA annual conference for a scarcity of papers on the origins of the crisis, but omitted to say that four of the five plenary sessions dealt with this to a greater or lesser degree (see pages 26-31). The columnist complained about a lack of books written by sociologists in the UK and US on the origins of the crash, but a search on Amazon under 'financial sociology' and other terms would have yielded their titles. *Work, employment and society* and *Economic Sociology*, with their various papers on the issue, and the newspaper and magazine articles written by sociologists as part of public engagement, were not mentioned. (Some of this information had been sent to the columnist by the BSA and was not mentioned, and the rest was available online or by contacting researchers.)

Had this evidence been presented, it would have made the columns' arguments hard to sustain: it is a big step from highlighting the relative paucity of papers on the origins of the crisis at the annual conference to suggesting that sociologists in the UK and the US are not interested in researching the issue or in taking their work into the public sphere; it's an unfeasibly giant leap to condemn social science for supposedly failing to tackle the issue.

Not all *Guardian* writers share the columnist's views - see: 'US sociologists are finally challenging the intellectual stranglehold of economists', by Jonathan Steele: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/aug/24/usa.highereducation

But it is true that financial sociology is a smaller part of the discipline compared with medical sociology or the sociology of religion, say. There are good reasons for this: it often involves fieldwork in the markets, which can be difficult to arrange and needs a detailed knowledge of the

intricacies of finance and economics, as well as the fundamentals of sociology. It's no surprise that some of those working in this field in sociology began their careers as bankers or traders, or, like Professor MacKenzie and Dr Pardo-Guerra, have degrees in maths or physics.

And while financial sociology is expanding, as more researchers have been drawn to studying the crisis, there will be the usual lag while PhDs are completed and journals accept and publish articles, and a longer wait before any over-arching account of the crisis, as called for in *The Guardian* columns, is attempted.

There are other reasons too: this issue links to the relative lack of quantitative analysis in UK sociology after its turn towards cultural issues in the 1980s and 1990s. This is a complex area and one often debated in sociology and in *Network* (see Williams and Payne, Spring 2012, and the verdict of the international bench-marking panel on sociology in the Summer 2010 issue).

While it's clear that there is much valuable work being done, opinions vary on the extent and power economic sociology has today. Professor Blackburn is cautious: "I think that sociology in the 80's and 90's had been very influenced by the cultural turn and I think there was something good and necessary about the cultural turn, and the new type of economic sociology does try to incorporate some of its insights. But in so far as the cultural turn led to a downgrading of economics, and economic sociology, I think that we pay a price."

Dr Pardo-Guerra, however, speaks for others when he thinks that "it's a field that has renovated itself several times" and is now as powerful as it was in the days when the founders of sociology first tackled it. Dr Andrea Mennicken, of the LSE, supported the idea that the sub-discipline is thriving in an article she co-wrote in the journal *Economic Sociology* in November 2008 which said that economic sociology was "flourishing, as the rediscovery of the economy by a range of social scientists gains increasing momentum."

There is also a risk of defining a search for explanations too tightly - underlying the immediate problems in the market were many important factors: the lax attitude to observing rules, the rise of neo-liberalism, the culture of the times; all of these are subjects of sociological investigation.

It's a debate that will go on, no doubt.

This article is a condensed version of a longer piece which has been posted on the BSA website at:
<http://tinyurl.com/89wadmw>



Dr Iain Hardie

To give an idea of the diversity of research in this area, *Network* presents a selective list of UK researchers working on the origins of the crisis from a sociological viewpoint:

Donald MacKenzie: Professor of Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. His books include *Inventing Accuracy* (1990), *Knowing Machines* (1996), *Mechanizing Proof* (2001), and *An Engine, not a Camera: How Financial Models Shape Markets* (2006), all published by the MIT Press.

His current and former colleagues have gone on to do significant work in this field:

Dr Yuval Millo: Lecturer in Accounting, LSE (from September Professor of Social Studies of Finance at the University of Leicester). Dr Millo is examining the historical sociology of financial derivatives markets, especially its regulatory aspects, and, more generally, social aspects of financial risk today.

Alex Preda: Professor of Accounting, Accountability and Financial Management, King's College London. His research interests include: strategic behaviour in financial markets; decision-making and cognitive processes in electronic anonymous markets; market automation and trading technologies; and the governance of global finance. His publications include *Information, Knowledge, and Economic Life: An Introduction to the Sociology of Markets* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and he is Co-editor of the *Handbook of the Sociology of Finance* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Dr Iain Hardie: Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, University of Edinburgh. Dr Hardie had an investment banking career in London and Hong Kong, specialising in emerging bond markets. His PhD examines the links between the financialization of government bond markets and government policy. He works with Professor MacKenzie on the sociology of financial markets and also looks at globalization, especially financialization and varieties of financial capitalism.

Dr Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra: Lecturer in Sociology, LSE. His core research focuses on the adoption of information and communication technologies in stock exchanges and the analysis of some of the current transformations within global finance. He is currently working on a sociological account of the emergence and growth of computer algorithmic and high-frequency trading in British finance.

the end of financial 'magic'

Others working in economic sociology in the UK include:

Robin Blackburn, Professor of Sociology, University of Essex. His work in economic and historical sociology has focussed on the history of slavery in the Americas, the roots of financial crises, the economic challenge of the ageing society, the threats to pension provision, the perils of financialization and the sociology of the credit crunch. He taught at the New School for Social Research, New York, from 2001 to 2010. He published *Banking on Death or Investing in Life: The History and Future of Pensions* in 2002, and *Age Shock: How Finance is Failing Us* in 2007 (Verso, paperback edition, with a new preface, 2012). He has written articles on 'grey capitalism', the pension crisis, financialization and tackling the credit crunch for *New Left Review*, *Prospect* and *Daedalus*.

Dr Daniel Beunza: Lecturer in Management, LSE. Dr Beunza's research explores the ways in which social relations and technology shape financial value. He has proposed a new way in which financial models can lead to disaster, and has written a report for the UK government on the dangers of automated trading.

Dr John Bone: Aberdeen University. He works on the way in which neo-liberal economic policy affects individuals and urban communities in terms of identities, working lives, well-being, social polarisation and social cohesion. His papers include: 'No place called home: the causes and social consequences of the UK housing "bubble"', *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 61:2, pp. 231-255 (2010, with Karen O'Reilly) and 'The credit crunch: neoliberalism, financialization and the gekkoisation of society', *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 14 2/3 (2009).

Dr Neil Pollock: Reader in e-Business, Edinburgh. He works in the field of the sociology of information and communication technologies. Current research interests include the sociology of technology, actor-network theory, the 'performativity' of simple business tools, and the social study of the information technology marketplace.

Dr Philip Roscoe: Lecturer in Management, St Andrews. His research focuses on markets, how they arise, how they are organised, their social and ethical implications, and the ways in which they can change behaviour.

Dr Zsuzsanna Vargha: Fellow in Accounting, LSE. Her work looks at: economic sociology and the sociology of finance, banking, and risk management. Her papers include: 'From long-term savings to instant mortgages: financial demonstrations and the role of interaction in markets', *Organization*, March 2010, 18(2).

Doreen McBarnet: Professor of Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford, who works on corporate finance, taxation and business regulation. Her research includes examining the type of off-balance-sheet issues in the corporate world that preceded the financial crisis.

John Law: Professor of Sociology at the Open University and a Director of CRESC, who works partly in sociology and partly in science, technology and society. His work includes: 'On qualculation, agency and otherness', *Society and Space*, 23, (with Michel Callon).

Articles on the origin of the economic crisis can be seen in these journals, newspapers and websites:

Work, employment and society:

'Theorizing financialization', Costas Lapavistas, SOAS, December 2011.

Economic Sociology:

'Credit rating agencies and the global financial crisis', Timothy Sinclair, University of Warwick, November 2010.


'History in finance and fiction in history: the crisis of 2008 and the return of the past', Amin Samman, University of Birmingham, July 2011.

Articles in the London Review of Books by Donald

MacKenzie can be seen by going to: www.lrb.co.uk/ and searching under his name: 'Hedge funds', November 2008; 'Broker's ear', August 2008; 'The credit crisis and the end-of-the-world trade', May 2008. Articles in the New Left Review by Robin Blackburn can be seen by going to www.newleftreview.org/ and searching under his name: 'Finance and the fourth dimension', May-June 2006; 'The subprime crisis', March-April 2008; 'Crisis 2.0', November-December 2011.

Article in Daedalus by Robin Blackburn

'Economic democracy: meaningful, desirable, feasible?' Summer 2007 www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/daed.2007.136.3.36



BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Medical Sociology Group Annual Conference 2012

Wednesday 5th – Friday 7th September 2012
University of Leicester

We look forward to welcoming you to our 44th Annual Conference.
We are pleased to announce Kathy Charmaz, Sonoma State University, San Francisco and David Armstrong, King's College London have agreed to be our plenary speakers at the 2012 conference.

Papers, posters and other forms of presentation will be structured around streams that include:

1. Cancer	10. Gender	19. Open Stream
2. Citizenship and health	11. Health Policy	20. Patient –professional interaction
3. Complimentary and alternative medicines	12. Health Service Delivery	21. Pharmaceuticals
4. Critical public health	13. Health Care Organisations	22. Politics of Health
5. Embodiment and Emotion	14. Individual, Collective and Global Risk	23. Professions
6. Ethics	15. Inequalities	24. Risk
7. Ethnicity	16. Lifecourse - reproductive health; chronic conditions; ageing; death and dying	25. Screening and diagnosis
8. Experiences of health and illness	17. Mental Health	26. STS and medicine
9. Evidence	18. Methods	27. Theory

The abstract submission is now closed.
Important dates for your diary

Monday 11 June – Presenter registration deadline
Friday 27 July – Reduced rate booking deadline

Further details available from:
www.britsoc.co.uk/events/medsoc and events@britsoc.org.uk

Annual conference: so

The success of the Leeds annual conference can be measured in figures: it was the second largest the BSA has organised in its 61-year history, with 700 delegates attending and 575 presentations. The event had five plenary speakers, 12 stream plenaries, 12 study group meetings, and special sessions on publishing, studying, teaching, researching, peer review, the media and the future.

It can also be measured in the quality of the speakers: Stephen Ackroyd, Zygmunt Bauman, Rosemary Batt, Michael Burawoy and John Brewer, and in the range of their addresses, reports of which are carried in the next pages.

The variety of the work that sociologists brought to the conference is also another good indicator of the health of the discipline. The streams give a good idea of this range: cities, mobilities, place and space; education; families, relationships, lifecourse; law, crime and rights; media, culture and consumption; medicine, health and illness; methodological innovations; open stream; sociology of religion; risk and climate change; science and technology studies; social divisions/social identities; teaching, professional practice; theory; work, employment and economic life.

Just as important was the positive reaction of delegates, with comments such as: "I take away a sense of hope – you hear that there are other people as passionate as you and who want to make changes" and "there have been some lively debates over the nature of sociology and fundamental questions like that." (See column on next page)

The event featured in the national and international media, with over 200 articles appearing in newspapers, magazines, websites and on the radio. The media coverage included five articles in *The Independent*, and items in *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail*, and in the *Times Higher* and *New Statesman* magazines, as well as coverage in India and the US.

This followed the issuing of 10 press releases on topics including domestic violence, unemployment in Britain and the US, ethnic minority representation in universities, the film industry, cosmetic surgery and the exploitation of lap dancers. The releases can be seen at www.britisoc.co.uk/media/pressreleases.aspx

The BSA and sociologists later defended the discipline against criticism in *The Guardian* which had alleged lack of interest in the cause of the current recession. This material can be seen by going to the BSA

The Leeds annual conference, the second largest the BSA has organised in its 61-year history, was a great success, with 700 delegates attending. In the next 14 pages Network takes a look at the people, plenaries and prizes...



New BSA President John Holmwood

home page, where there is a link to further information. See pages 18-21 for a feature on financial sociology

The conference also celebrated 25 years of the BSA journal *Work, employment and society* with a reception to mark its success and applaud the work of its editors and editorial board.



