

THE SOCIOLOGY TEACHER

THE JOURNAL OF THE BSA TEACHING GROUP



MENTORING

Engaging Sociologists

An A-Level tutoring and mentoring outreach project with 2nd year undergraduate students

Telephone Conversation with

Professor Göran Therborn, a Swedish Sociologist.

Sociology Social Media Questionnaire:

Student project

In this Issue: **Sociology and Statistics** • **Student Questionnaire Project**
This is my truth, tell me yours. • **BSA Teaching Group Membership**

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



Patrick Robinson



Happy Spring issue everyone!

Storm "Doris" has hopefully shown us the last of the winter weather and the days are getting lighter.

2017 has been eventful in the extreme: Donald Trump taking up Presidency sticks out of course. In recent weeks, he has made a number of accusations that parts of the media are creating "fake news" about his policies and decisions. This raises an important issue that sits at the heart of Sociology: how do we know what we know?

I mentioned the Trump reference to a class this week, in the context of a research methods lesson. Students rarely like research methods as a topic but with Trump's accusations occurring, it has been useful in highlighting the need to have valid evidence that stands up against scientific scrutiny: surely where good Sociology should fit in.

Scientific research tends to go down the quantitative path and this is true for our issue this week: Chi square testing is explained and there are lots of quantitative findings from a survey I carried out with my students concerning student use of digital social media. Thoroughly recommend you carry this out your good selves.

Many thanks to all our contributors in this issue.

All the best, Patrick Robinson".

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BSA Teacher Group Journal.

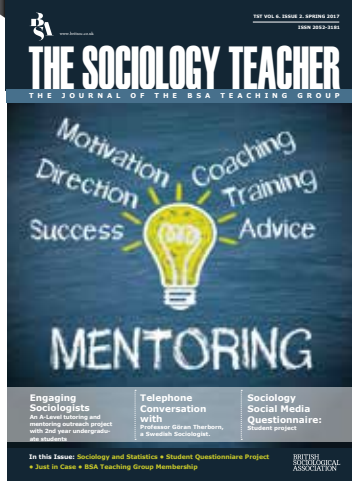
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Could you write for THE SOCIOLOGY TEACHER?



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If you're someone with an idea for something we could include in the journal, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Any aspect of teaching and learning in the Social Sciences can be suitable, but we'd be especially interested in material relating to GCSE and/or KS3, which are currently under-represented in the publication. Articles, classroom resources or offers to provide regular features will all be considered, as will any other ideas for suitable copy. In the first instance please contact commissioning editor, prs@cadcol.ac.uk and we will pass your proposal to the editorial board.



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Sociology teachers in schools and sixth form colleges, are now offered full BSA membership at the concessionary rate of £57pa (Jan to Dec), See last page For Benefits Details.

The BSA Teaching Group is a network of anyone keen to further the interests of sociology teaching from secondary to tertiary education.

The aim of the Group is to encourage and promote the teaching of the Social Sciences in Primary, Secondary, Further and Higher Education.

The Group therefore provides opportunities for those teaching in Sociology to develop and share ideas and strategies for the promotion and delivery of the teaching of the Sociology. To this end, one of the main activities of the BSA Teaching Group is the dissemination of information relating to teaching materials and teaching methods. The Group is also active in promoting the interests of Sociology teachers to examination boards, academic bodies, governmental and political agencies and the wider public.

Members of the Group can be found in every sector of education, but the majority are teachers of Advanced Level Sociology. Members are encouraged to be active in the running of the Group, either nationally or through local activities.

ENGAGING SOCIOLOGISTS



DO SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO SOCIAL MOBILITY?



SOCIOLOGY SOCIAL MEDIA QUESTIONNAIRE



ENGAGING SOCIOLOGISTS

By Richard Waller (RW)
Andy Mathers (AM)
Phoebe Savidge (PS)
Gemma Flook (GF)
& Daisy Hamm (DH)
University of the West of
England, Bristol (UWE)
South Gloucestershire and
Stroud College (SGS)

MENT

Engaging Sociologists

An A-Level tutoring and mentoring outreach project
with 2nd year undergraduate students

We will be presenting this at the university's
Learning and Teaching conference



The main purpose of publishing this article is to promote further collaboration between university Sociology departments and staff teaching the subject at A-Level in schools and colleges.

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ORIGIN

Background

This article is a collaborative piece of work co-written by two university academic staff (AM and RW), an FE college lecturer (PS), and two undergraduate students (GF and DH) who recently participated in the tutor/mentor scheme. The university academics are both experienced higher education lecturers and active researchers, AM previously taught in school, and RW used to teach in further education. Both AM and RW have worked extensively in widening participation and outreach activities within the university and beyond. We report here on a scheme designed to both help local Sociology A-Level students, and also to offer our undergraduate students a chance

to 'give something back' (Brine and Waller, 2004) to the wider academic community whilst gaining useful skills and first-hand experience of teaching. We have presented details of this scheme at the national British Sociological Association's Annual Conference twice, to the BSA's South West Regional Sociology Teachers' forum, and at Widening Participation events at our university. We are also hoping to present this at the university's Learning and Teaching annual conference in the summer, to encourage colleagues from other disciplinary areas to consider undertaking such a scheme. The main purpose of publishing this article is to promote further collaboration between university Sociology departments and staff teaching the subject at A-Level in schools and colleges.



The UWE Sociology tutor/mentor project

As part of UWE's aim of strengthening its collaborative partnership work with educational institutions and its wider civic mission to reach out to the local community, a scheme has been developed whereby selected second year undergraduates engage in outreach activity to help A-Level Sociology students in nearby schools and colleges. The scheme is now in its fifth year of operation and has now been expanded to include undergraduate students of Criminology as well as Sociology. The numbers of participants has varied over the years, and in 2016/17 there are nine undergraduates working at a total of six local institutions. The origins of the scheme lay in the academics' commitment to addressing the material, cultural and psychological processes through which students from disadvantaged areas and groups are excluded from applying to university (e.g. Archer et al., 2007; Harrison, forthcoming; UCAS, 2015).

The resulting scheme combines two main elements: tutoring and mentoring. Tutoring

by knowledgeable undergraduates provides A-level students with a valuable resource that would otherwise be less accessible in a 'shadow education system' (Bray, 2011) governed by money, and the aim is to boost performance at A-level thereby increasing access to Higher Education (HE). Mentoring by confident and capable undergraduates provides A-level students, many of whom come from families without direct experience of HE, with first-hand 'hot knowledge' (Ball and Vincent, 1998) about what university is actually like

(what Bourdieu (1986) would call a form of 'cultural capital'). It also offers a role model to whom the A-Level students can relate, and who can offer reassurance that university really can be open to all. While the scheme has generally targeted schools and colleges located within areas of Bristol where there has been a longstanding low level of participation in HE, it has not stipulated which specific groups of students can participate, since an overly prescriptive approach was thought to be potentially stigmatising for participants. The scheme



Undergraduate students are recruited onto the scheme at the beginning of their second year. Selection is based upon a strong first year academic performance, an application form, references, and an interview with the two academic staff.



is funded from the university's widening participation budget which meets costs including resources such as textbooks and travel expenses, and the provision of payment for the undergraduate students, who can also use their involvement in the scheme as the basis for further sociological reflection in a level two module at UWE titled 'Developing Self and Society'.

