

BSA Network

Recording the working lives of sociologists for over 40 years **Issue 139, Autumn 2021**



Sociology A-level: too old-school?

Also in this issue:

- We take a look at this year's WES and Medsoc conferences
- A new book relates the lives of the pioneers of social science
- We celebrate the life of Professor Andrew Webster
- BSA Chair warns of testing times ahead for sociology

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

Sociology from polity

polity

politybooks.com

Sociological Theory for Digital Society

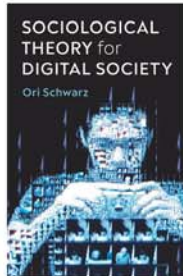
The Codes that Bind Us Together

Ori Schwarz

"In this striking new book Ori Schwarz argues that sociological theory is a creature of its time. And so the changes in the digital social landscape call for a revitalised theory that is able to cope with the emerging shifts and sharp turns. Keeping a watchful eye on the past and the present, this pathbreaking book seeks to rejuvenate sociological theory for these switched-on, hyper-networked and seemingly accelerating times."

David Beer, University of York

Pb 9781509542970 | £17.99 | September 2021



Making Sense of AI

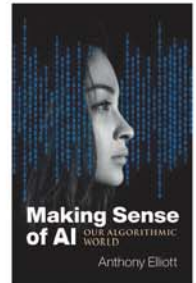
Our Algorithmic World

Anthony Elliott

"Making Sense of AI offers a much needed, clear and accessible account of AI and its possible futures as it emerges as part of our social world, as a global, institutional and everyday phenomenon. Confronting issues that concern all of us, including a focus on the future of work, social inequalities, and surveillance, and the ethics of AI, this book is an extremely welcome and sociological introduction to a field of research too often dominated by the engineering and computing sciences."

Sarah Pink, Director, Emerging Technologies Research Lab, Monash University

Pb 9781509548903 | £15.99 | October 2021



Critical Humanism

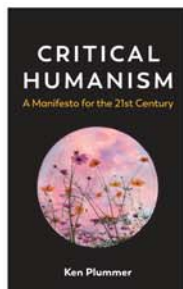
A Manifesto for the 21st Century

Ken Plummer

"This book is an extraordinarily brave and enormously comprehensive attempt to re-energize an interest in the battered concept of humanism, fully realizing its author's intention to provide 'a vision of something better'."

Laurie Taylor, University of York, and presenter of Thinking Allowed, BBC Radio Four

Pb 9781509527953 | £17.99 | September 2021



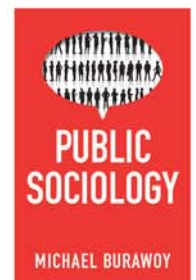
Public Sociology

Michael Burawoy

"Michael Burawoy has written a fascinating intellectual autobiography, reconstructing the sociological canon along the way. This is a powerful call for sociology to recover its public mission."

Edward Webster, University of the Witwatersrand

Pb 9781509519156 | £14.99 | September 2021



The New Gender Paradox

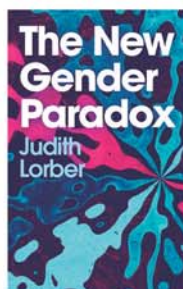
Fragmentation and Persistence of the Binary

Judith Lorber

"For those interested in both the fragmentation and persistence of the gender binary, this short book is essential reading. The New Gender Paradox is engaging, thought-provoking, carefully researched, and well written. I highly recommend it!"

James W. Messerschmidt, author of Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification

Pb 9781509544363 | £14.99 | November 2021



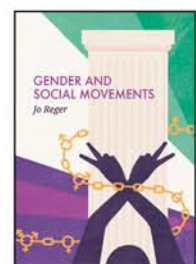
Gender and Social Movements

Jo Reger

"This accessibly written book is both eminently teachable and a must-read for scholars. Using a wide range of engaging examples and centering intersectionality, Reger brilliantly synthesizes the most current research and unpacks how major processes in social movements are gendered."