BSA Publications Officer Alison Danforth

• The Medsoc 44th conference will take place at the University of Leicester from 5 to 7 September. Plenary speakers are Professor Kathy Charmaz, Sonoma State University, San Francisco, and Professor David Armstrong, King's College London. See www.britisoc.co.uk/events/medsoc-annual-conference.aspx

solidarity and hope



'Other people as passionate as you'

"I'm a researcher in a council estate in a poor neighbourhood and I think that nobody cares about these people. When I get here I find lots of other people doing similar things who are also getting frustrated and angry about this. This is how we come together and speak to a bigger audience – it allows me to feel part of something and discuss issues that I can't otherwise – networking is a good thing. I take away a sense of hope – you hear that there are other people as passionate as you and who want to make changes – I do feel there's solidarity." – **Lisa McKenzie, Nottingham**



'Lively debates'

"The conference is an opportunity for British sociologists and international sociologists to get together, exchange ideas and have arguments where genuine differences exist. There have been some lively debates over the nature of sociology and fundamental questions like that – it's always useful to reflect on our own underlying assumptions. I'm taking back to Abertay some reflections on what I'm doing based on the responses to the paper that I presented and from meeting people at the conference." – **Alex Law, Abertay**

BSA grows during age of austerity, members hear

The BSA is a busy organisation whose activities, services and membership are growing during an age of austerity, its annual members meeting heard.

Four BSA officials told the meeting, held during the annual conference in Leeds and attended by around 30 people, that the past year had been successful for the Association and the next year promised further development.

The BSA Chair, Professor Judith Burnett, said that in its academic remit the BSA had organised 50 events during the year, including study group meetings and presidential events.

It had also played a key role among learned societies, she said, including part-funding an administrator working for the Association of Teachers of Social Studies, which had now become the Teaching Group within the BSA.

Professor Burnett said that as part of her activities the BSA's Chief Executive, Judith Mudd, sat on the committee of the Campaign for Social Science, and that the BSA had set up a blog on sociology and the cuts, which was viewed nearly 37,000 times, and had 59 posts. The BSA's media coverage had included items in the national and international press.

The BSA had responded to 17 consultations set up by higher education bodies and government about various issues. These included a joint response with the Heads and Professors of Sociology to the consultation on the Higher Education White Paper, 'Students at the heart of the system'.

Speaking about the Association's finances, Professor Burnett said the BSA had received some queries about the cost of membership, which was £80 on average. This was in fact subsidised by income from publications and events, and its true cost was £156.

Professor Eileen Green, a BSA Publications Director, said the year had been "very successful", with improved support for journal editors. *Sociology* was strong, with the current team of editors finishing at the end of this year. The



Professor Lynn Jamieson

number of paper submissions to *Work, employment and society* was up by 25 per cent on the year before and *Cultural Sociology* and *Sociological Research Online* were "buoyant". Publications brought in 41 per cent of the BSA's income.

Professor Green said that the BSA would review the challenges and opportunities presented by the rise of open access journals and it was considering creating a book series on BSA conferences.

Professor Lynn Jamieson, a Membership Services Director, said that the BSA had an active membership which had increased to 2,580. "Given that this is a time of austerity, that's pretty good going," she said.

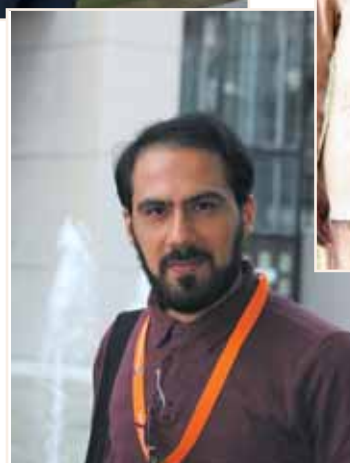
The Association had 45 forums and study groups, a strong Facebook presence, and had sponsored early career awards. *Network* continued to develop.

The meeting also heard that traffic to the website had increased by 9 per cent over the past year, with over 200,000 hits.

Syd Jeffers, a BSA Trustee, said that following the survey of members' views on the website, the first version of a new site would be built by the end of this year.

Photos courtesy of Dida Media and Chris Doyle

Leeds United...



All photos © Chris Doyle

The event in Leeds was the BSA's second-largest annual conference. Network takes a look at the snaps:



'The only permanence in society is change, and uncertainty is the only certainty'

In his plenary address before an audience of over 400 people entitled 'Liquid modernity revisited', Professor Zygmunt Bauman reflected on the uncertainties of our times, and the role of sociology and other groups in creating an alternative to this.

Professor Bauman gave a description of society today as he saw it, beginning with a summary of his concept of liquid modernity and the uncertainty for workers that it brought.

As an example, he said that business leaders could shift their factories to another country "with one press on the one key on their laptop."

However, "people who actually work for them cannot follow because they would be rounded up at the nearest border and transported back to wherever they came from."

He spoke about the corporation Enron, which eventually went bankrupt, where "as a matter of routine, as a matter of principle, every half a year they made redundant 30 per cent of their staff. Not because every third member of staff proved himself or herself to be inept and unable to perform their function, but simply to keep everybody else, those people who were not made redundant, on alert."

Professor Bauman, of the University of Leeds, summarised the ideas of the French sociologist Michel Crozier, expressed in his book *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*, saying that "domination is now exercised not by supervision, not by surveillance, not by the system of punitive sanctions for disobedience, but by plain uncertainty.

"It ends up in a situation in which change is the only permanence in liquid modern society and uncertainty is the only certainty.

"There is a transformation which I describe as a transformation from solid modern to liquid modern society, which could be expressed in the following way: that from an interest and effort to control or fix the future and tie up the flow of time, the prime concern has moved to the avoidance of mortgaging the future."

As part of this there had been "one very painful, very seminal, transformation – what I call the divorce between power and politics.

"If you define power as ability to do things and define politics as the ability to decide which things ought to be done, and which should be avoided, then until 50, 60 years ago the general belief of intelligent classes was that power and politics resided in the same home – the nation-state. Therefore

In his plenary session at the annual conference, Professor Zygmunt Bauman spoke about the divorce between power and politics, the management culture of Enron and the choice that sociology has to make

Photos:

Professor Bauman at the plenary audience

All photos by Chris Doyle

whether you were on the right of political spectrum or on the left political spectrum, you never worried to whom to address your demands."

He said that the "tacit, naive assumption" that our political leaders could carry out our wishes was no longer possible because they did not have the power to do this.

"People feel deeply in their hearts, even if they don't articulate it, that even if we know what needs to be done the big problem is who is going to do it?

"Politics is deprived of power, and suffers from a deficit of power, and therefore is toothless and unable to influence things.

"We saw recently during the credit crisis the very illuminating phenomena when the leaders of two of the most powerful European countries, Monsieur Sarkozy and Madame Merkel, met on a Friday in order to save Europe from financial disaster. They made decisions on a Friday and they nervously waited through Saturday and Sunday until on Monday the stock exchanges opened and then only they will learn whether they did something sensible or stupid."

Another manifestation of liquid modernity was that "individuals are expected to find – individually – individual solutions to socially-produced problems, using their own wit, their own wisdom, their own knowledge, their own targets, their own industry.

"It very much reminds me when there was a panic about the coming nuclear war. People in America were advised to buy and build themselves family shelters as a solution to the coming threat of mutual destruction."

Liquid modernity was driven by what he called the "managerial revolution mark



two", in which managers decide "not to take it upon themselves the very awesome, very clumsy, very tiring necessity of carrying responsibility for the effect of enterprise. The process in which the responsibility was taken off the shoulders of the active managers and transferred upon the shoulders of the managed people."

Professor Bauman spoke of what he saw as the threat of sociology losing touch with the public arena, a warning that Professor Burawoy had given more than 10 years ago, he said.

"If there is a truth in the fact that there is some sort of break of communication or weakening of communication between sociology and the public arena, it is mostly because the meaning of public has changed.

"I have lived unforgivably long, so I remember the time when the fear in reading and talking and chatting circles in society was that the public sphere would eat up the private.

"The fear of my generation after all the tremendous, awful experiences of totalitarianism in Europe, was the invasion and colonisation of the sphere of the private by the public. The fate of the public was contained in George Orwell's very vivid expression – a vision of a soldier's boot trampling into the ground a human face.

"What did happen was something which no sociologist – however wise he was – could predict." This was, he said, the "invasion" of the public sphere by the private.

"That was a revolution because suddenly the things separating the sphere of the private from sphere of the public had been broken. This boundary, separating them very carefully over several centuries, had been effaced.

"The result was the emergence of the

kind of society in which we live. I call it 'confessional society' and it is a society in which secrets – which were confided only in god almighty, sometimes in the presence of his representative on earth, the priest – suddenly were declared public, pushing away the other issues, the real public issues related to living in common, to sharing the same territory and engaging in daily interaction."

He gave as an example the willingness of people to talk about their intimate sexual problems on television. He said this was "as if we put microphones in confessionals and loud-speakers were connected to these microphones and installed on public squares."

Another facet of liquid modernity was



what he called "the passage from panopticon to banopticon. Banopticon is not about keeping people in but about keeping people out – undesirables. There are closed circuit television cameras which actually stop loiterers and all sorts of suspicious types which circle around your abode."

Sociology had a choice in these times: "Sociology feels no particular pressure to urgently follow the tracks of the changing world. The statute books of universities provide a protective shield against such pressure.

"Owing to the established procedure of graduation, promotions, staff rotation, self-replenishment and self-reproduction, codified by university statute books, sociology may cling infinitely to its extant form and style oblivious to the changing world.

"That means also staying oblivious to the rising demand for an altogether different kind of services.

"In our increasingly deregulated, privatised and individualised world, such services are badly needed but so far only sparingly supplied, and they need to be made with the task of a thorough de-objectification of the social world and its human members in mind.

"In our society, individualised by the decree of fate, aided and abetted by the second managerial revolution, sociology faces the exciting and exhilarating chance of turning, for a change, into a science or technology of freedom.

"I would say sociology's future, at least its immediate future, lies in an effort to re-incarnate and to re-establish itself as cultural politics in the service of human freedom."

In his plenary, Professor Michael Burawoy spoke about his experiences working in communist Hungary and in the USSR, and discussed how the work of Karl Polanyi could help us understand the present crisis

Michael Burawoy continued Professor Bauman's theme by giving examples of the change from solid to liquid modernity in the former communist states in Eastern Europe, where he had lived.

In a plenary address entitled 'On occupations', Professor Burawoy said he had worked in factories in Hungary in the early 1980s, which he called places of "true solid modernity" in the stability of working conditions they offered.

"I worked there and little did I know that this solid modernity of state socialism was about to collapse. We workers in the October Revolution Socialist Brigade didn't anticipate its collapsing.

"But when the collapse became imminent in 1988, I thought: 'Well, perhaps this is the moment of solidarity – this is the moment of a transition from state socialism to a democratic form of socialism'. I saw the possibility and I sensed a democratic movement of the character of the Solidarity Movement rising and taking Hungary in a democratic socialist direction. I could not have been more wrong.

"It is great to be wrong, by the way. A problem with sociology is that it makes too few predictions, in my view. It is great to be wrong and then interrogate that wrongness.

"But what happened in Hungary was actually a transition from state socialism to capitalism. It was a disaster, particularly for the workers around me, for industry in general. It was a period of deindustrialisation and privatisation and of an economy that went into deep decline in the industrial areas. Today we have a reaction to that problem – a very right-wing government.

"Then I decided after Hungary I was not interested in the transition from socialism to capitalism – I would go to the Soviet Union, as it was then, in 1991. I worked in a rubber factory in February and then in a furniture factory in March, April, May. By August we had the failed coup, by December there was no Soviet Union anymore." He then worked in Syktyvkar in northern Russia for 10 years.

"I watched for those 10 years the sad, tragic dissolution of the post-Soviet Russian economy. A decline that we hadn't really

'Our livelihood is at stake - we must pursue relationships beyond the university'

seen in peacetime in the 20th century.

"But what was happening everywhere from Zambia to Chicago, from Chicago to Hungary, from Hungary to Russia, was what? – a tsunami, a market tsunami. Everywhere the market was responsible for this disintegration of what had been solid modernity.

"What followed in Russia was the quintessential form of liquid modernity. We found a separation of politics and power – power went somewhere in the ether, behind which were the emergent oligarchs. Politics virtually disappeared in Russia.

Fragmentation was the order of the day.

"Individualism: consumer individuals, individual survival – should we say family survival – was the order of the day. Uncertainty was everywhere. The meaning of money changed – every day the rouble changed its value.

"Asset stripping was pouring out of the productive side of the post-Soviet Russian economy. In a sense exchange and production were not in a virtuous but in a vicious cycle."

Professor Burawoy, of the University of California, Berkeley, said it was necessary to specify the nature of liquid modernity, and that we needed a theory of capitalism for this.

"The first port of call is of course Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Communist

Manifesto and all their writings. That was a brilliant theory of capitalism – it may have been wrong but it was brilliant in its truth.