Undergraduate students are recruited onto the scheme at the beginning of their second year. Selection is based upon a

strong first year academic performance, an application form, references, and an interview with the two academic staff. During the autumn term (October to December) the selected students participate in a weekly series of 'subject knowledge enhancement' sessions with one of the academic staff tailored to mastering the sociological knowledge required for the relevant A-Level unit. In the past this has included family and households, education and research methods, and crime and deviance. These sessions involve the

relevant lecturer (either AM or RW), but are usually led by the students themselves in order to provide some classroom practice. As well as demonstrating their core subject knowledge, they are encouraged to discuss how they might teach the session in an A-Level setting. When these sessions have been led by an academic, school teachers and college lecturers have sometimes also been invited to participate, offering them the possibility for academic subject development. Although the undergraduate students have usually recently studied A-level Sociology, an additional session led by a current college lecturer (PS) provides curriculum updates and advice on 'how to teach' in the school or college environment. In the scheme's earlier years, social science graduates on the university's PGCE PCET award (a teacher training course for people aiming to work in sixth form or further education colleges) also helped mentor the scheme's undergraduate participants. This was how PS herself first became involved in the project, as a PGCE student prior to obtaining a permanent teaching post locally. PCET students also offered further advice and guidance on how to teach at A-Level. The undergraduate participant's mentoring training has largely

been delivered through the university's 'student ambassador' scheme, but with an additional focus on issues of safeguarding in schools and colleges. All participants receive clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service before going out on placement.

After this 'preparatory' first phase, students are ready to deliver the tutoring and mentoring during the spring term (January to April). These sessions are usually weekly or bi-weekly, span between six and twelve weeks and, depending on the specific student and location, last for anywhere between 30 minutes and two hours. The specific activities are negotiated directly between the A-Level teacher and the UWE student, thereby offering participants some experience of working like a professional. The majority of students have preferred working one-to-one with students inside and/or outside of the classroom, but a minority (mainly those most interested in teaching as a career) have engaged in both small group and whole class teaching, with the latter activity generally being under the supervision of the class's regular teacher. The main focus has been on reinforcing and extending subject knowledge, but additional focuses have included remedial work, revision guidance and examination technique. The mentoring element has largely been delivered through informal conversations in which the A-Level students have probed for information and insights into the 'real undergraduate student experience'. A small number of students have also participated in 'taster' events at which they gain first-hand experience of what studying Sociology at university will be like. During the 'delivery' phase, the Tutor/Mentors are supported by the university academics through regular emails and face-to-face meetings, and sometimes through establishing their own informal peer support systems too. And, as previously suggested, additional support has previously also included meetings with postgraduate students on the university's PGCE PCET programme until its closure in 2015.

As part of the formal evaluation of the scheme, we ask all participants to share their views on its benefits, and on how it could be improved. The A-Level tutors have reported how it is good for their own practice to have an enthusiastic and well-qualified 'assistant' to help even if it was for a relatively limited duration. Some had previously mentioned how they felt it 'kept them on their toes', and helped them to reflect on their own classroom practice (Loughran, 2002; Moon, 1999), especially during the discussions with the mentor. However, the major benefits reported were,

as we had hoped, for our undergraduate students and the A-Level school and college students they worked with. Whilst we could approach our own undergraduate Tutor/Mentors directly in this process and have used the evaluation from two of them (GF and DH) in particular here, some of the reported benefits for the A-Level students comes via their teachers rather than the school or college students themselves, which reflects the difficulties of obtaining first-hand data from them.

FINDINGS

For ease of understanding, the findings are divided into two key areas. The first is from the placement hosting teachers and lecturers, who give their own views of the scheme, as well as those of their A-Level students (analysed by PS). This section, which takes the opinions from a number of participating hosts in school and colleges, is further sub-divided along thematic lines. The second area is the views of the undergraduate participants (GF and DH).

School and college teaching staff increased of understanding of – and engagement with – the subject

In terms of their students' academic understanding, teachers reported that 'learners achieved better grades in formative assessments after taking part in the scheme as they were more confident with theories and authors'. Teachers frequently reported an 'increased engagement with the subject of sociology' leading to greater enjoyment of the lessons and better subject knowledge. The increased engagement was partly attributed to the mentors' depth of sociological understanding. One teacher remarked the mentor 'had a strong level of knowledge of A-Level Sociology and exam practice' and added that they were 'very well trained and comfortable in the college environment.'

Improved exam technique

According to their teachers, the exam technique of learners in the scheme vastly improved. The time to develop essential exam skills in a one-to-one setting was also invaluable to teacher and learners. One teacher felt the scheme offered 'improved skills of evaluation', adding that 'this is traditionally an area where learners need assistance'. Another highlighted that 'structured evaluation points' were 'a focus of many sessions.' Teachers noted the value of other study skills and exam preparation advice, including organising revision notes, coaching on revision techniques, and how to structure essays.


Individualised support

Teachers reported that the support offered in one-to-one or small group settings was

particularly beneficial. Because of class size and time pressure, this style of learning is difficult for teachers to offer, and one commented that the apparent increase in parents willing to pay for additional tutoring to ensure achievement is often led by learners' concerns about concentration and understanding in larger classes. Other benefits included improved writing skills for learners for whom English is an additional language, another issue that one respondent particularly felt learners and teachers are facing with growing frequency. Increased enthusiasm for Sociology Teachers noticed individual benefits to learners such as improved academic



engagement or enthusiasm for the subject. Learners benefitted from hearing concepts explained by someone other than their teacher. Teachers expressed that the small group had considerable benefits for anxious learners, who perhaps more than ever make up a significant proportion of the class. For learners who usually avoided speaking up, asking questions or 'taking risks' in the classroom, the small group sessions allowed them to offer their input in a more comfortable and less threatening



environment. Teachers also saw benefits to the host institutions; one noted that the scheme helped to improve student retention levels generally, citing the reason that learners 'viewed the study of Sociology as 'more than a lesson' and therefore connected with it more due to the efforts and enthusiasm of the mentors'.

Increased knowledge of higher education

Whilst on placement the Mentors answered questions, offering advice and inspiration to the A-Level students. Some teachers noted that meeting the mentor had allowed learners a valuable opportunity to discuss options with someone currently at university taking a Sociology or Criminology degree. One reported that 'learners gained an increased awareness of higher education and the career possibilities offered by a Sociology degree', and that 'the mentor talked to the students about her day-to-day life as an undergraduate, and the career plans of herself and her peers'. This had the impact of enhancing aspirations for the A-Level participants, and for some (including Gemma mentioned below) made going to university seem like a realistic possibility.

The undergraduate student perspective

In this section two undergraduate students



share their thoughts on the benefits of their participation in the scheme. Both Daisy and Gemma are Sociology undergraduates. Rather than A-Levels, Daisy did a vocational BTEC Health and Social Care award before her degree, but decided to focus on Sociology at university. Gemma is from Bristol and was a participant in the scheme as an A-Level student at a nearby college, an experience which encouraged her to decide to study Sociology at university as she explains below.

Daisy

My participation in the Sociology tutor/mentor scheme has been one of the highlights of my second year at university. The best element of it was working with the young people, who I found to be interesting, intelligent, and just as passionate about Sociology as I am. The scheme offered me a number of benefits, including the opportunity to obtain practical teaching experience in a classroom environment which would be invaluable should I ever consider a career in teaching. Through planning and delivering these

sessions I found that my own knowledge of key concepts and theorists was refreshed as the focus on the unit on 'Families and Households' coincided with one of the major themes of my Level 2 undergraduate core module on 'Social Transformations'. Most importantly of all, I found the students' curiosity and enthusiasm infectious, and finished the scheme with a renewed enjoyment of my field of study, alongside an interest in working with young people as a career path. Throughout the scheme the students also experienced a range of benefits, of which I would say the most important is individual level support and improved subject knowledge. My students also seemed to enjoy talking to me about my own student experiences, and particularly appreciated the opportunity to hear a first-hand account of university life, and the increased knowledge of higher education

that it provided. Many students were interested in how degrees were classified or graded, although discussions around how to balance study commitments and the student social life was also a main preoccupation!