Nancy Whittier, Sophia Smith Professor of Sociology, Smith College

Pb 9781509541331 | £15.99 | September 2021



Join our mailing list at www.politybooks.com

 @politybooks  facebook.com/politybooks  instagram.com/politybooks

For further information and to order books,
visit www.politybooks.com or email us at ukmarketing@politybooks.com

News

- 4** Sex workers from the EU report more violence since Brexit, research says
- 5** A new book compares the royal family to tax-avoiding giants such as Amazon
- 6** A new website on how to think and write critically has been launched
- 7** A sociologist evacuated from Afghanistan is concerned for its future
- 9** A £7 million project to improve the collection of data on violence is set up
- 10** The new BSA Chair says she is optimistic despite testing times ahead for sociology
- 11** The BSA is selling its London room to avoid running down cash reserves

Features

- 18** This year's WES conference heard addresses on racism, Covid and AI
- 24** Experts spoke about suicide, race and the pandemic at the the Medsoc conference
- 30** A new book relates the life stories of 58 pioneers in the field of social science
- 47** The BSA sets out its achievements in 2020 in its annual review

Opinion

- 36** Oli Williams tells us about the books that have inspired his career
- 40** Martyn Hammersley takes a fresh look at the life and work of Karl Mannheim
- 42** Tim May writes about the values that should inform a civic university
- 44** We run an appreciation of the life and work of Andrew Webster

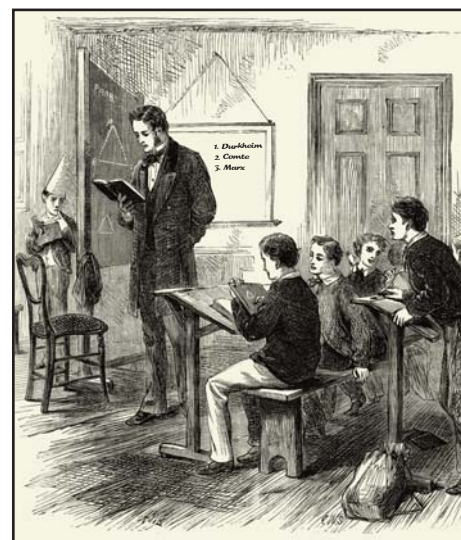
Autumn 2021 ►

Main feature:

A recent BSA event looked at whether the sociology A-level syllabus has kept pace with the times

See page 28

graphic:
adapted stock imagery



BSA Trustees:

Jason Arday
Aminu Musa Audu
Sarah Cant
Elizabeth Cotton
Mark Doidge
Stevi Jackson
Janice McLaughlin
Karim Murji
Catherine Pope
Louise Ryan (Chair)
Rima Saini
Richard Waller
Chris Yuill

Editorial Team:

Judith Mudd
Tony Trueman

Note: where not stated, copyright of photographs generally lies with the researchers featured in the article, their institutions or the BSA

Network:
©2021 BSA Publications Ltd
ISSN: 2634-9213

Production/Enquiries:

tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk
Tel: 07964 023392

Network is published three times a year:
Spring
Summer
Autumn

Available online to members:
www.britsoc.co.uk

Longer versions of some *Network* articles can be seen at:
<https://www.britsoc.co.uk/members-area/network> (login needed)

Disclaimer: Please note that the views expressed in *Network* and any enclosures or advertisements are not necessarily those of BSA Publications Limited or the British Sociological Association (BSA). While every care is taken to provide accurate information, neither the BSA, the Trustees, the Editors, nor the contributors undertake any liability for any error or omission. BSA Publications Ltd is a subsidiary of the British Sociological Association, registered in England and Wales, Company Number: 01245771. The British Sociological Association was founded in 1951. It is a Registered Charity (no. 1080235) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 3890729).

Sex workers from the EU report more violence since Brexit

University of Salford: Almost half of sex workers who come to Britain from the EU say they have experienced more violence since the Leave vote.

A report by Dr Laura Connelly, working in collaboration with the English Collective of Prostitutes, found that violent clients use migrant sex workers' uncertain immigration status as a spur to aggression.

The report, carried out with 41 EU migrant sex workers and the first of its kind, found that 44% had noticed an increase in the levels of violence since the referendum.

Some have been physically assaulted, including one sex worker who had eggs and tomatoes thrown at them.

One interviewee told the researchers: "Punters are more confident to report us to the police and Home Office – their threats sound like 'I am going to get you deported if you don't give me my money back'."

Around 44% of respondents describe their relationship with the police as poor or very poor. This means that when migrant sex workers experienced violence, they often felt unable to report it to the police for fear of arrest.

One sex worker said: "I have been threatened by men on the street who said they would attack me. When I went to the police, they said 'are you telling me you're a



Dr Laura Connelly

prostitute? Because if you are, I am going to arrest you'. I have experienced increasing racism and sexism from the police since the referendum was announced."