"So we need to update the Communist Manifesto and all that Marx and Engels wrote. I think the way to do that is to bring in another central European sociologist, my favourite, I think, after Professor Bauman – Karl Polanyi. His *The Great Transformation*, written in 1944, a century after the Communist Manifesto, was in fact a revision of – or if you will, a transformation of – that original document."

He said that Polanyi suggested that there were two waves of marketisation, in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first led to a counter-reaction with the formation of trade unions and the second led to state action, such as the New Deal in the US, fascism in Europe and Stalinism in the USSR, as the state tried to seal itself from the global market.

"Now we are in a third wave and the question that we have to ask is: 'In what form will this third wave be resisted? – will there be a counter movement?' Polanyi assumed that there would have to be a counter-movement if the market moves too far in one direction. But we now know – and this is the importance of Professor Bauman's work – in fact there is no obvious counter-movement."

However, as a potential inspiration for



Photos: Professor Burawoy at the plenary address

All photos by Chris Doyle

counter-movements, he drew upon Polanyi's concept of 'fictitious commodities' which have no value when they are subjected to unrestricted exchange in the marketplace.

One of these was labour, because in an unregulated market, labourers were so poorly paid that they couldn't work effectively.

"Labourers may actually not be able to survive on the lower wages that they make – wages that may fall below the level of subsistence, something that Marx and Engels did not anticipate."

The same could be said about land: "Once land is subject to unregulated exchange, the capacity to sustain human existence falls. Again I don't have to give you examples of how that applies to the world today.

"Money too, when it is commodified – we have seen all the forms of the ways in which money is commodified over the last few years. Starting with Wall Street, the different ways in which monies are created and subject to market forces itself actually under-mines the capacity of the economy to function.

"But there is a fourth fictitious commodity that Karl Polanyi did not actually consider, and that is knowledge. I think it is the case today that as the production of knowledge becomes privatised, particularly in the form of the university, so that knowledge becomes instrumentalised, turned into an asset by those who have the money to pay for it and in that way redirects the character and form of the content of knowledge."

He pointed to reaction in these areas – with labour there was a struggle for immigrants' rights in the US, for instance. Many of the struggles in India, in China, in Latin America were about a question of the expropriation of land. The Occupy Wall Street movement was a reaction to the commodification of money "and the indebtedness which it produces in a large proportion of society."

"What do they all have in common? Well I think they all have in common the recognition of Professor Bauman's claim

about the separation of politics and power. The lack of faith anymore in liberal democracy and the constitution of politics at the local level.

"I think that this spreads across the world – each of these movements have their national inflections, but nonetheless they do have this common spirit: the recognition that politics no longer can be carried on in the old way.

"I happen to live in Oakland [California] which has one of the more interesting of the occupy movements. Many of my students have exited the university and joined the Occupy movement. I try to get them to come back but they are lost souls. They are so dedicated to the new ways – and what is so interesting about these movements? – it is their liquid character.

"Liquid modernity requires liquid protest: gone today, comes back tomorrow. It flows around the metropolis, undefeated, silent at times, noisy at others. But liquid modernity requires and actually shapes liquid protest.

"First and foremost we have to have a new theory of social movements. I don't know what it is like in the UK, but in the United States there is a mafia that controls social movement theory. It is the political process model and has made great contributions. But it is built up on the civil rights movement and the French Revolution. It is

the idea of collective actors organising resources, framing themselves in the right sort of way and mainly contesting against the state. That theory is just not going to work for protest movements today.

"We need new theories to adapt to liquid modernity. We need new theories that recognise the significance of these social movements that are taking place all over the world.

"I think we also have to have a sociology of ourselves, a reflexive sociology that puts at the centre the education system and in particular the university. We have to recognise that the university can no longer be seen as apart from society – that it is in society. The boundaries are now fluid and that has implications.

"If the university is in society, what forces in the wider society are going to grab hold of it and direct it? What we are seeing in this country in particular is the withdrawal of public funds and what this has meant for students, for fees, for different subjects. The whole legacy of the RAE exercises.

"The question is: where will sociology lie? Will it try and join the crowd? Or will it seek other audiences? A sociology seeking an audience in broader publics to counteract what is, in the end, a very close linkage between finance capital and the state.

"I think we have, as sociologists in particular, the capacity to understand these relationships, but also our very livelihood is at stake. So we have a genuine interest in pursuing relationships with publics beyond university.

"If not, then we may no longer exist. It was always urgent but it becomes every day more urgent.

"It is very difficult to get the sociological message across to publics. It requires deep embeddedness in those publics. Deep and patient engagement with them. Public sociology is not instantaneous, fluid sociology. It requires patience, endurance, imagination and above all a collective embrace of this project. Individuals cannot do it themselves. It has to be a collective project."



'A fundamental shift in

Professor Stephen Ackroyd spoke about a major shift in the economic system: the adoption by major companies of a financialised model of operation where more profits were paid to shareholders and production was located in developing countries.

He called this "a shift in our economy and society of a fundamental kind. It is comparable to the industrial revolution which, in many respects, it reverses.

"After nearly 200 years of industrial capitalism in this country we are reverting to something which doesn't depend on industry, which I think is a fateful thing because there is no dominant power in the history of the modern world without a substantial manufacturing base.

"I know that many people think that the transition to a services economy is inevitable. On the contrary, I don't think it is. Clearly other economies in Europe and throughout the world have substantial manufacturing sectors of their economy and continue to do those things. Not so in the UK, and increasingly in the US, and I think it's a perilous situation for us to be in.

"We're talking about the transition from managerial capitalism, capitalism in which accumulation took place substantially on the basis of money productively invested in capitalist enterprises – quintessentially manufacture. The investment of that money, and of course labour in that activity, produced surpluses which could then be used for other purposes.

"What we're looking at now is a shift, at least in western economies – and we're talking principally about the US and the UK – in which there has been a substantial specialisation in the division of labour such that we're now looking at an entirely financialised economy.

"We have a substantial slice of the manufacturing circuit of capital, the productive circuit of capital, relocated in China and south east Asia, and much less in the US and almost nothing in the UK, such that our economy is driven by other activities entirely – as I say, finance capital."

Professor Ackroyd, of Lancaster University, said he had studied the evolution of large UK companies over the last few decades.

"Something in excess of 40 per cent of British people worked in manufacturing for nearly 150 years. After 1970 the graph went precipitately down and it's now around 10 per cent.

"The British economy [before 1970] actually had a higher proportion of the workforce in manufacturing than Germany at the height of its militarisation or Japan in its post-war boom.

"I did a calculation a couple of years ago



looking at the top 200 firms and found that only around 15 of companies in the FTSE 100 were moving away in terms of size and becoming global companies. The rest of them, the next 185, are actually shrinking over the years in average value.

"Making allowances for inflation, we're finding the average size of the rest of these companies is reducing. Why is that? Actually because substantial value is being extracted and redistributed to shareholders. It's not as if there are millions of people out there who are shareholders – there are highly concentrated shareholders who are getting the lion's share of any such value redistributions.

"But to see it as somehow an impersonal process of globalisation producing changes in policy seems to me to be fundamentally wrong. This is driven by the self-interest of particular factions and particular stakeholders in these major firms.

"Financialisation seems to have actually caused the flight of capital from the UK manufacturing industry. And it's fairly simple, isn't it? For a good return on manufacturing you've got to have a relatively long time-horizon, you've got to invest in research and development of new products, you've got to invest fairly heavily in the machine tools and factory space you need.

"Some of our choicest manufacturing companies have fallen to French and German buyers. British Oxygen ought now to be called German Oxygen. Pilkington's ought to be called Japanese Glass, so the list goes on.

"What a tragedy. I'm oppressed by the engineering environment – I walk around, I

can't see a British car on British roads – plenty of French ones, plenty of German ones." Even two successful British firms, British Aerospace and Rolls Royce, were "protected by a golden share the government owns and they cannot be taken over and they're substantially subsidised by the defence procurement budget."

He said a type of company, which he called the 'capital extensive firm', had appeared. These were firms that "remain geographically located in this country but the substantial proportion of their activities is now overseas and they're dragging products across the world and marketing them in the UK."

This new type of company was spreading and expanding by opening many outlets – what he called "Waltonism" after the family that started the Walmart chain in America.

"That is the kind of company that we're getting, making profits in a capitalist economy that are comparable to the Ford Motor Company in 1930 or so, when it was at its peak of influence.

"Shareholder value is a top priority. It's an extremely effective, highly profitable firm that delivers low-cost but good quality products and is highly flexible in its response to the market.

"Wages, of course, are a source of substantial saving. It's bargaining down the level of wages, it's strongly anti-union and it is, in effect, re-commodifying labour. Its effects on the labour process are to insist on a good deal of versatility from their workforce, multi-tasking teamwork, attributing to the workforce autonomy but, of course, taking away their bargaining power."

t in the UK's economy'

In a joint plenary, Professor Stephen Ackroyd talked about a fundamental shift in the economies of the US and UK, and Professor Rosemary Batt discussed the role of private equity buyouts

Photos

Opposite page: Professor Stephen Ackroyd during the plenary
Below: Professor Rosemary Batt

Professor Rosemary Batt, in the joint plenary address, entitled 'Austerity for some? The impact of financialization on management and labor' described the system of private equity buyouts.

She said that it was a completely unregulated form in America. "There's no transparency – the private equity and hedge funds are not required to report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, so we have no knowledge really of what they actually do," she said. "It's very hard to get data and so all of this is a kind of challenge from a research point of view."

She said that private equity buyouts were first introduced under the name of 'leveraged buyouts' in the 1980s, and had led to financial scandals. They disappeared until the late 1990s, when they re-emerged "with a clean face, called private equity". Now eight million Americans worked in firms controlled financially by private equity firms.

Professor Batt, of Cornell University, US, said that typically in a buyout a private equity firm would provide two per cent of the buying cost, with around 30 per cent put up by large institutional investor partners and the rest borrowed, using the target public company's assets as collateral.

Once the public company had been bought it would be moved out of the public sphere and made private, where there were fewer restrictions on what the new owners could do.

Private equity firms would then take out more loans, placing the burden of repayment on the company they had bought, use these to pay themselves profits and go on to make more deals. Often they would sell the company, now burdened with debt, within a few years.

As an example of how private equity firms worked, she cited Mervyns store chain in the US, which had employed around 25,000 staff.

In 2004 it was taken private in a private equity buyout. The equity company carried out some operational improvements and closed some underperforming stores. Then it sold off the buildings in which Mervyns stores were based, and had Mervyns rent them back from the new owners.



"In this case the private equity sold off the property, paid itself back in the proceeds from the property – we call it asset stripping – and then made the Mervyns stores pay rent on property they used to own."

But the extra cost of renting their stores put strain on the company, and as its financial position worsened, its creditors refused to provide merchandise. Mervyns went bankrupt in 2008 owing \$64 million. The private equity firm was not liable for any debts, and had made a profit from the transaction.

Professor Batt pointed to a study, with 20 years of data, which found that "the annual bankruptcy rate of private equity firms is twice as high as publicly traded firms." Bankrupted companies included the one that ran *Reader's Digest* magazine.

Studies also found that firms owned by private equity lost more jobs than those publicly traded, and provided a 20 per cent lower yield on investment than publicly traded companies. Also, "there are a number of ways in which these companies use various tax avoidance strategies to shift

the burden to tax payers."

In the EU, private equity firms were much more regulated. "There's this Alternative Investment Fund Managers directive, which was two years in the making, and was finally passed last November.

"It will require by 2013 that each nation-state implement the directive. And it is strong in many ways. It has serious reporting requirements, audit requirements, limits on debt leverage and a number of other provisions. By contrast, there's almost no change that's occurred in the US regulations except in minimum reporting requirements.

"And one of the main reasons for this is that there was enormous political mobilisation by the trade unions across Europe – that was a really well-coordinated activity that attacked private equity and brought these cases forward. So I think it is a combination of social movement and the research that we carry out that can have an impact.

"By contrast, the unions in the US were compromised because they had pension funds where they were investing in private equity as well as trying to represent their members. And so they could not launch the kind of political movement that they did in the EU, and we really see the differences as a result.

"The power of sociology and the power of organisation studies is tracing the labour process, showing the mechanisms through which value extraction occurs, and providing these rich cases that you put out there – and people are outraged because they see the mechanisms, they see the impact on consumers, on workers, on pensioners.

"So I think we have a great role to play in tracing those linkages between the financial side and the productive side and the organisational stuff."

She said that a large study into the use of private equity firms in US healthcare was now being carried out.

"We can show the impact on patients of this kind of financial model. I think that's the kind of research we really need to do."