Gemma

When I was at college in Bristol taking my A-Levels, the Sociology tutor-mentor scheme helped improve my grades and encouraged me to take not just the AS, but also the full A-Level qualification. It also encouraged me to consider doing a degree, and specifically a degree in Sociology. In addition the scheme allowed me to ask questions about the university application process and university life in general. As an undergraduate, working on the scheme increased my confidence both with regards to my academic ability and within a working environment. The role was very fulfilling too as it allowed me to give something back to my local community



(Gemma worked at her local FE college with a number of students who had been to her old school).

I think that overall my experience of being part of the scheme as a sixth former and then as a university student contributed to my personal and academic development to the point at which I am currently heading towards a 'good honours' degree in Sociology. I am also taking part in a placement in the post-16 education and training field which is helping develop my career plans after university.

Conclusions

Overall the scheme seems to benefit everyone who participates in it. The undergraduates gain enhanced subject knowledge and experience of working in a school or college environment. The A-Level teachers get assistance in their classroom, encouragement to reflect upon their own practice and the opportunity to enhance their subject knowledge. The A-Level students receive support for their studies and the rare chance to discuss university life with someone close in age to themselves to whom they can perhaps relate better than they can to their teacher. Even the university benefits from enhanced partnerships with local schools and colleges and the opportunity to develop the skills, experiences and employment outcomes of its undergraduates.

If you are reading this as a school or college teacher, why not get in touch with your local university Sociology department

and see whether they would be interested in offering a similar scheme? Richard and Andy would be happy to offer some advice on how to do so.

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Sociology and Statistics:

The Chi Square Test by Percival Santos (PhD, London School of Economics)

Sociologists looking at educational achievement find that there are distinct patterns. Success and failure at school seem to be closely related to membership of certain social groups.

There are many factors, which can hinder a child's attainment especially if he is from a Black ethnic background (e.g. material and cultural deprivation, lack of proficiency in English, a high incidence of lone parenthood, a culture of resistance, teacher stereotyping and labelling, the ethnocentric school curriculum, etc.). There are also some factors, which explain why Chinese and Indian students do so much better than others in education (e.g. positive teacher stereotyping, parental involvement in education, high value put on education, etc.). Research in education inequality would also try to enumerate some factors why girls outperform boys in school (e.g. feminization of the workforce, genderquake, girls possessing an 'elaborated code', etc.), while boys' underperformance could be due to other factors (e.g. crisis of

masculinity, decline of traditional masculine industries).

Interestingly, when the performance of the different ethnic groups is further broken down by gender it also becomes obvious that girls consistently outperform boys across all ethnic groups. It also appears that the gender gap that exists varies depending on the ethnic group.

Thus, we already know that certain ethnic groups (Chinese, Indian) do very well while others (Black African, Black Caribbean) underachieve. And we also know that girls outperform boys in general. But what is not so apparent is that girls outperform boys across all ethnic groups, although the size of the gap varies among the ethnic groups. The groups with the widest gender gaps include high performing groups like Chinese, as well as underperforming ones such as Black Caribbean, Black African and White British pupils. The groups that have the narrowest gender gaps include one very high performing

group, the Indians, on the one hand, and mid-table Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, on the other.

Therefore, what needs to be examined, is the issue of whether these two variables are somehow related to or independent of each other, at least with respect to differences in educational attainment. Simply put, are gender and ethnicity with respect to GCSE grades, related or not? Which variable is stronger? How do we know? Is there a test for it?

Chi-square Test of Independence

The Chi-Square Test of Independence is a test that allows you to determine whether two variables are somehow related to or independent of each other. It does that by determining whether what you observe in a distribution of frequencies would be exactly what you would observe if it occurred by chance alone. It allows you to compare the actual, or observed, data to the expected (what would have occurred by chance alone) one. In other words, the Chi square test



compares different categorical data according to expected and actual frequencies. If there is no difference between what we observe and what we expect, the chi-square value would be equal to zero. The higher the Chi-square score, the bigger the difference. If the difference between these frequencies is too

analysis of the relatedness or independence of gender and ethnicity. This test is applied when you have two categorical variables from a single population. It compares observed and expected values. How many of something were expected and how many were observed? It is used to determine whether there is

interested in finding factors that are related- education and income, gender and occupation, race and educational attainment, etc. The Chi square test will only work with actual numbers or frequencies, not proportions or percentages. The test can be conducted in 6 easy steps.

Source: Department for Education, National Statistics, GCSE and equivalent results 2015 to 2016 (provisional). <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2015-to-2016-provisional>

Table 1	Boys	Girls	Boys and Girls
White British	110,623	125,441	236,064
Indian	4,797	4,818	9,615
Pakistani	4,900	5,399	10,299
Bangladeshi	2,361	2,601	4,962
Black Caribbean	1,428	1,931	3,359
Black African	4,190	5,108	9,298
Chinese	737	844	1,581

Table 1: Number of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs grades A*-C including English and mathematics in England 2015, by ethnic group and gender

large (or statistically significant), then we can conclude that there is an outside factor that causes it. This article will be about how to apply the Chi-square Test of Independence to the

a significant association between the two variables. It is called a Test of Independence because it finds out whether the two variables are independent, or whether they are correlated. In sociological research we are

Step 1: State the Null and Alternative Hypotheses

A null hypothesis states that there is no statistical significance between the two variables. It is usually the hypothesis a

sociologist will try to disprove or discredit. An alternative hypothesis is one that states there is a statistically significant relationship between two variables. In that case it could mean that one variable (e.g., ethnicity) affects another (e.g., GCSE scores). For Santos (2015, p. 13) it is akin to the legal axiom of 'innocent till proven guilty':

A good parallel to this is the British legal principle of 'innocent until proved guilty'. The onus is on the prosecution to prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the person is guilty- otherwise they remain innocent. Here the null hypothesis is 'innocent' and the alternative hypothesis

is 'guilty' A type I error would be finding the person guilty when they are actually innocent, and a Type II error would be finding them innocent when actually they are guilty. Under the principle, a Type I error (you are prosecuting an innocent person) is probably considered as more serious than a Type II error (a criminal goes free), and so we should ensure that we never convict unless there is no reasonable doubt as to the guilt.

When we formulate the null hypothesis we are saying (as well as assuming) that variable A and variable B are independent:

'Ethnicity and gender are independent with regards to GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics'
When we formulate the alternative hypothesis we are saying that variable A and variable B are not independent:

'Ethnicity and gender are related with regards to GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics'

Step 2: Calculate the expected value for each cell of the table

Start by creating a table for your analysis. It has 3 columns (Boys, Girls, Total Column) and 8 rows (White British, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African, and Chinese, and Total Column). There are a total of 14 cells in this table. Next, write the observed numbers or frequencies for each cell. For example, the observed number for White British Boys is 110,623. After you have done that, add the values for each column. Then put the sum in each cell at the bottom of each column (Total Columns). Next, add up all the values in each row and put the sum in each cell in the right-hand column (Total Row). For example:





Row 1: White British
 White British Boys (110,623)
 + White British Girls (125,441)
 = Total Row (236,064)

Column 1: Boys
 White British Boys (110,623)
 + Indian Boys (4,797)
 + Pakistani Boys (4,900)
 + Bangladeshi Boys (2,361)
 + Black Caribbean Boys (1,428)
 + Black African Boys (4,190)
 + Chinese Boys (737)
 = Total Column (129,036)

Next, calculate the total number by adding the sums of all columns at the bottom and putting

the figure in the bottom- right hand corner. Alternatively, you can also add the sums of all the rows in the rightmost cell in each row and put the figure in the same bottom- right hand corner. It doesn't matter because the sum of all cells in the bottom columns is always equal to the sum of all cells in the rightmost cell in each row. So you will have:

Sum of Columns
 Total Boys (129,036)
 + Total Girls (146,142)
 = Total Number (275,178)
 Sum of Rows
 Total White British (236,064)
 + Total Indian (9,615)