The report showed that migrant sex workers feared discrimination from the police and Home Office – 54% of respondents believe their risk of arrest has

increased post referendum and 66% think their risk of deportation has increased. Some reported having been raided and arrested, others have been threatened with deportation.

This is despite the fact that sex workers can claim self-employed status under the EU Settlement Scheme, which allows EU migrants to live and work in the UK post-Brexit.

Many sex workers are disadvantaged in their application to the scheme, not having the documentation required to prove continual residence or employment in the UK.

Dr Connelly said: "Violence, racism and xenophobia against EU migrant sex workers has increased since the referendum result was announced. Yet, far from being able to rely on the police for support, migrant sex workers are increasingly fearful of arrest and deportation.

"They are told that sex work is not legitimate work, despite EU migrant sex workers having the right to claim self-employed status in the UK.

"We call on all of those concerned about the rights of migrant workers post-Brexit to work with us to establish sex work as real work and campaign for all EU citizens to be granted automatic settled status in the UK and for the end to the hostile environment."

Unpaid carers use food banks

University of Sheffield: Unpaid carers are twice as likely as others to have used a food bank during the pandemic, research shows.

Researchers at the ESRC-funded 'Sustainable care: connecting people and systems' programme and the University of Birmingham analysed survey data.

They found that of the six million adults providing care to someone living outside their own household in the UK, 106,000 have used a foodbank, a rate twice that of the rest of the population.

Helen Walker, Chief Executive of Carers UK, a partner in the Sustainable Care programme, said: "This pandemic is pushing unpaid carers to breaking point physically and mentally.

"The fact that carers are also twice as likely as the average person to be relying on foodbanks demonstrates just how difficult life is for them right now.

"It is simply unacceptable that carers are having to go hungry because they do not have support.

"Surely, when the majority of carers are providing even more care for relatives during this pandemic, and spending more



Helen Walker

to do so, they deserve some help?

"The government must acknowledge the impact the pandemic is having on carers' finances and job prospects and raise Carer's Allowance as a matter of urgency."

The researchers drew on data from the Understanding Society survey for their work.

New staff start at Glasgow

University of Glasgow: Four staff have begun work recently.

Dr Elisabetta Ferari is an expert on the social and political implications of digital media, with a focus on how activists make sense of the politics of digital technologies. Before joining Glasgow she worked at the universities of Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Dr Karen Cuthbert has research and teaching interests in asexuality and other forms of non-sexualities, gender, youth, qualitative research methodology, disability and autism. Dr Cuthbert joins from the University of Sheffield.

Dr Dominic Hinde is an environmental media academic and a journalist with a background in environmental and international reporting. He was formerly a Carson Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich and has worked at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

Sam Lawton is a social researcher of sexuality and gender, whose PhD project is on bisexual men and their partner's experiences of identity and relationships.

Royal family 'is like tax-avoiding firms'

Lancaster University: A new book that compares the royal family to tax-avoiding corporate giants such as Amazon has been published.

Running the Family Firm, by Dr Laura Clancy, looks at the wealth of the monarchy, who works for it and the tactics it uses to avoid higher taxes.

At an online seminar about her research, Dr Clancy said: "My argument is that we often think of the monarchy as a traditional institution connected to old, aristocratic forms of wealth, but if you look at it in detail we find that we can compare it to something that is more akin to a global corporation like Amazon or Apple."

She said that money from the Duchy of Lancaster was being put into various overseas investment funds to avoid paying tax. The *Guardian* newspaper has revealed in its work on the Paradise Papers that millions of pounds from the Queen's private estate had been invested in a Cayman Islands fund as part of an offshore portfolio.

Dr Ben Carrington, of the University of Southern California, said of the book: "There are few institutions that have been as effective in hiding their operations from public view as the British monarchy."



Dr Laura Clancy

"Laura Clancy deftly traces the strategic ways in which the corporation known as The Firm has maximised profits and engaged in capital accumulation for its own benefit, whilst projecting to the world a false image of a benign family institution, committed to simple, selfless service to the nation."

"A different, more disturbing picture emerges from the pages of this book, namely a portrait of an economic and political enterprise ruthlessly managed as an exploitative financial machine."

Cut inequalities in order to solve climate change

University of Essex: A book which argues that inequalities in wealth and resources must be addressed in order to fully tackle climate change has been published.