First BSA Distinguished Service Award is given

Various awards were given at the conference. President John Brewer awarded the BSA's first Distinguished Service Award to Professor Jennifer Platt. He told the audience: "We recognised there was a need for an annual award and the BSA has inaugurated a Distinguished Service Award, eligible to all members of the BSA in current standing."

"This year we had six nominations and a shortlist of three: Grace Davie, from the University of Exeter, whose contribution to the sociology of religion is outstanding; Jeffrey Weeks from LSBU, whose contribution to the sociology of sexualities is world-class; and Jennifer Platt of the University of Sussex, whose work on social class and methods is world-known."

"Jennifer is remarkable for having spent all her career at Sussex – as Professor Emeritus from 2002. She has been President of the BSA, an Honorary Vice-President, she has edited the journal *Sociology* and she is now one of a rare group of people who is entitled to honorary membership as a result of 50 years' continuous payment of the subscriptions."

"She has been a member of the Executive Committee of the International Sociological Association and is a Vice-President of Publications."

Professor Brewer said she was famous for her *Affluent Worker* studies with John Goldthorpe, David Lockwood and Frank Bechhofer, and was also renowned for her work on the history of sociology, on research methods, and social divisions.

Professor Platt said: "I would like to say that, as John rightly points out, I have had quite a long career in sociology, and I would like to add that over that time the BSA has done distinguished service for me."

As the award recipient, she will give a public lecture at the October presidential event.

Professor Rose Barbour thanked Professor Brewer, whose term of office has now ended. "This is the end to John's term as a BSA President and his last conference," she said. "The title of our conference may well be the Age of Austerity but I think we all agree that the BSA and the discipline as a whole have been immeasurably enriched by John's presidency."

The Philip Abrams Memorial prize for the best sole-authored first book in sociology was awarded to two sociologists this year, Dr Zowie Davy and Dr Michael Skey.

The prize was established by the BSA in honour of Professor Abrams, whose work



Professor Jennifer Platt receiving her award from Professor John Brewer

photo: Chris Doyle

contributed substantially to sociology and social policy research in Britain.

Dr Davy and Dr Skey shared the prize of £1,000. Dr Davy, of the University of Lincoln, wrote *Recognizing Transsexuals: Personal, Political and Medicolegal Embodiment* (Ashgate), which draws on interviews with transsexuals at various stages of transition. See page 34 for more details.

Dr Davy has also worked on a project looking at the implementation of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and was the Co-editor of *Bound and Unbound: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Gender and Sexualities*, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Dr Michael Skey, of the University of East London, wrote *National Belonging and Everyday Life: The Significance of Nationhood in an Uncertain World* (Palgrave Macmillan). See page 35 for more details.

Dr Skey has published work in a range of journals including *Nations and Nationalism*, *The Sociological Review* and the *Journal of Cultural Geography*.

The other authors shortlisted for the prize were: Dr Michaela Benson, of the University of Bristol, who wrote *The British in Rural France: Lifestyle Migration and the Ongoing Quest for a Better Way of Life*, and Dr Paul Thomas, University of Huddersfield, who wrote *Youth, Multiculturalism and Community Cohesion*.

Also awarded were the SAGE Prizes for Innovation and Excellence, given annually to one paper from each of the BSA's journals judged best to represent innovation or excellence in the field. The winners receive £250 of SAGE books or a free individual subscription to a journal. This year's winners were:

- *Cultural Sociology*: Andrew Smith's paper 'Concrete freedom'
- *Sociological Research Online*: Maria Pérez's and Tony Stanley's 'Ethnographic intimacy'
- *Sociology*: Carol Smart's paper 'Families, secrets and memories' and Henry Yeomans' 'What did the British temperance movement accomplish?'
- *Work, employment and society*: Clare Lyonette's, Gayle Kaufman's and Rosemary Crompton's 'We both need to work'.

Also, the Director of the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, Professor Malcolm Williams, and Professor Geoff Payne of Newcastle University, were awarded this year's BSA/C-SAP National Award for Excellence in Teaching Sociology. This was given for their work over the last decade in researching the problems of teaching quantitative methods in sociology and developing new pedagogy in this area.

The award of £500 was set up to raise the profile of sociological learning and teaching in universities.

'Judge us by our public value and not impact'

Sociology has a public value that goes beyond any measurement of its impact, the outgoing President of the BSA, Professor John Brewer, told its 61st annual conference.

In his plenary address, entitled 'From the public impact to the public value of sociology,' he said: "Sociology has normative public value by making people aware of themselves as comprising a society.

"By helping in the development and dissemination of key social values that make society possible – social sensibilities like trust, empathy, altruism, tolerance, compromise, compassion, social solidarity and sense of belonging – sociology assists in society's ongoing betterment and improvement," he told an audience of 400.

"Sociology helps us understand the conditions which both promote and undermine these values and to identify the sorts of public policies, behaviours and relationships that are needed in culture, the market and the state to ameliorate their absence and restore and repair them.

"Sociology is a public good in its own right, for nothing else than it is a moral sentiment, a sympathetic imagination, which makes society aware of its social nature."

His belief in sociology's moral power was distinct from the argument that education improved reasoning and mental ability.

"I find myself in disagreement therefore with Stefan Collini, who argues scholarship proffers primarily cognitive achievements not direct moral ones. The humanities do not necessarily turn practitioners into better people, he argues, and practitioners' personal morality can be abominable and their political views deplorable.

"I am referring instead to the moral sentiment and sympathetic imagination that makes social sensibility possible within society generally, despite the fact that some people's lapse of personal morality may mean a lack of tolerance. In addressing, therefore, the question of what makes society possible I am dealing inherently with moral questions, not cognitive ones – moral questions that privilege sociology's public value as well as its cognitive accomplishments.

"Tolerance for other people may not always be the outcome of a sociological education, but this is a measure of the failure of people's personal morality."

Sociology was "better placed than humanities and natural sciences to demonstrate the value for society that derives from its teaching as well as its research."



Professor John Brewer

Photo – Chris Doyle

In an answer to a question from the audience, he said: "What I have been trying to suggest is that sociology has a moral role to play – it is not just about the cognitive achievements of sociology teaching and research, it is about communicating its moral sentiment.

"Does it make sociology like theology and moral philosophy? Am I an evangelical preacher? Well, I do feel evangelical in that I believe sociology does have a moral purpose – to make us aware of ourselves as constituting a society, assisting in the reproduction of society and enabling us to deal with this series of wicked problems that the 20th century has bequeathed the 21st.

"Does that mean I don't see sociology as a science? Not in the slightest. I go back to 18th century Scotland and suggest moral values can be studied scientifically – that's what Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith are about – it's not a mutually exclusive choice between normative factors and science, and sociology must live this as a constant tension."

He rejected defining sociology by its Impact. "There is something wrong with the principle of Impact. It is feasible but inherently flawed...it is inevitably bound up with marketisation and the audit culture as an ideological project of neoliberalism."

This was not because sociology could not justify itself in economic terms – if this

calculation were done properly, it would "reveal sociology to have even greater price and use value than present calculations enumerate.

"The normative public value of sociology comes in part, therefore, from its engagement with the big issues of future industrial, scientific and economic change in the 21st century – economic sustainability, labour migration, climate change, peace processes, social wellbeing, pollution, the link between demographic shifts and welfare demands, and the like. Scientific, economic, political, industrial, and social changes in the future will be mediated by the capacity of sociology to enable culture, the market and the state to make sense of all these changes."

Professor Brewer, of the University of Aberdeen, spoke about the need to re-examine teaching methods: "I believe that sociology is a vocation – it's life-changing and what this means is that we need to expose our students to the life-changing capacities of an education in sociology. Tired old lectures and examinations and course-work essays don't do that.

"There's a big job ahead for public sociologists to look at the way in which they teach the discipline of sociology to make sure that they convey to their students that it's life-changing and personally transformative. It transforms not just themselves but the way they look at the dispossessed, the other, the marginalised outsider, and I think that an important function is not being fulfilled in the tired old pedagogy that dominates the contemporary university."

Professor Brewer said that sociology in the 21st century would exist and thrive "at the point of tension between four axes that mark its special perspective." He said these were "the representation of people's lived experience, contrasted with abstract analysis; ethical involvement, contrasted with detachment; normative practice, contrasted with science; and public engagement, contrasted with contemplative reflection and thinking-time." Each of these was a continuum where sociologists could place themselves.

• Professor Brewer shared his thoughts at the end of his three-year term of office (he has been succeeded as President by Professor John Holmwood). Professor Brewer's views are expanded in *The Public Value of the Social Sciences: An Interpretative Essay*, to be published by Bloomsbury Academic next year.

Two books share BS

A book by Dr Zowie Davy exploring the lives of transsexuals and the medical and legal issues they encounter was the co-winner of the 2012 Philip Abrams Memorial award.

Dr Davy, a research fellow at the University of Lincoln, wrote *Recognizing Transsexuals: Personal, Political and Medicolegal Embodiment* (Ashgate), based on research for her PhD at Leeds, carried out between 2005-2008. She met and interviewed trans people in Great Britain and followed this up with email correspondence.

"I talked to 24 trans men and trans women at different stages of transition, from those who had just set out on their decision-making process of recognising themselves as transsexual to others who were taking hormones and those who had undergone gender reassignment surgery," she said.

"The interviews lasted between two and three hours and I also used photo elicitation methods in order to get less shielded responses, which I think worked very well.

"Prior to the interview I asked the respondent to dig out some photographs of themselves pre- and post-body modification and to talk about their feelings about their bodies in relation to the metamorphosis of their transition."

In her book she criticises the medical model that assumes that all transgender people want to have genital reconstructive surgery.

"This is not the case and it never has been. However the medico-legal construction of what constitutes a true transsexual claims this, but for many years people have been contesting this, and in the empirical chapters in my book I illustrate these differences.

"One of the starkest differences is between trans men and trans women. Trans men often don't have full genital reconstructive surgery because of the difficulties of the operation due to some of the problems post-operatively. Whereas the pressure for a trans woman to have genital surgery is much more – society can't cope with someone who claims a feminine identity whilst still having a penis. That kind of aesthetic judgement is borne out on trans women's bodies much more. So most trans women feel that to be recognized as women by society means that they cannot have a penis.

"I think there are different pressures on trans men and trans women in relation to their bodily aesthetic.

"I argue that although the law facilitates

Two books were judged joint winners of this year's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize. Network interviews both authors, beginning with Dr Zowie Davy:

this to a degree, the medical establishment also needs to take account of this diversity within the transgender community."

Dr Davy said that in order for a trans person to be prescribed hormones as part of their transition they had to state that they eventually intended to have surgery, even if they didn't want this.

"They have to show that they wish for surgery in order to be diagnosed. So when they go to have their therapy and their psychotherapy they use rehearsed narratives in order to look like the 'true' transsexual in order to get their hormones for their body modification. And they admit to this [to me], although this undermines the medical model on which the diagnosis is based. They negotiate the system in order to

'I argue that medical practitioners often base their understanding of what a true transsexual is on dated understandings of masculinity and femininity'

get what they want.

"Most of the respondents said to me, 'You just go in, say what they want to hear and get your stuff and come out'. Basically, that was it, quite widespread. I don't want to say that they're manipulative because this is a choice based on the system they have to live within.

"I claim in the book there are a few medical practitioners who are approaching transgender from a feminist or postmodern



and perhaps queer perspective. And they are implementing a different way of judging bodily aesthetics of trans people. However, this isn't widespread and perhaps many practitioners are more in line with the empirical data that I show in the book. I argue that they often base their understanding of what a true transsexual is on rather dated understandings of masculinity and femininity."

Dr Davy found arranging the interviews relatively easy. "I belong to some transgender groups anyway so my standing within the community is okay, people weren't in any way put off by me representing these narratives of trans body aesthetics in a book.

"So I had no problem in access – particularly because the focus of the study was completely different to what had been researched before."

Dr Davy has also worked on a project looking at the implementation of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and was the Co-editor of *Bound and Unbound: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Genders and Sexualities*, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. She works in the field of healthcare research generally, examining quality improvement projects in the NHS, and also continues her research into (trans)gender and sexualities.

BSA memorial prize



Dr Michael Skey won the award for his work on the sense of belonging of the ethnic majority of white English people, and their anxieties about minorities:

said Dr Skey. “Also, there’s a sense of ‘I belong here more than you, therefore I am allowed to make judgements about you, whose behavioural activities might be slightly different’.”

He also found a sense of insecurity among them. “They are witnessing other people in what they perceive to be their nation, and that is leading to a sense of anxiety.