+ Total Pakistani (10,299)
 + Total Bangladeshi (4,962)
 + Total Black Caribbean (3,359)
 + Total Black African (9,298)
 + Total Chinese (1,581)
 = Total Number (275,178)

Now the expected value for each cell of the table can be calculated by multiplying row sum by column sum and dividing by total number. For the row sum, locate the very last cell (called 'total row') to the right of the row your cell is located in. For the column sum, locate the bottom cell (called 'total column') in the column your cell is located in. Then find the cell in the bottom right-hand corner. For example:

Table 2

Category	Boys	Girls	Total row
White British	110,694	125,369	236,064
Indian	4,508	5,106	9,615
Pakistani	4,829	5,469	10,299
Bangladeshi	2,326	2635	4,962
Black Caribbean	1,575	1,783	3,359
Black African	4,360	4,937	9,298
Chinese	741	839	1,581
Total column	129,036	146,142	275,178

Table 2

using the 1st cell in the table (White British/Boys);

$$236,064 \times 129,036 \div 275,178 = 110,694$$

The expected value for White British Boys is 110,694 using the 2nd cell in table (White British/Girls):
 $236,064 \times 146,142 \div 275,178 = 125,369$

The expected value for White British Girls is 125,369

Step 3: Determine degrees of freedom

The degrees of freedom (df) of an estimate is the number of independent pieces of information that went into calculating the estimate. In order to get the df for the estimate, you have to subtract 1 from the number of items. Let's say you were finding

from each and multiply the result, so:

$$df = (2-1) * (7-1) \\ df = 1 * 6 \\ df = 6$$

Our study will have 6 degrees of freedom

Step 4: Establish the level of significance

The level of significance, also known as confidence level or *p*-level, is the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true. Santos (2016, p.16) likens it to the requirement of proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt in law:

Stated in legal terms, it would be the degree of risk you are willing to take that you will convict an innocent person. In behavioral science the level of significance is typically set at 5%, meaning there is a 5% probability, or one in twenty chance of committing a Type I error. Again, in legal

Step 5: Compute the Chi-square value
Now calculate Chi square value using the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Sum of (Observed-Expected)}^2}{\text{Expected}}$$

It is advisable to create a table (Table 5) where all categories appear in rows and the columns represent observed value (O), expected value (E), observed minus expected value (O-E), square of the difference between observed and expected value (O-E)², finally, the square of the difference between observed and expected value divided by the expected value (O-E)² ÷ E. You can calculate the Chi square value by working out the value of each cell from left to right, one row at a time. For example, row 1 (White British /Boys): The observed number is: 110,623, Expected number is: 110,694. Plugging this into the formula:

Category	Boys	Girls	Total row
White British	110,694	125,369	236,064
Indian	4,508	5,106	9,615
Pakistani	4,829	5,469	10,299
Bangladeshi	2,326	2635	4,962
Black Caribbean	1,575	1,783	3,359
Black African	4,360	4,937	9,298
Chinese	741	839	1,581
Total column	129,036	146,142	275,178

Table 3: Expected values for all categories

the average wage of the two sexes. You would have to use two sexes; male and female, giving 1 degree of freedom (2 – 1 = 1). The formula for calculating df is:

$$df = (r - 1) * (c - 1)$$

Where r stands for the number of rows for one categorical variable, and c is the number of columns for the other categorical variable. Our study has 2 columns and 7 rows, subtract 1

parlance, this would mean that there is a 5% probability, or one in twenty chance of convicting an innocent person. A 5% level of significance (or *p*-level) would then be analogous to the requirement of proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt before a defendant can be convicted of a crime. Typically, for a null hypothesis to be rejected, a *p*-level of 0.5 or less is expected.

$$\frac{(110,623-110,694)^2}{110,623} = 0.045539$$

Thus the Chi square value for White British Boys is 0.045539

Continue doing this for the rest of the categories, and add the final numbers in the Chi square value (O-E)² ÷ E column for the obtained Chi square number. There are 14 total categories, so at the end you should be adding 14 numbers together for you final Chi

square number.
The obtained Chi square value or statistic for our study is 76.371383.

Step 6: Compare the obtained and critical values of Chi-square

Next, identify the appropriate Chi square critical value (see Table 6). At .05 (or 5%) significance level, with 6 *df*.

Therefore we reject the null hypothesis 'Ethnicity and gender are independent with regards to GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics'. And we accept the alternative hypothesis 'Ethnicity and educational attainment are related with regards to GCSE grades A*-C including English and mathematics'.
If the two variables were completely

We must note, however, that the Chi-square test only tests whether two variables are independent. It cannot answer the question of which variable is more powerful or less. In other words, the Chi-square test cannot help us evaluate whether ethnicity is a more important factor than gender, or vice versa. It can only test whether the two variables are independent or not.

Table 4

Categories	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E) ²	Chi square value (O-E) ² ÷E
White British Boys	110,623	110,694	-71	5041	0.045539
White British Girls	125,441	125,369	72	5184	0.041349
Indian Boys	4,797	4508	289	83521	18.527284
Indian Girls	4,818	5106	-288	82944	16.244418
Pakistani Boys	4,900	4829	71	5041	1.043901
Pakistani Girls	5,399	5,469	-70	4900	0.895959
Bangladeshi Boys	2,361	2,326	35	1225	0.526655
Bangladeshi Girls	2,601	2,635	-34	1156	0.438709
Black Caribbean Boys	1,428	1,575	-147	21609	13.72
Black Caribbean Girls	1,931	1,783	148	21904	12.284913
Black African Boys	4,190	4,360	-170	28900	6.628440
Black African Girls	5,108	4,937	171	29241	5.922827
Chinese Boys	737	741	-4	16	0.021592
Chinese Girls	844	839	2	25	0.029797
Obtained Chi square value or statistic: 76.371383					

Table 4: Chi square values of the categorical variables

The critical Chi square value at 5% level of confidence and 6 *df* is 12.59. Therefore, in order to reject the null hypothesis, the obtained Chi square value or statistic must be *greater than or equal to*

independent, the chi-square value would be equal to zero. The higher the Chi-square score, the more evident the relatedness between the two. This means that ethnicity and gender *are related*. The existence of the relationship is quite undeniable, statistically

Bibliography

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Table 5

Level of significance	Degrees of Freedom									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5%	3.84	5.99	7.81	9.49	11.07	12.59	14.07	15.51	16.92	18.31
1%	6.63	9.21	11.34	13.28	15.09	16.81	18.48	20.09	21.67	23.31

Table 5: Chi square distribution table

12.59. The sociologist then is at a crucial juncture of his analysis where he must make a decision;

If obtained value > critical value, then reject null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis

If obtained value < critical value, then retain the null hypothesis
76.371383 > 12.59

speaking. At 76.371383, the Chi-square value easily passes the test at a 5% level of confidence (where the critical value is 12.59). The Chi-square value that we obtained is so high that it passes the test even at a 1% confidence level (where the critical value is 16.81). That means there is less than one in a hundred chance that we posited a relationship that didn't in fact exist.

Bioprofile

Percival Santos (PhD, London School of Economics) has taught sociology, anthropology and research methods in Japan. He has published on the teaching of English as a Foreign Language and the pedagogy of the social sciences. He currently teaches at London Academy, London, UK.

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Do schools and universities make a difference to social mobility?