In *Climate Emergency: How Societies Create the Crisis*, Emeritus Professor Mark Harvey argues that efforts to combat climate change are doomed to fail unless we have a better understanding of how different societies use the planet's resources.

The book, the culmination of years of research in the UK, Europe, the USA, China, India and Brazil, examines the past through the lens of climate change, highlighting climate impact through history.

"Inequalities in wealth within and between nations are at the heart of their unequal contributions to the climate emergency," said Professor Harvey.

"The richest within the richest countries are forcing the pace of climate change. Meanwhile, half the world's poorer population produces less greenhouse gases than the level needed to meet the 1.5C global warming target."

He said that unless the issues of inequality both in wealth and in command over environmental resources was politically addressed, treaties to cut emissions were "doomed to fail in the challenge to meet the climate emergency."

More details are at:
<https://tinyurl.com/3n5mz58v>

Youth safety expert joins Durham

University of Durham: Carlene Firmin, an expert in the safeguarding of young people at risk of abuse, has joined the Department of Sociology as a professor.

Her appointment is part of the department's move to become a centre for research into this area.

Professor Firmin pioneers the 'Contextual safeguarding' approach to child protection, which is concerned with young people's experiences of harm outside of their families, including in peer groups, schools and local neighbourhoods.

Her work has helped advance policy and research into the protection of adolescents in the UK, Europe and Australia, and has led to changes in social care responses to abuse that takes place outside of families.

Professor Firmin said: "Moving to Durham is an exciting opportunity to build upon this work and to explore the influence of Contextual Safeguarding on child protection policies internationally, while working alongside colleagues and partners who have a wealth of expertise in social and community action across different disciplines."

"As one of the UK's youngest Black female professors, I will contribute to



Professor Carlene Firmin

building an academic community that better reflects and understands the societies we live in, for young people, for women and for Black and other minoritised communities."

She will continue to collaborate with colleagues at the University of Bedfordshire's Safer Young Lives Research Centre, where she is currently a principal research fellow and where she established the practice of Contextual Safeguarding.

In 2011 Professor Firmin was the youngest Black woman to receive an MBE, for raising the profile of women and girls affected by serious youth violence in the UK.

Middle-ranking criminals studied

University of Essex: A new book about the criminal world in the East End of London has been published.

The Business – Talking with Thieves, Gangsters and Dealers, by Emeritus Professor Dick Hobbs, looks at the lives of middle-ranking criminals, such as lorry hijackers, warehouse thieves and minor drug dealers.

"Whenever possible I let ordinary criminals talk about ordinary crimes," said Professor Hobbs.

"I look at the breaking down of the working class communities that the villains came from, such as the docks, and the rise of the drugs trade."

"I look at the blurred boundaries between the criminal world and daily life, through 'nice little earners' and how this changed as security got better and technology developed." The book is published by John Blake Publishing.

Music, migration, Covid and racism tackled at Edinburgh

University of Edinburgh: Lisa McCormick was a studio commentator for English-language YouTube coverage of the 18th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in October. She contributed three articles about the sociology of music to the newsletter, *Chopin Courier*, which was distributed during the competition.

Dr McCormick also chaired the online book launch for *Culture and Art: Selected Writings Vol. 1*, the first in a book series of unpublished writings by Zygmunt Bauman, published by Polity Press. A recording of this, which includes a presentation by librarians on the resources of the Bauman Archive at the University of Leeds, as well as documentary film footage, can be viewed: <https://tinyurl.com/4djeyetc>

In other Edinburgh news, Dr Idil Akinci has been given a fellowship by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation at the GIGA Institute: <https://tinyurl.com/3ke6syz8>

The foundation promotes international academic cooperation between scientists and scholars from Germany and from abroad.

Dr Akinci published an article on the E-International Relations website which explores how Syrians born and raised in the Arabian Gulf States navigate migration to the West. <https://tinyurl.com/73yy5zn>

Professor Nasar Meer helped launch the People's Review of Prevent, a project that invites evidence from researchers, community



Dr Lisa McCormick

organisations and civil liberties groups on the negative impact of Prevent policies. It was set up after a boycott by groups that mistrust the official government enquiry into the strategy. The Review is chaired by Professor John Holmwood and Dr Layla Aitlhadj.

Professor Meer has also worked with a Scottish government-commissioned review of anti-racist policy, and has made a final report to the government as part of the Expert Reference Group on Covid-19 and Ethnicity.

The Guardian newspaper ran an opinion piece by Professor Nasar Meer on discrimination against ethnic minorities in the jobs market.