“Over the past 20 years there’s been a shift in the way people are perceiving what’s going on in places like Britain. And these arguments also apply in other parts of Western Europe, in the States and in Australia as well. Increasingly, that’s articulated in relation to Islam.”

However, Dr Skey found that there was also a great deal of ambivalence and sometimes confusion in the way that people discussed these issues. People in the focus groups could express their hostility to cultural or ethnic diversity while at the same time acknowledging friendships with people from minorities.

“One of the things I talk about in the book is this idea that people would at one moment say things like, ‘Well you know, I’m great friends with so-and-so’, or ‘I play football with this guy and he’s a Muslim’. And then the talk would move on and then they would say something like, ‘Well, you know, they are building that mosque down the road, and that’s just outrageous – this is a Christian country, they shouldn’t be allowed to do that’.”

Dr Skey said of this phenomenon: “Where the ‘other’ is seen to be managed or manageable, their difference can be welcomed, and you can celebrate that. But where they are seen to be a threat to the dominant group’s position, then they are criticised and attacked. That was really interesting.

“There were also moments in some of the groups where there would be a big

20-minute rant against Muslims, and then someone would say, ‘Well, hang on a minute, these are just people, like us, they are born in this country and they work hard, most of them, and there are problematic English people in the same way that there are problematic Muslims and it is not really helpful for us to just constantly harangue particular minorities’. And that was quite reassuring.”

The wider literature suggests that many of the more antagonistic attitudes towards minorities are the preserve of a pathologised white working class. However, Dr Skey found that while working-class groups were more likely to use overtly racist language, middle-class groups often expressed similar beliefs, but in much more guarded or nuanced terms.

“I went to a working men’s club in Middlesbrough and spoke to a bunch of guys who were welders and the like, and they were the most overtly racist of all, and they didn’t seem to care about what I thought of them – they were pretty brutal in the way they expressed themselves. But at the same time, you could see echoes of their views in a number of the middle-class groups, but they said it in much more sophisticated language and were much more concerned about how they were perceived.”

Dr Skey was also interested in finding out why the participants thought there had been an increase in flag-flying and other visible displays of national pride in England over the past 20 years. “I asked my respondents ‘what’s going on here?’ and they said, pretty much as a group, that things are changing in this country and that English people are having to reassert their sense of identity in relation to perceived challenges from minority groups.”

He went on: “I think that by studying the majority – those who tend to take their place within the nation for granted – we can begin to understand why national identities might matter to particular groups and why perceived challenges to more established social formations are often so passionately resisted, notably during times of uncertainty or change.”

Dr Skey, who carried out the research for his PhD while at the LSE, is now working on two complementary projects examining the experiences and attitudes of young people from ethnic minorities born and brought up in England, and the lifestyles of British people who now live overseas.

Although multiculturalism has been the subject of intense study by academics and policy-makers in the past 20 years, their focus has mainly been on ethnic minorities. But the prize-winning work by Dr Michael Skey tackles the issue from another angle, by examining the views of an often overlooked group: the ethnic majority.

In *National Belonging and Everyday Life* (Palgrave) Dr Skey, of the University of East London, studied the views and experiences of white English people born and raised in the country, based on 21 focus groups he supervised. Those involved were of all ages and classes, and lived across the country, from Carlisle to Devon and Kent.

Dr Skey was investigating whether members of the ethnic majority articulated a more settled sense of belonging to the nation and defined themselves in relation to people from ethnic minorities.

He found that in their responses to questions such as ‘what do you like and dislike about living here?’, ‘what’s changed in this country?’ and ‘what are the main challenges we face?’ they said they belonged to England more than other ethnic groups.

“I found that those who are white and born and bred in England do claim a more secure sense of belonging, and also entitlements that flow from that, such as material things like housing or welfare,”



Violent Fathering and the Risks to Children: The Need for Change

– Lynne Harne

Policy Press
216 pages
£21.99 (pbk)
ISBN 9781847422118 (pbk)

The aim of this book, according to the authors words, is to “look at the harmful impacts of domestically violent fathering in heterosexual relationships and underline the urgent need for change in policy and practice to improve the safety and wellbeing of the children concerned” (p1).

This aim is achieved by first offering the reader a brief introduction to the issue of domestic violence, clearly defining the phenomenon and critiquing the current government’s gender-neutral definition. Such an introduction sets the book in context from the outset and makes it accessible to any reader with an interest in domestic abuse, regardless of their level of knowledge.

The first chapter is an exposition of father violence, drawing on a range of existing research to evidence discussion, and using quotes powerfully. In doing so, this chapter offers the perspectives of children themselves, so often hidden from debates about what is in their best interests, even though research shows that even the most vulnerable children consider participation positively and value the opportunity to be listened to. Such omissions can lead to the exclusion of children’s own versions and give more space to the views of adults and thus practice may be shaped accordingly.

This book keeps the voice and needs of children central to the ensuing argument about current policies on violent fathering and the need for change. The development of such policies are discussed in chapter two, with an interesting historical overview,

before the author moves on in chapter three to examine common theoretical perspectives on causation, which is essential to any consideration of policy and practice.

Perhaps the most important element of this book is the author’s empirical research with violent fathers, the first UK study looking specifically at violent fathers’ perspectives of their fathering and thus of great significance (outlined and discussed in chapter four).

Whilst the findings from this research do not appear to offer anything new in terms of our understanding of violent fathering (i.e. fathers minimise and deny abusive behaviour, their discourse is rooted in their right to have contact with children rather than children’s rights to live free from violence, and contact is used to continue abuse of mothers), the findings support existing knowledge from the unique perspective of the perpetrator.

This book is then an important addition to literature about domestic violence and timely in that discourses on engaging and involving fathers in the lives of children have increased in recent years. The Ofsted report ‘Ages of Concern’ evaluated serious case reviews undertaken from 2007-11 and concluded that there was a lack of attention to the role of fathers and what was known about them, leaving fathers marginalised and invisible to professionals as either a risk or a resource.

Harne argues that it is important that violent fathers are seen as a risk and that

Book

appropriate risk assessment is considered along with the rehabilitation of violent fathers before child contact is granted, and this is discussed by her in detail and to great effect in chapters five and six.

Overall this book is well written in an informal, accessible way, and is interesting and informative and adds weight to arguments such as Hester’s (‘The three planet model’, *British Journal of Social Work* 41, 5, 2011) that current UK policy concerning domestic violence and parenting is contradictory and needs to change in order to keep children safe.

I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in domestic violence but particularly to current and future policy makers and practitioners. For this reason it will be on my reading list for students on the MA in ‘Professional development: the dynamics of domestic violence’ at Worcester, who will be future key domestic violence workers.

■ Dr Ruth Jones

Institute of Health and Society
University of Worcester

Offending Women: Power, Punishment, and the Regulation of Desire

– Lynne A Haney

University of California Press
304 pages
£41.95 hbk (£17.95 pbk)
ISBN 9780520261907 (hbk)

This is ostensibly an eye-opening journey into the reality of prison for women. It compares the experience of women with babies at two penal institutions: ‘Visions’ and ‘Alliance’. However, Haney comes from a sociology of welfare perspective which roots all this in debates within feminism, gender studies and critical theory. NYU colleague David Garland is fulsomely approving on the cover, but I guess Raewyn Connell would not appreciate being referred to by her former gender several times.

The two institutions share a therapeutic, community-based ethos in north California. The talk of yoga and spa days

might have the Right foaming but here they are seen as part of the attempts to wean the women off state dependency or away from dangerous desires. Haney first visited Alliance in 1992 when a grad student at Berkeley. It was unlike other criminal justice institutions she’d seen, it “almost felt homey” (p1) perhaps because it was for juveniles. When she visits the less homey, but still unprisonlike, Visions 10 years later it describes itself as a “therapeutic community”.

Haney states, “these institutions were part of a feminized arm of the penal system – staffed exclusively by women for women” (p3). Here comparison might have

As Fincham et al note, one of the key problems faced when studying suicide, is that the principal informant is dead (p1). It is perhaps for this reason that sociological work on suicide has tended to be dominated by quantitative methods.

In contrast, the research presented in *Understanding Suicide* opens up a number of exciting, innovative and insightful new approaches to explaining and accounting for suicide. The book is a significant accomplishment, being both extremely accessible as well as theoretically and methodologically rich.

The research discussed is a successful, mixed-methods study based on both qualitative and quantitative analysis of 100

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Reviews of recent books in social science and sociology

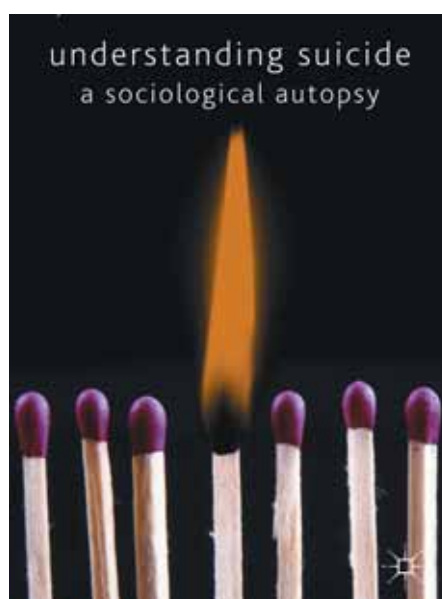
suicide case files. This methodology is based on the widely used psychological autopsy approach to the study of suicide. However, while psychological autopsy studies tend to privilege clinical psychiatric explanations for suicide, the sociological autopsy championed by Fincham et al focuses on unpicking the multitude of social factors surrounding suicide. Social factors, particularly relationships, are examined entirely via

helped – the UK has mixed sex staffing as have many US facilities.

She notes the possibilities for resistance within the discourse and the prison setting but is not romantic about the possibilities even where the staff saw themselves as a real alternative to the rest of the penal estate.

As she notes: “these state projects [...] often claim to be empowerment projects, designed to teach independence or enhance self-reliance. But, in reality, they end up teaching the women the depth and parameters of their new disenfranchisement” (p209).

The staff too have their disentanglements and desires yet disavow the gender-specific



Understanding Suicide: A Sociological Autopsy

– Ben Fincham, Susanne Langer, Jonathan Scourfield, Michael Shiner

Palgrave Macmillan
224 pages
£55 hbk
ISBN: 9780230580923

the documents contained in the case files: suicide notes, witness statements, reports from GPs, psychiatrists and coroners. The result is an intensely rich, and often moving, analysis of the construction of death, identity and social relationships through the creation and subsequent reading of these artefacts. The examination of suicide case notes itself is not novel, however the use of the files to analyse social relationships and socio-cultural context is.

The data chapters explore the social context of suicide and the social construction of suicide case notes from a number of different angles. Each of these is well grounded theoretically, drawing on diverse sources including sociology,

psychoanalysis, anthropology and the study of social movements. Chapters four and five comprise a detailed examination of the case files, both as ‘sites of identity creation’ and as routes through which social relationships are maintained or created. Throughout, attention is paid to the ways in which agency is exercised through the documents studied.

This analysis is nuanced, careful and wide-ranging and includes: examining the ways by which the deceased attempt to exert agency from ‘beyond the grave’ through suicide notes; how professionals negotiate responsibility and professional identities in medical reports; and how the bereaved construct identities and relationships in their statements. Chapter six widens the analytic lens somewhat, examining suicide as a repertoire of action. This is a particularly successful adaptation of a concept originally used in studies of social movements, serving to locate the individual practice of suicide securely within wider socio-cultural contexts.

Chapters seven and eight step further back from the individual, presenting broader arguments achieved through quantitative analysis of the case files, alongside official suicide statistics. Through this, several sociologically grounded explanations are given for suicide across distinct stages of the life-course. Finally, in the concluding chapter, the authors raise important challenges to existing suicide prevention policies. One of the more striking is the observation that suicide rates among men in mid-life are more frequent than ‘youth suicide’, despite the tendency to focus in research and policy on the latter.

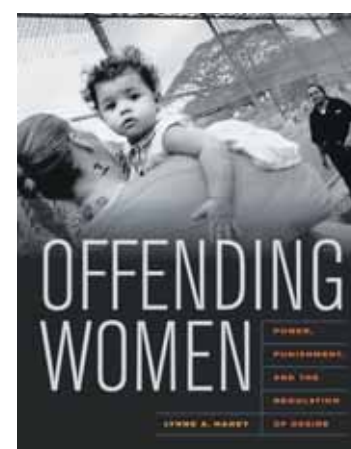
Overall, *Understanding Suicide* represents a wonderful example of what sociology can achieve: being methodologically innovative and rigorous, theoretically rich and challenging, as well as maintaining direct relevance and utility to policy-makers and practitioners working in suicide prevention.