Prof Robert Mears Executive Dean College of Liberal Arts Bath Spa University

There is a long history of liberal thinkers viewing education as the panacea for every social ill. Concerns about class inequalities in the UK are no exception, with politicians and commentators arguing that education reform should be at the centre of the drive to increase social mobility. Indeed the Social Mobility Commission chairman, Alan Milburn, was quoted recently, “It will be impossible to make progress in improving social mobility until the educational attainment gap between less well-off and better-off children is closed”. The recent proposal to reintroduce grammar schools

has sparked a similar row about the attainment gap and mobility opportunities, with opponents of the Government claiming that selection means ‘segregation’ and that the creation of more grammar schools will harm mobility. It is widely believed that education is critical in social mobility processes. At face value this is not contentious and no-one would celebrate any widening of the attainment gap between the children of different social classes. But there are problems here. Despite frequent claims that social mobility in the UK is ‘falling’ or going backwards or even

recreating the old class structure, academic evidence from sociologists who study the occupational and class structure in Britain shows mobility rates (i.e. measured by occupation of parents and their children) have been remarkably steady over the past thirty years. So, despite the repeated claims of the commentariat, social mobility is not in decline. Relative mobility changes are characterised by very large degree of constancy over time.

The mistake of left and right is to assume that educational policy drives occupational



mobility. It is assumed that the key to increasing social mobility lies in the operation of the education system. Heated arguments about, for example, pupil selection, streaming by ability, curriculum reform, assessment regimes, teacher pupil ratios, teacher recruitment and training – are all invoked in the argument about mobility opportunities. Such debates miss the point. Mobility opportunities are driven by the shape and character of the occupational system and not by tinkering with schools or universities. Sociologists have argued, on the contrary, that the

historical record indicates that the effect of educational expansion on mobility processes and outcomes has in fact been very limited. John Goldthorpe of Nuffield College claims that a new pattern of mobility is emerging in which younger generations will face less favourable mobility chances than did their parents or grandparents, but this is essentially the result of structural changes to the labour market, as the underlying mobility regime remains remarkably constant.

Public debates about social mobility are

always concerned with the upward mobility of the children of lower ranked occupational groups. They exclude consideration of downward mobility. Of course it is logically impossible for rates of upward mobility to increase unless rates of downward mobility also increase. Because the middle classes are very effective at using their economic and cultural resources, even during periods of expanding educational opportunities, they ensure that their offspring are not downwardly mobile. If there is no room at the top because the middle class are effective at avoiding the intergenerational



downward spiral, the only prospect for higher rates of mobility is for more high-end jobs to be created. This is exactly what did happen between 1960 and 1990, the period referred to as a 'golden age' of mobility. The reasons for this are complex but are not related to education policy or reform. These years witnessed a huge expansion in state employment and the creation of substantial career opportunities in education, welfare, administration, etc. In the private sector large corporations grew in scale and created a new managerial class. Such an upgrading of the class structure creates a big rise in what Goldthorpe and his colleagues term the 'salarariat'. This period sees also a numerical fall in the proportion of the population in the wage-earning working class from 50% to 30% of the economically active. What occurs in effect is that economic change

creates more room at the top. As a consequence many more were on the way up rather than on the way down.

Educational opportunities are an important factor in determining which particular individuals will be mobile but it does not follow that it will be of much significance in determining the total amount of mobility. In fact Goldthorpe argues that we impose an undue and possibly unfair burden on schools and universities by expecting them to provide a solution to inequalities of opportunity. In a 2016 lecture to the British Academy, he argued that any equalisation in attainment of educational qualifications in terms of class origins is offset by the decline in the returns educational qualifications bring. If we wish to return to a period of greater occupational mobility, then we must grasp that the role of education is limited. Goldthorpe calls

instead for policies that would deliver an upgrading of the jobs structure, i.e more high skill top-end jobs. This is much more challenging politically than reforming education systems. So, it seems that debates about, for example, selection by ability, reducing class size or access arrangements to elite universities are largely irrelevant in the greater scheme of things.

Rob Mears
February 2017

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Sociology Social Media Questionnaire: Student Questionnaire project

By Patrick Robinson, Sociology Teacher at
Cadbury Sixth Form College in Birmingham



Explaining the study

Students at Cadbury College study the Digital Social Media topic for their upper sixth course. This explores how greater access to on-line social media has effected the norms and values of society. I thought that this would be an interesting topic for students to carry out their own primary research with and, along the way, allow students to have some experience in designing and delivering their own sociological study. So, even if your own

Sociology course doesn't study digital social media explicitly, there is always the need to demonstrate how research methods work for students.

Designing the questionnaire

The easiest and most practical method for a group of students to design and carry out is a questionnaire, based on Likert scale closed questions. I started this task by explaining the different range of closed questions that exist and sharing an example

of an existing questionnaire that Ofsted use to measure pupil views at a school: www.thegrid.org.uk/leadership/sse/documents/pupil_questnr_ofst_sec.doc Then, my class had to design statements that could measure student views towards a range of sociological arguments regarding the use of digital social media. For example, in order test Baudrillard's concept of the "death of the real" (see reference below) we designed the statement:



Exploring how greater access to on-line social media has effected the norms and values of society.

“Most people present a version of themselves on-line that is not the reality of their lives”.

Or to test the Feminist idea that online social media adds to women and girls feeling that they live in a culture where they are to be judged on their appearance:

“On-line social media has a negative effect on my self-esteem”.

And

“Images shared via on-line social networks create unrealistic standards of what is considered beautiful”.

This process of turning sociological ideas into easy to understand statements helped students revise the concepts and theories we had already studied and allowed them to experience the process of operationalisation: how to design questions that could measure attitudes towards abstract ideas. For example, in the last question above, we had a discussion in

class about the use of the word “beautiful”: would male respondents interpret this word in the same way as female respondents? Perhaps it would be better operationalisation to ask:

“Images shared via on-line social networks create unrealistic standards of what is considered attractive”.

We wanted to obtain mainly quantitative data in order to compare



results from different gender groups. But there were some qualitative, open ended questions in the last section of the questionnaire too.

Obtaining results

Once the questions were handed in to me in draft form, I typed them out for the final questionnaire. Students were then given 4 blank copies of the questionnaire and set homework to fill in from an opportunity sample of other young people they could ask to fill in the questions. We set a quota of finding two females and two males so that our sample was of even size (though this doesn't make it representative of course).

Students handed in their completed sheets to me, then I carried out the counting task to generate results. Other teachers may use social survey websites if they feel that

would be more efficient (and save paper!).

Results and conclusions

Our final sample size was 93 participants, mainly students from the same college. 43 Male and 50 female.

Here is a summary of the quantitative results of the survey. I plan to let students code the more qualitative data from the survey as a class task next term, so I will publish these results in the next issue of the Sociology Teacher: stay tuned!

Quantitative results: all figures in %.

Q2. Approximately, how much time would you spend using on-line social networks in a typical 24 hour period? Please tick one option:

	Males	Females
0 hours/None at all	0	0
0-1 hours	6	4
2-3 hours	12	30
4-5 hours	12	32
6-7 hours	9	16
8 hours or more	4	18

Q3. If you use on-line social media, what are the top three types/sources/apps that you use?: please state in the 3 boxes. If you don't use on-line social media, state "NONE".