■ **Dr Amy Chandler**
Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
University of Edinburgh

nature of their situation or that of their charges. That is a specific denial of the social. Whilst resistance was difficult the governance of dependency could be undermined by solidarity and a politics of rights but it was difficult to organise against the governance of desire.

On penal reform Haney cautions against a one-size-fits-all policy. She rightly seeks to stay true to the voices of the women but we probably still learn more about her interests and current theoretical debates.

■ **Nic Groombridge**
St Mary's University College
Twickenham





Yvette Taylor is Professor in Social and Policy Studies and Head of the Weeks Centre for Social and Policy Research, LSBU.

Her most recent book, based on ESRC funded research, is *Fitting Into Place? Class and Gender Geographies and Temporalities* (Ashgate, 2012). Other books include *Working-Class Lesbian Life: Classed Outsiders* (Palgrave, 2007) and *Lesbian and Gay Parenting: Securing Social and Educational Capital* (Palgrave, 2009), as well as edited collections including *Classed Intersections: Spaces, Selves, Knowledges* (Ashgate, 2010).

Professor Taylor is currently conducting an ESRC project 'Making space for queer identifying religious youth' (2011-13) and is principal investigator on an ESRC seminar series 'Critical diversities@the intersection: policies, perspectives, practices' (2012-2014). She will organize the 2013 Gender and Education Association international conference with colleagues at the Weeks Centre.

What made you chose your first work, Dorothy E. Smith's *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*?

Feminist commitment! And a sense of endurance in – as well as challenge to – the field of gender studies and higher education more broadly in these recessionary times, when the 'everyday world' is indeed problematic.

This is a book I became more familiar with while doing an MA at the University of York and working on a dissertation about working-class women in higher education, supervised by Professor Stevi Jackson. I'd gone through my undergraduate degree at the University of Edinburgh thinking about the ways that 'working-class' and 'academia' could be talked about and inhabited (or not).

The next book on my list really helped with those thoughts too and I'll come to that... but back to Dorothy Smith – the questions of race, class, gender, and of creating 'feminist standpoints' from the places we inhabit and move through, seemed then – and seem now – very relevant and compelling.

There has been contestation about the danger in essentialising locations and voices, asserting these as entitlements, rather than as situated 'truths'. But this seems an enduring problem to work through, rather than just dismiss as something resolved by another 'wave' of (post)feminism – Angela McRobbie's critique of 'gender mainstreaming', as well as Lisa Adkins' and Clare Hemmings' work, contests this linear mis-fitting of feminisms. I don't want to be saying that this work is a return to a real, proper and more viable feminism, which I think the recent Gender Panel at the BSA 2012 Conference contested while also allowing for a sense of the way that feminist concerns and urgencies echo across time and place.

I've been a part of a few feminist reading groups in different UK and US institutions



and this has posed a question of what kind of feminism are we reading, evaluating and doing in classroom encounters? Who can be the feminist-in-the-classroom and what efforts, labours and recognition come into play here? How do these encounters travel beyond the classroom and where do we locate feminism?

During a Fulbright sponsored research visit to Rutgers, I was lucky enough to participate in a weekly Happiness reading group, where researchers across the career stage were encouraged to present their work-in-progress and to share views on the subject of happiness; how to get it, whether and where it arrives, and what or who sustains this, with the group facilitating its production as well as its disruption.

I've recently been reading Sara Ahmed's work *The Promise of Happiness* which leads me to think that happily or not, the feminist in the classroom cannot often be equally present or an unburdened absence (speaking only for herself). Often there is the weighty expectation that she should take us, 'our feminism', to another level, revealing her feminist approach with her every articulation. I say this as an enduring concern rather than as avoidance.

What about your second choice, Beverley Skeggs *Formations of Class and Gender*?

Well, I'm going to continue with very much 'alive' and present sociologists (at the risk of embarrassment). So, this is the book I really remember grabbing off a shelf as an undergraduate at Edinburgh. I sat down on the library floor and read it there and then, something which rarely happens!

While at Edinburgh I was doing carework, even though I'd 'made it in time' in getting a maintenance grant; it seemed plausible to me that I would continue with a similar kind of work on leaving university as it was something I knew and could do well, where university had felt very unfamiliar and unexpected.

This book made me question – as well as appreciate – these 'cares' as also about class and gender. It gave me a validity in raising (albeit quietly at that point) questions about class in the classroom and the inside-outside academic spaces I occupied. And still occupy.

Questions about class inequalities and feminist subjects (and gaps) are ones followed through, I hope, in *Working-class Lesbian Life: Classed Outsiders*, which was my PhD project at York. *Formations of Class and Gender* was also key in my more recent project on lesbian and gay parenting, which showed that the middle-class 'cares' of some are positioned as responsible and opposed to the 'carelessness' of working-class parents – sexuality complicates the 'success' and 'failure' of these parental stories, and class positions.

Val Gillies' work on *Marginalised Mothers* is also really important in these debates – it is fantastic to be working alongside her at the Weeks Centre, as well as with colleagues such as Tracey Reynolds and Chamion Caballero, who highlight the racialised dimensions of these formations. I'd miss them all on my desert island...

Your third choice is Divya P Tolia-Kelly's *Landscape, Race, Memory: Material Ecologies of Citizenship*

This is a book that came out as I was writing *Fitting Into Place? Class and Gender Geographies and Temporalities* and I was really grateful for it, it's a really vivid account of belonging amongst British Asian women. Engaging with questions of Britishness in calling for attention to landscapes of memory and race, Tolia-Kelly recollects drinking tea and learning the manners and cultures of "quintessential Englishness", via nursery rhymes and C S Lewis stories.

In reading this, alongside interview accounts of working-class and middle-class women inhabiting the post-industrial landscape of the north east of England, and not really feeling present 'then' (in industrial times) or 'now' (in a 'feminised' economy), I was inspired to think through inclusions and exclusions, familiarity and

strangeness, and also the elisions between Britishness and Englishness, apparent in regional dis-identification (and felt personally through my own 'Scottishness').

I think what this book shows is the ways that histories – and futures – are carried. This was important theoretically but also methodologically as I occupied different entry points in researching the north east of England as, for example, 'resident', 'researcher', 'citizen', and in moving to New York in 2010 (as 'foreigner', 'tourist', 'mobile academic').

Your last choice is *Ramona the Brave* by Beverly Cleary, tell us about that?

Well really I would take the whole series of eight books and count these as one choice but *Ramona the Brave* is my favourite. The series is about growing up, femininity, families, sibling rivalry, schooling, friendship and bullies. I recall a whole

section about divorce, smoking and unemployment, as 'bad habits', which I might need to rip out.

But it's about negotiating place and belonging more generally – if the everyday world is problematic, fraught with gender and class inequalities, Ramona offers comfort – and strategies! I used to read this in a public library in Glasgow (which has shut down now, alas). I recently found a copy (accidentally) and re-read meanings into Ramona's friendship with Daisy Kidd, her 'boisterous yet appealing' character, loud activities and, ultimately, her brave triumphs!

And lastly, what luxury item would you take to your desert island?

My luxury item would have to be my (this is contested) cat, Malaise, who lives an independent ('living apart together') life in York. Ramona's cat was called Picky-Picky and Malaise is a much more sensible name.

Professor Taylor's choices:

- 1. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, by Dorothy E. Smith (1987) Open University Press**
- 2. *Formations of Class and Gender*, by Beverley Skeggs (1997) SAGE**
- 3. *Landscape, Race, Memory: Material Ecologies of Citizenship*, by Divya P Tolia-Kelly (2010) Ashgate**
- 4. *Ramona the Brave*, by Beverly Cleary (1982) Puffin/Penguin**


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EXPLORING FAMILIES WITH THE POLICY PRESS



ADULT LIVES: A life course perspective
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Showing public benefit

Abby Day, Giselle Vincett and Sarah-Jane Page, of the Sociology of Religion study group (Socrel), write about the need to demonstrate benefit to the public:

The demonstration and dissemination of Impact has become an increasingly important issue for social science research over the past few years. Organisations which are publicly funded or benefit from having charitable status are expected to give details of how their activities benefit the public. In 2008 the Charity Commission brought in new regulations stating that organisations which sought the advancement of religion and education would now need to demonstrate the public benefit of their activities; prior to this these benefits had been assumed.

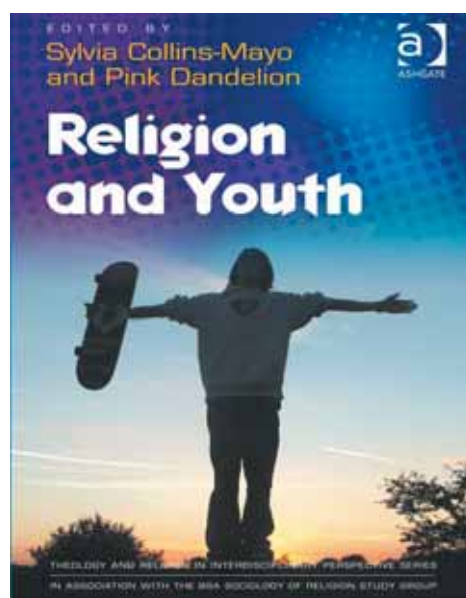
This new regulation was brought in to reinforce the notion that public benefit is of central importance to the concept of charity, providing a clear link between an organisation's activities and purposes and its charitable status.

As a charity, it is important for the BSA to be able to demonstrate its public benefit. Socrel wishes to take this renewed emphasis on public benefit as an opportunity to consider the impact that the study of religion has in the wider public sphere.

The issue of the study of religion and public benefit should be considered both conceptually and practically: what are the existing, and possible public, benefits of the study of religion, and what activities can lead to these benefits?

For a charity such as the BSA it would be insufficient to describe the public benefits of the advancement of sociology without also describing how the BSA's particular activities contribute to this advancement. For example, there is undoubtedly an overall benefit to society from having charities that undertake cancer research, but that general benefit cannot necessarily be claimed by every organisation undertaking that sort of research. What matters is what research the particular organisation is doing, how it does it and what it does with the results.

This increasing need for organisations



focusing on the advancement of social sciences to demonstrate their work's public benefit provides the backdrop to the ways in which Socrel is rethinking and developing how we can develop our framework for public benefit.

First on the agenda is to build partnerships with other national and international professional bodies to shape a consensus around the public benefits of studying religion.

The upcoming joint British Association for the Study of Religions/Socrel panel at the former's annual conference, on September 5-7 at the University of Winchester (*see page 13*) is a case in point. This event directly seeks to shape consensus on the public benefits of the study of religion, and we are also in discussion with counterpart organisations in Europe about how to strengthen ties and common research agendas.

To take such an agenda forward, the Socrel committee has agreed that a reconceptualisation of the roles of committee members is essential. Socrel's committee is, unusually, made up of a Convenor as well as a Chair. While the Convenor's role is based on the everyday running of the study group, the Chair's role is more outward-facing. The Chair is thus well-placed to take on the function of spokesperson and lobbyist, speaking out about the public significance of the sociological study of religion to policy makers and putting research on religion on the agenda of pulse-taking exercises such as the 2011 National Census.

Socrel also has a long-standing and

thriving record of publications associated with the group. Our book series with Ashgate generally publishes a new title annually and highlights the research of members and others prominent in the field on such topics as women and religion (Aune, Sharma, Vincett, 2008), religion and youth (Collins-Mayo and Dandelion, 2010, *see image, left*) and, forthcoming, religion and knowledge (Guest and Arweck, 2012). We are also actively seeking ways to develop a series of books aimed at secondary and first-year undergraduate students which will be open-access and hosted on our website.

Bringing the research of members to new audiences is a study group priority. Socrel is looking at our web presence and how to develop it in order to achieve this aim. Historically, the web presence of professional bodies such as Socrel has been limited to event announcements and a small amount of information hosting (such as resources for postgraduates). Often such websites are infrequently updated and basic to the point of appearing outdated. Socrel hopes to extend our web presence and impact by improving the ways we publicise and disseminate member research, as well as expanding our information hosting and upgrading our website design and functionality.

Building links with user groups is yet another way Socrel has been looking to expand public benefit. Groups such as educators may, for example, find the web-based information hosting useful. To this end, Socrel has been developing our relationship with the Higher Education Academy by hosting and developing resources aimed at secondary school students. An emerging focus in several recent Socrel conferences and events has been on building dialogue and links with user groups. In the case of Socrel, user groups clearly include faith organisations, but also youth workers, social workers, health workers and researchers.

As religion increases its visibility in wider society, an engaged sociological response is required. Often sociology has marginalized religion, but groups like Socrel can go some way in addressing the public benefit question, publicising to a diverse range of audiences the importance of religion in social life, and highlighting the sociological work that is being conducted in this field.

• Dr Abby Day, Chair of Socrel, Dr Giselle Vincett, Publications Officer, Dr Sarah-Jane Page, Convenor.

League tables not valid

Andrea Abbas (right), Paul Ashwin and Monica McLean write on measuring the worth of departments:

We have just reached the end (of the funded period) of a three-year ESRC funded mixed-method investigation exploring whether the different reputations of four English university sociology departments for teaching undergraduates (as measured by league table position) can be substantiated by exploring data on what is learned and taught.

Initially we were motivated by research, including our own pilot studies, which had indicated that the link between reputation and quality might be unjustified and have unfair consequences for students at lower ranked universities. (If we had found that the ranking was an accurate reflection of the quality of provision then the project would have revealed how students, who attend these universities, were being disadvantaged).

To understand the quality of the degrees, we gathered rich data sets from four different departments in four universities which we called Community, Diversity, Prestige and Selective to reflect their status. The departments in Community and Diversity have been regularly rated in the bottom third of the major UK higher education league tables and those in Prestige and Selective in the top third. Students in these departments nearly all studied some modules from sociology-related social sciences but Selective and Community were more mixed with criminology, social policy or politics.

Working closely with academic colleagues and students in each of the universities, we have generated and are analysing the following data: 97 biographical interviews with first-year students; 31 three-year student case studies; 16 interviews with teachers and key informants; 12 videos of seminar teaching; comparisons of students' work from each year; curricular and departmental documents; statistical data; national and international policy documents; and a student survey (765). These data sets allow us to explore the question of the quality of university education in complex ways.

Findings indicate that league tables are



not valid measures of the quality of undergraduate courses because they misleadingly oversimplify the complexity of a high-quality undergraduate education: specifically they offer no indication of students' engagement with academic knowledge.

Qualitative and quantitative data all suggest that personal transformation through sociological knowledge is key to understanding what students get out of their education. In all four universities the case study students report being changed by the sociological knowledge they encountered. They chose their degrees on the basis of wanting to understand themselves and others better and their hope of working with people, usually in the public sector. By the third year most students had been changed in unanticipated ways by the discipline: they were more committed to sociology and they wanted to use their knowledge to improve society, particularly for the disadvantaged.

It is arguable that the 31 case study students who volunteered to participate by being interviewed over three years provided an optimistic picture of students' relationship with academic knowledge. However, our survey of 765 students also indicated the importance of engagement with academic knowledge for evaluating the quality of provision. Students' ratings of their engagement with sociological knowledge is significantly related to whether they claim to have developed skills attractive to employers while at university; and high engagement with academic knowledge and high ratings of employability skills are both significantly related to experiences of good teaching.

Our survey, which was partly developed

from the qualitative work, challenges league table hierarchies by exploring this broader transformation that university students claim to be going through. There are strengths and weaknesses across all four institutions.

Statistically significant differences provide strong evidence for the complexity of quality and the fallacy of simplistic league table hierarchies. For example, Diversity and Community students rated their teaching higher than those at Prestige and felt they had more enhanced employability skills than those at Prestige and Selective. Selective and Diversity students felt they had learnt more than those at the other universities (engagement with academic knowledge) but Diversity students were less likely to feel they had developed an understanding of and empathy with a wide range of people than those at other universities.

The survey results are not accounted for by students in different institutions having different expectations: the qualitative interviews indicate cross-institutional consistency about what constituted good teaching. In addition videos of teaching and analysis of students' work suggest a great deal of similarity in what students and teachers are doing and expect to do.

Our complex and rich data sets are relevant to current government policy, the new funding regime, the value of sociological knowledge, and learning and teaching in universities. For example, it is clear from our findings that any decrease in sociology departments would be a great loss to society because sociological knowledge transforms students into graduate-citizens who can empathise with others. They feel they understand the causes and consequences of injustice and in different ways they appear to have the hope, optimism and energy to work towards a fairer society.

Moreover, if this loss is concentrated in lower status universities it would be unjust: sociology is 'powerful knowledge' that needs to be distributed equally. The findings substantiate a critique which suggests that league table hierarchies reproduce inequality, but more importantly they show what is at stake if disciplines like sociology are diminished.

• Dr Andrea Abbas, Teesside University (co-investigator), Dr Paul Ashwin, Lancaster University (co-investigator), and Professor Monica McLean, University of Nottingham (principal investigator). Further details of the project can be found at www.pedagogicequality.ac.uk

Linking with Palestine

Rachel Cohen, Nickie Charles and Nicola Pratt write about attending a workshop in Palestine:

For two years sociologists and political scientists associated with Warwick's Centre for the Study of Women and Gender have visited Birzeit University in Palestine as part of a British Academy funded network, 'Reconceptualising gender: transnational perspectives'. The network members seek to develop normal academic discourse with Palestinian scholars, who find international collaboration difficult due to the Israeli occupation, by attending a workshop where gender scholars can share their work.

Attending a workshop in Palestine is unlike attending one anywhere else. Getting there is not easy. Israel controls all entry points into the West Bank and academics can be refused entry if, on questioning by Israeli immigration, it emerges that the reason for their visit is to go to a Palestinian university. Even saying that you intend to visit Palestine can mean that you are refused entry as highlighted by the recent 'flytilla' protests.

So when we entered Israel, despite the legitimacy conferred by our British Academy funding, we each had 'addresses' of where we were 'staying' in Jerusalem, and none of us mentioned our hotel bookings in the West Bank town of Ramallah. We left behind laptops and email-enabled phones (limiting the material available to security screening) and packed guidebooks and bikinis, the accoutrements of tourism. We breathed a collective sigh of relief when we emerged from customs without enduring the three hours of questioning a project member experienced the previous year.

Even for relatively privileged British academics, a visit to Birzeit University provides a small taste of the micro-social and political processes of life under occupation: the feeling of being monitored, the dread of not being allowed through state-controlled barriers (customs, checkpoints, road-blocks), a lack of autonomy, and the need to dissemble.

The workshop itself was fascinating. Our Birzeit colleagues, based at the Institute of Women's Studies, spoke about: Palestinian women's NGOs; victims of the geographical split of the Palestinian territory between the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the experiences of the wives and mothers of political prisoners, who are themselves metaphorically and



Professor Charles and Dr Pratt at the wall

sometimes literally imprisoned by constraints on their movement that make visiting incarcerated family members almost impossible; the pressures on Palestinian universities as a result of European and North American donor-promoted neo-liberal policies (pressures that felt very familiar to UK academics); and the development of new masculinities in the occupied territories.

In relation to this last topic, Reema Hammami turned an ethnographic lens on the everyday life of checkpoints, arguing that Palestinian men and women continue to travel through checkpoints, living through daily humiliations, but also seeking to establish micro-practices of autonomy, including ways of doing gender.

She summarised life under occupation with the phrase, 'existence as resistance', something that resonated throughout our visit: the refusal of Palestinians to stop travelling, even when checkpoints and closed roads extend 10-minute journeys by several hours; the enthusiasm of university students for education and research that is socially and politically relevant despite little available graduate work; the attempts by villagers to farm, even where this is made unsustainable by Israeli monopolisation of water resources; and simply attempting to do the mundane in circumstances where nothing is mundane. Our visit took place in the context of the Israeli government's unwillingness to allow academic visitors to Palestine.

As such Palestinians are subjected to a de facto international boycott (something that exposes the hypocrisy of Israeli government opposition to a boycott of Israeli

academic institutions as 'against freedom'). This context made us reflect upon what it is about academic visits that is so threatening to the Israeli state. Perhaps it is that Israel seeks to prevent Palestinians from enjoying the trappings of 'civilisation'. Thus the Palestinian Authority is not permitted to widen roads, dispose of the rubbish, or even direct traffic in the congested areas on the Palestinian side of the main checkpoint separating Ramallah from Jerusalem (Qalandia). Consequently visitors to the Palestinian controlled area are met with chaotic traffic jams, dusty rows of totalled cars and piles of stray carrier bags. And the symbolic point is hardly obscure – Palestine is, we are being led to believe, a wholly uncivilised place.

In contrast, the Israeli occupation utilises many of the trappings of civilisation and modernity as tools of colonisation: rapidly rising new illegal settlements, brutalist clusters of architecturally matching buildings containing tens of thousands of residents; high-tech agricultural development of (stolen) land; construction of by-pass roads in the West Bank for the use of settlers only; land expropriation in the West Bank under the guise of archaeological preservation or



Network members at a Ramallah meal

the designation of 'nature reserves'. From this perspective, the boycott of Israeli academic institutions, themselves complicit in Israel's colonising practices, is a means of challenging Israel's oppressive civilising processes.

Travelling to Birzeit is neither straightforward nor entirely pleasant. But when academics are discouraged from developing independent relations with academics in Palestine, face-to-face debate becomes a practice of resistance – an academic form of 'existence as resistance'. Moreover, visiting Birzeit is also a way of meeting and learning from scholars whose feminism is embedded in long-standing social engagement, and whose lived experiences do indeed help us to 'reconceptualise' gender. For more information on 'Reconceptualising gender' see: www.go.warwick.ac.uk/gender/research/birzeit
• Dr Rachel Lara Cohen, University of Surrey, Professor Nickie Charles and Dr Nicola Pratt, University of Warwick.

Chris Harris 1934 -2012

Nickie Charles writes about the life of Chris Harris:

Chris Harris, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Swansea University, who has died aged 77, was best known for his research on family and community. He was an inspirational teacher and intellectual guide who spent his whole professional career in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Swansea.

Chris (pictured right in graduation robes in the late 1950s) was a sociologist of the family, first and foremost. He went to Swansea as a young researcher to work on a project exploring the way families had changed from the early 20th century to the beginning of the 1960s.

Chris and Colin Rosser, his anthropological co-researcher, found that a modified form of extended family existed in Swansea across the class spectrum and that women, and the domestic labour exchanged between mothers and their married daughters, were at

the heart of extended family networks. Their findings were important in challenging the idea that extended families no longer existed in urban settings and that kinship ties were declining in importance.

Chris's method of working and his attention to theoretically informed empirical research enabled him to develop new ways of thinking. In *The Family and Social Change* (1965) he coined the term 'mobile society', foreshadowing by at least 40 years much current debate about mobilities. He also pointed to the major shifts in gender relations that were likely to result from increasing occupational, geographical and cultural mobility.

Chris was a brilliant communicator and his ability to talk about the findings of his research in lay person's language were enviable. Not only was he able to speak the language of academics, but he also communicated his research findings to his research subjects.

Chris's work on what came to be widely

known as a classic community study was significant both personally and professionally. It was through this study and his role as a researcher that he met Angela, his future wife, to whom he remained married until her death in 1998; and it was also through this study that his enviable reputation as a sociologist of family and community was established.

Chris was one of the founder members of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Swansea: it came into being when he was a young researcher and, ironically, was closed when he had completed a study which revisited his original research on the family (*Families in Transition*, 2008).

• This article is a summary of a longer obituary by Professor Charles, of the University of Warwick, which can be seen at: www.britisoc.co.uk/members/network



MA Culture, Diaspora, Ethnicity

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London's evening university

Mike Hardey 1950 -2012

Andrew Webster writes about the life of his colleague Mike Hardey:

Mike Hardey, who has died aged 61, was one of the UK's leading medical sociologists. He was a Reader in Medical Sociology at the Hull York Medical School (HYMS) as well as Associate Director of the Science and Technology Studies Unit (SATSU) in the Department of Sociology based at York. Mike was a gentle and collegial man who produced work of a high quality that explored the world of Medicine 2.0 and the relationships between health and lifestyle.

His work on social media and doctor-patient relations was ground-breaking, and he published in 1999 the first article about medicine and the internet in the leading international journal, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, which later used his paper as a springboard for a special issue on the web and medicine.

Mike was born in Lagos, Nigeria (his father worked for BOAC, now BA), and on coming to the UK with his family he helped in the family business, but later took up academic study as a mature student, with a keen interest in the Labour party and political theatre. His ideas were honed at the University of Essex where he took his first degree in sociology followed by an MA in social history, securing his first job as a researcher working with the sociologist Dennis Marsden on working-class youth and employment, before then moving to the University of Surrey in 1986 as a research associate working on welfare systems.

Through his work on welfare, he became increasingly interested in health inequalities and refocused his interests on the theory and practice of health research, which led to his appointment as head of the Nursing Research Unit at Surrey. Subsequent posts in Southampton (1992-2005) and Newcastle were key to his developing an interest in the web and its relationship to medicine and social media.