	Males	Females
1	Instagram (31 respondents)	Instagram (37 respondents)
2	Snapchat (27 respondents)	Snapchat (33 respondents)
3	Facebook (22 respondents)	Facebook (22 respondents)

SECTION B: Likert scale question results

Q1. On-line social networks help me make and maintain worthwhile friendships.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	16	56	23	5	0
FEMALES	30	58	12	0	0



Q2. I measure my self-esteem by positive feedback from on-line social networks eg: number of friends, number of “Likes” received.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	12	21	32	35	0
FEMALES	6	26	54	14	2

Q3. I spend too much time on-line using social networks

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	21	49	23	7	0
FEMALES	30	36	30	4	0

Q4. Images shared via on-line social networks create unrealistic standards of what is considered beautiful.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	33	44	19	2	2
FEMALES	60	30	6	0	4

Q5. I feel safe when I am using social networks on-line

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	21	54	23	2	0
FEMALES	14	64	18	4	0

Q6. I have been bullied by others via on-line social networks

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	2	9	33	56	0
FEMALES	4	22	40	34	0

Q7. I have bullied others via on-line social networks

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	7	19	23	51	0
FEMALES	4	2	22	72	0



Q9 I have friends on-line but I still feel lonely

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	7	12	44	37	0
FEMALES	4	10	58	28	0

Q10. I make regular use of on-line social networks as a tool for studying for my education.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	12	23	44	19	2
FEMALES	16	40	32	10	2

Q11: Most people present a version of themselves on-line that is not the reality of their lives.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	35	48	17	0	0
FEMALES	50	36	12	2	2

Q12. I rely on on-line social media every day.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	21	53	12	12	2
FEMALES	28	50	26	6	0

Q13. On-line social media has a negative effect on my self-esteem.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	12	9	47	30	2
FEMALES	6	36	46	12	0



**References/contacts/
wider reading**

References/useful wider reading:
Baudrillard summary: Steven Poole,
Guardian on-line <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/mar/07/guardianobituaries.france>

Q14: On-line social media is a good way to decrease feelings of loneliness.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	7	39	35	19	0
FEMALES	16	46	28	10	0

Q15. I would be able to give up on-line social media for a week

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know/no answer
MALES	33	26	25	16	0
FEMALES	12	40	30	16	0

Analysis: Gender trends and theory links?

Male and female respondents have very similar levels of digital social media use, and have the same list for their favourite three forms of social media: Instagram, Snapchat and then Facebook. There are similar attitudes from males and females concerning the usefulness of social networks in making and maintaining friendships. Males and females both tended to agree that “Most people present a version of themselves on-line that is not the reality of their lives”, suggesting some awareness of our sample sharing Baudrillard’s view of the “death of the real” from the mass media. The reliance on social media every day was very similar between gender groups.

Female respondents were twice as likely as male respondents to “Strongly Agree” that “Images shared via on-line social

networks create unrealistic standards of what is considered attractive”, suggesting some support for feminist interpretations of how the media can make women feel. There was a slightly higher % of male respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that “I have bullied others via on-line social networks”. While a minority of males said they used social networks for studying for their education, the majority of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they did this. More female respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social media has a negative effect on their self-esteem, but this was not a majority view of the female sample. Female respondents were slightly more likely to agree or strongly agree that “On-line social media is a good way to decrease feelings of loneliness”.

Lesson activities/suggestions for teaching

Questionnaire design training session, design questions
Present the students with a sheet of the results, but let them work out analyse what conclusions the numbers actually mean. Let students analyse the qualitative answers themselves to experience coding process.
Let students evaluate the study we did in terms of validity, reliability, representativeness and ethics.
Ask students to write about what research should happen now, after our questionnaire has been carried out
Potential to pass the data on to the pastoral team at your school/college: a useful starting point to discuss how students use social media in their own lives.



Social Media Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire aimed at measuring the attitudes of students towards their use of on-line social networks. On-line social networks refer to media that can be accessed via internet communities where people post and read messages from and to others eg: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Twitter.

We would be very grateful if you would fill in the questions below as part of a Sociology project. All answers will remain anonymous. If you feel you can't answer any question (eg: you're not sure) please feel free to leave the question blank. Thank you very much.

SECTION A: about you:

1. Gender Group: Are you.....? (please tick). Male Female

2. Approximately, how much time would you spend using on-line social networks in a typical 24 hour period? Please tick one option:

0 hours/None at all	
0-1 hours	
2-3 hours	
4-5 hours	
6-7 hours	
8 hours or more	

3. If you use on-line social media, what are the top three types/sources/apps that you use?: please state in the 3 boxes. If you don't use on-line social media, state "NONE".

1	
2	
3	

SECTION B In the following table, please tick if you either "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree".

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q1. On-line social networks helps me make and maintain worthwhile friendships.				
Q2. I measure my self-esteem by positive feedback from on-line social networks eg: number of friends, number of "Likes" received.				
Q3. I spend too much time on-line using social networks				
Q4. Images shared via on-line social networks create unrealistic standards of what is considered beautiful.				

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q5. I feel safe when I am using social networks on-line				
Q6. I have been bullied by others via on-line social networks				
Q7. I have bullied others via on-line social networks				
Q9 I have friends on-line but I still feel lonely				
Q10. I make regular use of on-line social networks as a tool for studying for my education.				
Q11: Most people present a version of themselves on-line that is not the reality of their lives.				
Q12. I rely on on-line social media every day.				
Q13. On-line social media has a negative effect on my self-esteem.				
Q14: On-line social media is a good way to decrease feelings of loneliness.				
Q15. I would be able to give up on-line social media for a week				

SECTION C

Q16: Have you ever been bullied by others via on-line social networks? (eg: insulted, harassed, intimidated, regularly ridiculed?)

YES	
NO	
Don't know/prefer not to say	

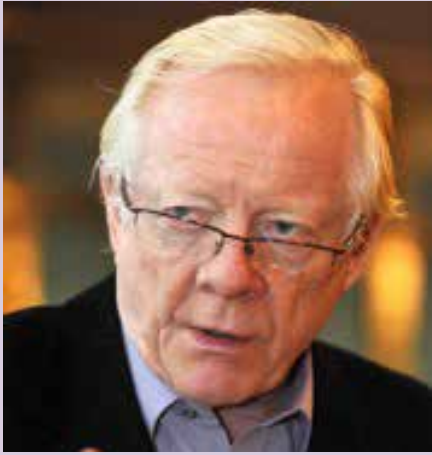
Q17: Who would you seek advice/help from if you feeling bullied by others via on-line social networks? (Use the box below to state who/ what that would that be)

--

Q18: What do you like and dislike the most about on-line social networks?

LIKE	DISLIKE

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, please hand back to the person who gave you the questionnaire.



Telephone Conversation with Professor Göran Therborn, a Swedish Sociologist.

Interview with Corrina Ferros, head of Sociology at William Morris Sixth Form in London.

I spot a book in my school library on the display shelf: 'The killing fields of inequality' by Göran Therborn. I take it out on loan and am immediately drawn to his 'voice' as a sociologist within the broader family of the social sciences. He has a clear line: inequality is rising, which is a bad thing for society. I feel like I have found another sociologist I need to talk to. I email him that evening and he responds immediately: he would be happy to talk to me. This is fabulous as this is the process of 'doing sociology' not just teaching it!

Would you say you are a sociologist?

"Yes! Although I should add that I often call myself a social scientist. I guess that is primarily because outside academia few people know what sociology is. I am proud because basically it is the endless curiosity of the discipline and the endless open social horizons. I mean, whatever you are interested in in society, you can study it. It is not quite a discipline, it is an open field, and that is what I found so attractive.

Can this 'openness' not go both ways?

It can mean that people can't narrow it down and put it in a box, so its status suffers and it is actually problematic? Or is it just positive?

The academic status doesn't worry me very much, and it goes up and down. I remember in the 1960s when sociology was a rising star in the academic context and it might come again. It is true that the non-disciplinary character of sociology means that its openness can be abused. Some colleagues certainly do that in treating it as a rather easy way of doing things, by doing pretty amateurish studies they happen to be interested in. It's a risk and you have to be very serious or very committed to do it well because you don't have that much of narrow, paradigmatic or disciplinary constraints telling you what you are not allowed to do.

What excites you most about sociology?

Really that is what attracts me, the openness. I have hard evidence to show

that I am interested in a number of things. Over the years I have studied gender relations, unemployment, state structures, ideology, cities, inequality, class conflicts. You can do that. You can roam around within sociology and nobody finds it bizarre or strange and that's what attracts me, yes!

Why does inequality interest you?