In 2006 he took up his Readership at HYMS. He had had a long-standing friendship and academic collaboration with Roger Burrows, and, with Roger and other colleagues, established the Social Informatics Research Unit in the Department of Sociology at York which in 2009 merged with SATSU, with Mike as one of the associate directors.

Mike was interested in exploring the



ways in which the web might empower patients and so challenge professional authority. He was inspired by the potentially democratising effects of social media and indeed practised this in regard to his own work, using Slideshare as much as possible to make his papers and presentations available to all.

His 1999 paper in *Sociology of Health and Illness* broke new ground in opening up for exploration the then emerging development of Web 2.0 and how the web had become a site for the co-production of knowledge and the redistribution of medical understanding and expertise. He foresaw a number of key, though discrete, developments on the Web, each describing a different producer-audience relation and a different sourcing and authorisation of knowledge: data-scraping, crowd-sourcing, and related forms of user-generated expertise created among lay-publics via social networking and mash-ups.

This led to an interest in the ways in which we have seen the emergence of new digital cartographies as well as new ways in which consumers of medicine could be empowered through sites such as RateMD to create a powerful new global Internet referral network among e-patients. His location in a medical school meant that Mike saw the need to encourage colleagues and students to see such developments as an opportunity rather than a threat and to work with lay and user-generated data and information; and in all this to understand the relationship between online and offline relationships and identities.

He never saw the virtual as a means through which multiple identities could be built in some limitless way, but as a place where offline embodied identities could

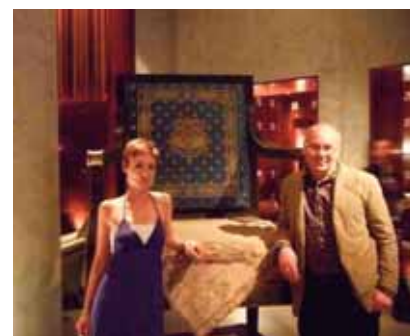
be expressed and enjoined online.

This was both made evident and poignantly expressed in Mike's exploration of patient narratives about their illnesses and disease in his papers published in the early 2000s. His interests here led to international collaboration with his Spanish colleague Francisco Lupiáñez-Villanueva (based at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute, directed by Manuel Castells in Barcelona) and Sue Ziebland (originally at Surrey and now at Oxford), and a work on a major project which has recently completed data-gathering via an online panel survey on 'Citizens and ICT for health' in 14 EU countries.

Mike's work in HYMS was very highly regarded by his colleagues: he was academic co-ordinator of the Phase I Student Selected Components (SSC) programme, as well as running his own SSC in 'Social bodies and body perception – exploring the various ways in which social life and the life of the human body interact'. The School has recently established a student prize in his honour.

He also played an important part in the administration of the School. In SATSU he was always available for a coffee and a chat to discuss new ideas or plans for the Unit and his good humour and summery shirts always provided a lift to the demands of everyday academic life. A forthcoming SATSU conference in July on STS and social media provides an opportunity to celebrate the contribution he has made. He will be a great loss to his daughter, Dr Maz Hardey, who is based at Durham University, as well as to the field as a whole. He is pictured below with Maz.

Professor Andrew Webster
Director, SATSU
Academic Coordinator Social Sciences
University of York





BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Call For Papers

The British Sociological Association Annual Conference 2013

Engaging Sociology

- **Tuesday 2 April – Friday 5 April**
Postgraduate and Early Career Forum Workshops.

- **Wednesday 3 April - Friday 5 April**
Annual Conference
Grand Connaught Rooms.

The British Sociological Association invites submissions to its Annual Conference. Participants can present on any sociological research topic.

Suggestions for grouped sessions within the open streams are welcomed.

All BSA study groups are strongly encouraged to contribute posters/ papers and other activities. There will also be opportunities for study groups to meet independently.

- **Online abstract submission:**
www.britsoc.co.uk/events/Conference

- **IMPORTANT DATES:**
Friday 5th October 2012: Final deadline for abstract submission
Friday 18th January 2013: Last date for presenters to register

- E-mail: events@britsoc.org.uk



Most cited papers in BSA journals

The BSA supports the work of four journals: *Cultural Sociology*, *Sociological Research Online*, *Sociology and Work*, *employment and society*, and here *Network* lists the three most cited articles from each.

The citation count is measured by Thomson Reuters Web of Science, which publishes lists of highly cited articles (and also calculates the journal Impact factor, based on citations and number of articles published). The data for the journals goes back to 2002, when the count began, with the exception of *Cultural Sociology* which was launched in 2007.

"The BSA supports a large body of published work and these are only some of the important contributions in all four of the journals," said Alison Danforth, the BSA's Publications Officer.

"We hope to bring attention to the work that is being published by drawing out various articles.

"Citations are only one lens by which to examine the many articles that are published and *Network* will showcase other articles in coming issues."

BSA members can read all these articles by logging into the membership area and accessing the SAGE Sociology Full-text collection. *Sociological Research Online* is free to individual subscribers:

www.socresonline.org.uk/home.html

Cultural Sociology top 3 cited papers (2007 – present)

Those things that hold us together: taste and sociology	Hennion, A	Mar 2007, 1(1) 97-114
Understanding cultural omnivorousness: or, the myth of the cultural omnivore	Warde, A; Wright, D; Gayo-Cal, M	July 2007, 1(2) 143-64
The work of culture	Bennett, T	Mar 2007, 1(1) 31-47

Sociological Research Online top 3 cited papers (2002 – present)

Sociology and, of and in Web 2.0: some initial considerations	Beer, D; Burrows, R	Sept 2007 12(5)
A child of its time: hybridic perspectives on othering in sociology	Stanley, L	Sept 2005 10(3)
Coming home to love and class	Johnson, P; Lawler, S	Sept 2005 10(3)

Sociology top 3 cited papers (2002 – present)

Mobility and proximity	Urry, J	May 2002 36(2) 255-74
The coming crisis of empirical sociology	Savage, M; Burrows, R	Jan 2007 41(5) 885-99
The making of class and gender through visualizing moral subject formation	Skeggs, B	Dec 2005 39(5) 965-82

Work, employment & society top 3 cited papers (2002 – present)

Work organization, control and the experience of work in call centres	Taylor, P; Hyman, J; Mulvey, G;	Mar 2002 16(1) 133-50
'India calling to the far away towns': the call centre labour process and globalization	Taylor, P; Bain, P	June 2005 19(2) 261-82
Disconnected capitalism: or why employers can't keep their side of the bargain	Thompson, P	June 2003 17(2) 359-78

Sociology

Journal of the British Sociological Association

Genetics: The Sociology of Identity

Special Issue Call for Papers Deadline for submissions: 31 July 2012

The special issue, for October 2013, addresses the many ways in which genetic knowledge and technologies intersect with the formations of personal, social, cultural, racial/ethnic and national identities in contemporary societies. It will bring together sociological analysis of identity concepts and practices with reflections on the role of genetic knowledge in the formation of contemporary identities.

Possible themes may include but are not limited to the following:

- Genetics, normativity and the dynamics of identity
- The role of genetics in creating and contesting racialised identities
- Genetics, colonialism, imperialism and power
- Genetics in social institutions: medicine, policing, immigration
- State surveillance, including forensic DNA technologies and immigration politics
- Genetic screening, and the remaking of health risk and at-risk populations
- Social movements, genetic identities and the dynamics of identity-based activism around health, disability and other issues
- New genetic identities
- Genetics and the contestation and remaking of parenting and kinship
- The geneticisation of sex/gender/sexuality
- Fairness and equality: how wealth, economic structures, patenting, and the regulation of markets and products influence access to genetic testing and the ability to articulate certain identity claims

Editorial Team

Editor-in-Chief: Christine Hauskeller (University of Exeter)
Co-editors: Gill Haddow (University of Edinburgh), Steve Sturdy (University of Edinburgh) and Richard Tutton (University of Lancaster)
Conveners of the ESRC Genomics Network stream on Genomics and Identity Politics

Full call for papers:

<http://www.britisoc.co.uk/publications/pubsvacancies.htm>



Peer reviewers sought for Sociological Research Online

The BSA's *Sociological Research Online* journal seeks peer reviewers to join the editorial board. Members with expertise in the following areas are particularly welcome: internet research methods and approaches; quantitative methods; visual methods; social policy; and social network analysis. Those interested should go to:

www.socresonline.org.uk/info/CallEdboard.html

In February, Professor Rachel Brooks and Dr Paul Hodkinson, of the University of Surrey, took over as Editors of the journal. They would like to encourage proposals for 'Special Sections', one of the distinctive features of the journal. These sections typically focus on a specific issue of sociological interest and they can be run in every issue. Proposals from prospective guest-editors are welcome. The journal also runs a 'Rapid Response' section on topical issues of interest to the sociological community. To send proposals or contributions, email: r.brooks@surrey.ac.uk or p.hodkinson@surrey.ac.uk

Sociological Research Online is in its 16th year of publication and has established its place as a major archival sociological journal.

Events listing to November 2012

5-7 September	University of Leicester	Medical Sociology Group 44th Annual Conference
13 September	University of Bolton	Regional Postgraduate Forum Event: Engaging People in Research
14 September	BSA Meeting Room, London	Workshop for early career researchers and PhD students on how to get published
18 September	BSA Meeting Room, London	Media Study Group Event
28-30 September	Menzies Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham	Teaching Group Annual Conference
8 October	British Library Conference Centre	Presidential Event - Distinguished Service Award winner
22 October	British Library Conference Centre	Work, Employment and Society 25th Anniversary Conference
2 November	BSA Meeting Room, London	Youth Study Group Event
19 November	BSA Meeting Room, London	Social Aspects of Death, Dying and Bereavement Annual Symposium: Death and the Family



Inaugural Conference

28th – 30th September 2012
Menzies Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham

Speakers:

Professor John Holmwood (University of Nottingham),
 Former Chair of the Council of UK Heads & Professors of Sociology,
 Fellow of Academy of Social Sciences & the incoming
 President of the British Sociological Association

Professor Corrine Squire (University of East London), Humanities & Social Sciences
 Author of 'Women & AIDS: Physiological Perspectives'

Dr Paul Bagguley (University of Leeds)
 Researcher in the Sociology of Protest
 Author of 'Riotous Citizens: ethnic conflict in multicultural Britain'

Exam Training Sessions - delegates will be able to attend exam training sessions, select from workshop sessions to match specific career development targets and see recent subject specific resources.

Workshops will include sharing Ofsted experiences, Differentiation, Gifted & Talented and ICT in the Classroom.

Postgraduate Micro-lectures covering areas such as: culture & identity creation; differentiation; inequality & stratification; demography; welfare & government policy in most fields of life; family & households; the role of women; minority groups; aging; youth culture; all aspects of education especially potential changes & their effects on different groups within sociology; health & welfare; wealth & poverty & welfare provision; politics & power; globalisation in all its many aspects; religion; crime & deviance; methodology; theory & the role of research.

Conference Registration Cost:

Full Conference (including accommodation & food):

BSA Members £260; BSA Teaching Group Members: £265; Non-members: £360

Saturday Day Delegate (excludes Conference dinner & accommodation):

BSA Members £70; BSA Teaching Group Members: £90; Non-members: £120

Postgraduates £35 - Saturday only: includes refreshments and lunch as well as free membership of the BSA Teaching Group until December 2012. Membership will keep you up to date with what is happening in sociology and in the teaching of sociology and enable you to network with like minded people. Limited places available on a first come first served basis.

Early bird discount ends 17th August 2012, any bookings received after this date will incur an additional £30 charge.

For further information please go to <http://www.alas.org.uk/site/content/conferences.php>

Please direct any enquiries to: bsa@britsoc.org.uk Tel: (0191) 383 0839.

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Please note that events are updated frequently.

Readers should check the BSA website for the latest information: www.britsoc.co.uk/events

Would you like to contribute to *Network*? We are looking for letters, opinions and news articles.

For more information please contact Tony Trueman at: tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk or on 07964 023392; or contact Chief Executive Judith Mudd at: judith.mudd@britsoc.org.uk

The Winter edition of *Network* will be published in mid-December. Copy deadlines are around two months before publication, but please check with Tony or Judith. We try to print all material received, but pressure of space may lead to editing and delayed publication.

NETWORK

Summer 2012

“ If the university is in society, what forces in the wider society are going to grab hold of it and direct it? ”

“ We live in a world that’s saturated by media images. Older women are the butt of humour or are simply absent from the media ”

“ We need to expose our students to the life-changing capacities of an education in sociology. Tired old lectures don’t do that ”

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