In one sense it goes back a long time and has to do with always being a social critic and a kind of intellectual rebel. Inequality has always been one of the things I have rebelled against. In that sense I have been looking at it all my life. In the 1960s and 70s people like me looking at it was self-evident, from the social system, the capitalist system. It wasn't interesting per se, but you had to try and see how it could be combated. So I spent quite some time looking at class conflict, social movement, state power and ideology, those things. Now I have come to the conclusion that you have to delve more closely into what is happening within the system, I mean it is certainly going to last for quite some time. I should also say one thing that has been enormously inspiring to me has been a lecture by Sen raising the question: Inequality or what? Because that propelled the whole thing, because inequality is not as self-evidence and obvious as you might think. It is not just about the size of someone's wallet, it is much more complex than that.

Do you also want to define problems and improve them in your role as a sociologist, or is it your intent to be neutral and just describe the world?

The reason why I am hesitating is because I have always been driven to sociology because I wanted to look at certain things because of their social importance, and that was guided by my values. But on the other hand, I have been from very early on, I have never been very attracted to this idea of values. I once wrote a collection of essays called 'what is the value of good values?' with the conclusion that it wasn't that much worth. I never really felt obliged to take a fight for value-driven sociology. I assume that that is basically self-evident,

whatever you study. You have some interests in something, and whether you call that interests of values or... the main thing is you have to be serious and have empirical evidence.

Do you see yourself consciously working as a Marxist or neo-Marxist?

For quite a long time I certainly defined myself as a Marxist, even as a Marxist with a social science programme. Later on I got interested in things which you didn't find very much of in Marx, like urban iconography or the operation of health issues, the rights of children. And so I am not disowning my Marxist formation – I am pretty proud of it – it taught me a lot – it got me out into the world with lots of friends and contacts – but I can just notice that many of my research topics I have been dealing with in later years – not inequality as that is clearly within the Marxist orbit – but for instance now I am writing about how cities manifest power in their architecture, that is something that Marx never wrote about. I am walking outside a Marxist path nowadays. A couple of years ago I reread Marx and published a little book: from Marxist to post-Marxist? The question mark is the most important part. I must say I was very much impressed with his dialectical process, looking for contradictions and conflicts is a most fruitful approach, and also in ethical terms, I was reminded of one of his diktat's, the freedom and emancipation of the oppressed will have to be the work of the oppressed themselves. It is a kind of emancipatory project for a set of emancipatory values, which I find morally absolutely convincing and attractive.

Is your work on African capitals to do with your current work on global cities?

My current work is going to look at the rise of nation states and capitals all over the world to try to find out what the national capitals tell us about the background of the nation state and the kind of power within it. I will start with the first revolutionary capitals like Paris and Moscow to the rise of global cities.

What do you think has been the most significant contribution of sociology to the world?

It's an understanding of the fact that people live differently and an explanation of why they live differently in different parts of the world.

Why is that important? Why do we need to know that?

Because in order to function properly in the world and to be a decent human being to your fellow humans, you have to understand other people and other cultures and ways of living and thinking. That is the reason.

Anthropology would also do that or is sociology doing that better in our modern, contemporary world?

They are in some ways the same discipline though until recently Anthropology focused on the colonies of the empires rather than the empires, in that sense the contribution has been much narrower. It has also had a bit too interested in exoticism, with too much focus on small populations in remote areas – not much about big countries, big populations.

Thinking back to this contribution of sociology to society, does that link to the reduction of existential inequality that you describe in your book? Is that linked to sociology opening up the world to us? Oh yes, sure, absolutely yes. It is not only sociology but social movements and the victims of patriarchy and racism themselves, but sociology has been part of that, has contributed to that, and that is something we have reasons as sociologists to be proud of.

Do you think that the natural scientists have made more of a contribution to making a better world?

That is a very big question. Probably yes, although the natural sciences have also made much bigger contributions to a dangerous world, just think of the weapons of mass destruction. Yes, I think the social sciences have to recognise the modesty of their achievements, and that is because of the complexity of human life and human beings. They are certainly much more difficult to understand and to manipulate than the natural sciences.

It is a worthwhile thing to teach sociology in schools?

Oh yes, even in countries that don't teach it, there is usually something called 'social studies' or 'civic knowledge' which is, at least in its best forms, is a broad form of sociology.

What are the biggest problems facing the world now?

Mass poverty and inequality in the world which prevents the majority of the human population to live a fully human life at a level which is possible at the current

technological development.

Hans Rosling, also from your country, shows how child mortality and fertility rates around the world are improving everywhere, and the world is no longer polarised into a 'developed' and 'developing' world. He seems quite optimistic about the world in this sense – do you agree with him?

Oh yes, with respect to fertility it is happening. Africa is holding out and most sub-Saharan African women still have 6-7 children, but for the rest of the world there has been a dramatic change, also in India and in Latin America. That is certainly true and there are other things like better mobile phones in sub-Saharan Africa. They went directly from having no functioning communications or wire or fixed wire telephones or roads, to communicating by mobile phones. But, the world is still very much polarised and one thing which is getting more polarised life expectancy and health expectancy within countries is actually widening.

Can you explain the phrase you use of the "Strange non-death of neo-liberalism"? I see it as also relating to my non-high-flyers students who are not against tuition fees and seem quite optimistic about their choices and options. Is that the hold neo-liberalism trickling down?

No, I don't think so.

Why is it so attractive then? Is it the one percent who keep a grip or hold on the rest of us?

Not many people think of the situation in terms of neo-liberalism, but a liberal market economy is clearly seen by many people as a vehicle of opportunity, and it is true that due to neo-liberal economic policies, and with the dramatic technological revolutions, Facebook and Amazon etc. enormous fortunes have been made, and many more people are hoping to jump onto the bandwagon. Particularly in countries outside Europe the chances of opportunities of young people have widened in recent decades with the expansion of higher education and the whole economic world which has produced high economic growth in many parts of the world, largely driven by China, ironically enough which is not quite a neo-liberal country, as its demand has got Latin America and Africa going. But having said that, for young people who are born in Europe and the US, their future prospects look much dimmer than for people of my generation. There is hard sociological data which shows that. It is particularly dramatic in France for some reason. People born after 1975 basically, their chances of getting as good a life as their parents are declining. The prospects of getting ahead of their parents are really only for the minority. In the Far East, they can clearly look forward with some good reason to much better chances than their

parents had. The same is true from Africa and Asia, especially if they are getting good schooling in Britain.

Should there be restriction of freedom of choice of 'exclusivity of schools'?

Yes, absolutely. Such schools have an enormous tradition in Britain, but in my country it is now coming on a large scale and is creating havoc with a whole cohort of pupils. One of the main reasons is that education experts are fairly consensual in saying that this kind of segregation of schooling is why Sweden has fallen in the PISA educational performance. Having private schools undermines the sense of citizenship and creates exclusive social worlds where young people live on different planets.

Given that inequality and poverty are the biggest problems in the world, can we improve on this situation in future?

It is a question of temperament – I tend to have a fairly optimistic temperament! I do think that things can be changed but nowadays the odds of doing that are empirically unverifiable, and are tremendous obstacles. That is why I am now increasingly looking into the middle class, or the middle classes in different parts of the world, because what happens there is a key for the future. This rather heterogenous class can align themselves with the rich, the oligarchy, and hope to become members themselves of it, or they can align themselves with the people, the popular classes, which would mean a force of social change. Realistically the probabilities between these poles are empirically unverifiable and I think it is impossible to say which has the biggest chance of winning. Perhaps the non-popular option is more likely, more probable, I will concede that – that is the sociological constraint on my optimistic temperament. Of course it also depends on the character of the oligarchy – if it is blatantly corrupt and inefficient and authoritarian, the chances of the middle classes aligning against them with the people is more likely. So the oligarchy can stave off any popular alliance against them I am afraid.

Do you think Northern Europe or possibly Latin America are the best places to grow up?

Clearly Northern Europe is still the least indecent place on the planet, although there are forces trying to undermine that, and one is the segregationist schooling movement. How far Latin America equalisation will go nobody knows. Even the best country like Uruguay has a very long way to go before coming to Northern European countries of equality. In that sense, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan are much closer, but currently all three countries are politically rather conservative and not going in the right direction. But in social issues, they are our closest relations.



“This is my truth, tell me yours.”

By Patrick Robinson, Cadbury Sixth Form College.

“This is my truth, tell me yours.” Aneurin Bevan quote, used as title for a Manic Street Preachers Album in 1998.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/southeastwales/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8792000/8792227.stm

Debates concerning “fake news” in the media are perfectly relevant to the methods behind good Sociology. Fake news refers to the sharing of information that lacks truth, substance or evidence. Hearsays become rumours and rumours become reality. As if we are living in a constant April Fool’s day. But it is possible to see the idea of

Why has “fake news” been picked up as a phrase in everyday culture in 2017? Perhaps it’s because the plurality of media outlets make it hard for readers/viewers to keep up with media stories. 24- hour news cycles and the ability for anyone to comment, blog and vlog allow a multitude of messages to exist at the same time. If time to assess all sources is scarce, declaring reports as “fake news” may be some form of rationalisation to respond to a situation that we can’t verify evidence. The role of Sociology is to fill this void of verification: without the “social facts”, we can’t study society and we can’t aim to improve it.

Fake news refers to the sharing of information that lacks truth, substance or evidence.

“fake news” as a familiar topic that has been discussed before. For example, conflict theorists such as Marxism have long argued that media messages are controlled and maintained by the powerful to serve their own end: messages that lead to deceit and false class

Teaching ideas for learning activities:

- Homework task: find evidence of news that spread quickly around on-line forums that then turned out to be false: summarise what happened and aim to describe how the fake news spread.



consciousness. Social action theories could be summarised as arguing that the “truth” always lies in the eye of the beholder: we interpret social events in a number of different ways.

- Homework task: USA election: Clinton v Trump: watch the live debates again and research the moments referred to as “fact checks”: who turned out to be true/false?

Just in case

If you are looking for ideas or inspiration to liven up your sociology teaching, in each issue we review ICT related activities, guides, websites, book and film reviews for you to explore.

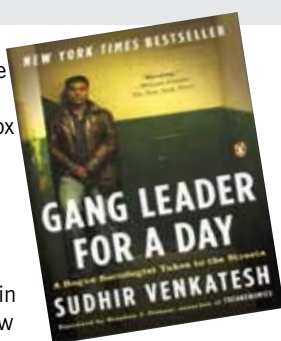


Case Study

Observation method used in the Crime topic

ON LINE RESOURCE:
SUMMARY BY PATRICK
ROBINSON, CADBURY
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE IN
BIRMINGHAM.

Sudhir Venkatesh became very well known in research for his unorthodox study into criminal gang behaviour in the city of Chicago. Entrusted with access to the gang via the gang leader, "J.T", Venkatesh was able to gain deep understanding of how a gang known as the "Black Kings" operated from day to day. This study has now become core reading in studying crime topics, but also has lots to demonstrate regarding the observation research method such as the need for verstehen, rapport and trust with a sample. Teachers may well be very familiar with the details of Venkatesh's study but may not be aware of the following on-line links to extension material on the study:



All-together, this is an hour and a half material on Venkatesh that exists for free on internet sources. Well worth sharing in class/steering student to watch this for homework and extension knowledge.

- 4 minute clip of Venkatesh explaining his project, comes with useful footage of life in the Robert Taylor homes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRq1AhFAN-4>

- 9 minute presentation and book reading by Venkatesh at a bookstore:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipb0TfdNRwM>

- 1 hour 14 min lecture from Venkatesh exploring the underground economy of New York, called "Floating City" and published in 2013. Several extracts are read out by Venkatesh such as the section regarding the need to shift his mind as a Chicago-thinking researcher to a different city with different cultures and scale:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZPhcOZzXPU





Reflection on Teacher Training: Wellbeing and Achievement.

by Mariyah Husayn, Law Teacher at Cadbury Sixth Form College, reflecting on a training event ran by Keynote Educational, London: 18th November

I went to the conference knowing it was going to mainly centre around:

- The rising mental health issues amongst our students.
- Incorporating wellbeing in order to raise attainment.

I really wasn't expecting the key focus to be 'Every Teacher Matters'. This focus makes sense though, because by making sure teachers are well and cared for, they will then step into the classroom being the role models and mirrors that our students need. This humanity and a recognition of staff effort matters. Kindness and appreciation matter otherwise there would be limited emotional loyalty/longevity.

This conference was amazing. The key speaker was Natasha Devon, who was until recently, the Government's Mental Health Champion. Before she took on the role, she spent a decade promoting mental health and self-esteem in schools. Many different sources describe the increase in rates of depression, anxiety, self-harm and eating disorders for children.

If teachers model self-care, they will respond to situations with resilience and be centred so that they are not reactive or

defensive. They would be great role models of wellbeing in the classroom.

Unlike a number of other professions, teachers don't have the same safety valve available to them when they are feeling overwhelmed or stressed on the job. They can't so easily take 5 minutes out to calm down and centre themselves or take an early break. We have to stay in front of our class.

So what can we do to support our staff? We could stand out from the crowd, by creating an environment that is about being preventative - not curative.

We could refrain from encouraging staff to be superhuman by multi-tasking or taking on too much. This is not sustainable in the long term or good for wellbeing. Striving for perfection demoralises us, and it is not beneficial for staff or students. We could have a policy that makes people go home at a decent hour instead of staying late and working. We could overtly encourage family values and a work life balance and introduce mindfulness which is widely known to cultivate compassion.

An emphasis could be placed on creating an environment that is kind to both

References/contacts/ wider reading

www.keynote.org.uk Twitter: @keynotecourses
Decca Aitkenhead, Guardian on-line: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/may/13/sacked-childrens-mental-health-tzar-natasha-devon-i-was-proper-angry>
Charity, Young Minds: <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

staff and students. Ofsted want to see environments that model this. Why wouldn't they?

It was suggested that we could experiment with the following ideas:

- Embed a whole school wellbeing culture
- Avoid a 'bolt-on' approach
- Model wellbeing from the top down & bottom up!
- Prioritise Wellbeing over targets & achievement
- Create a long term plan. There is no quick fix!
- Embrace a fingerprint unique approach

One of the workshops centred around the kinds of compliments we give and that we need to rethink praise. Common responses were how someone looks, what they achieve etc, and how we inadvertently support multibillion profiting companies who feed off the insecurities of the young. We could compliment people on character virtues; kindness, ethics, effort, consideration, motivation, purpose and humanity etc. Compliment more on how someone smiles instead of what they are wearing etc. Basically, the focus should be to give compliments on what really matters. So how can we fight the mental health issues in both staff and students?

Perhaps we could begin with assessing the wellbeing levels staff by asking them where they feel they are in terms of a wellbeing scale? We could then implement changes on the basis of those findings. A whole college approach seems best. At the conference, a majority of the delegates felt their wellbeing was not as important a consideration as the wellbeing emphasis placed on students.

I haven't been able to stop thinking about how overwhelming it was in significance: how can a stressed, over worked, burnt out staff achieve a truly good/ outstanding organisation? Teachers' wellbeing needs to be at the core. This will then have an impact on the students we teach and their wellbeing and attainment, which would lead us towards the good/outstanding organisations we all want. Every teacher really does matter.

Sociology teachers in schools and sixth form colleges, are now offered full BSA membership at the concessionary rate of £57pa (Jan to Dec), with the following benefits:

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<https://www.britsoc.co.uk>

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