He wrote the piece after the publication of research by academics at the universities of California and Chicago in which 83,000 responses to real job adverts were made by fake applicants with the same qualifications and training, some of whom were obviously from an ethnic minority. The study showed beyond doubt that "distinctively Black names reduce the probability of employer contact", he said. <https://tinyurl.com/2ycju2rp>

Dr Sophia Woodman became a member of the Academic Freedom and Internationalisation working group. The group has developed a draft code of conduct to ensure that academic freedom of staff and students is protected in UK universities. It is encouraging universities to adopt this.

Professor Jan Webb was invited to present oral evidence to the UK Parliament Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee on the role of local government in meeting net zero greenhouse gas emission targets. <https://tinyurl.com/yy9bv69c>

The RACE.ED network at the university held a series of events over the autumn on topics including schools, Black History Month, feminist approaches to war and genocide, and the Israeli Occupation of Palestine: www.race.ed.ac.uk

Website on thinking critically is no turkey

University of Edinburgh: A new website on how to think and write critically has been launched.

The Critical Turkey, created by Dr Martin Booker, is a resource for students and features general essay writing advice and blogposts addressing frequently asked questions.

The central idea of the site is to use the practical concerns and questions of students who want to improve their grades as a launchpad for a deeper understanding of and critical engagement with the social world.

Dr Booker said: "One of the most frequently asked questions we get from students is how many sources they should use in their essay. It is tempting to brush this off as a superficial question, or simply give them a quick number. But there is more to it than that.

"So I wrote a blogpost on the different parameters that are in play here, such as the importance of looking at different perspectives and interpretations, and how this helps us gain a better understanding of the



Dr Martin Booker

topic we are looking at. What seems like a superficial question then actually becomes the starting point for a deeper understanding of how to think and write critically."

The website also looks at how to be critical

and original, and under what circumstances students are permitted to use non-academic sources.

All resources are available under a creative commons licence, CC BY-NC, so they can be downloaded, adapted and remixed as required. New content is added regularly.

Dr Booker hopes it will become a comprehensive guide to critical writing in the social sciences, suitable for an inclusive and decolonised sociology of the 21st century.

The title is a play on the metaphor of the inductivist turkey employed by Bertrand Russell and Karl Popper to warn against the pitfalls of inductivist reasoning.

Used to being fed every morning, the 'inductivist turkey' concludes that it will always be fed every morning. This holds true, until Christmas. The critical turkey, however, uses its critical reasoning skills, understands the motives of the humans feeding it, and escapes to live a life of freedom.

The website is at: blogs.ed.ac.uk/criticalturkey For more information contact M.Booker@ed.ac.uk

Afghan researcher fears for colleagues

City University: A sociologist who was evacuated from Afghanistan as the Taliban took power has spoken about her concerns for the country's future.

Dr Liza Schuster spent most of the past decade conducting fieldwork based at the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University.

Dr Schuster recounted how she had been staying with a friend in Kabul when the situation in the city "was getting increasingly tense". After moving to a secure camp, she was taken to Kabul airport in an armoured vehicle to get an emergency flight out.

"I'm a European with a European passport and I'm a woman of a certain age, and I knew that I really wasn't at risk," she said. "People who are most at risk are my Afghan colleagues and friends."

She could "really feel people's fear and panic all around" her in her final days in Afghanistan. She said that everyone was wary of strangers, and banks and ATMs were running out of cash as people tried to stockpile what they could.

"Personally, I have at least two dozen people I desperately want to get out and who I know are eligible to be evacuated because of either their work with the British government or European governments.

"I also have lots of other people who are calling me and sending messages and emails, and I know that they won't get on a list. I know that they're in danger, and I don't know what's going to happen.

"All of those people are now extremely worried and very frightened. The Taliban are already going to people's homes – they know who these people are. At the moment they are questioning them and taking documents,



Dr Liza Schuster

and they're also looking for official vehicles.

"I have no way of getting them out. I would pay every penny I had to get them out now. I am very afraid for them.

"I'm so angry with the UK government but also with the European Union, which should be loudly telling European countries, 'we have a responsibility to the people who have worked with us'."

Dr Schuster, who can speak Persian, one of the country's main languages, has carried out work funded by the ESRC, including an examination of the way that migration is represented in Afghan oral culture and an exploration of the influence of the EU on the development of Afghan migration policy.

She came to City University in 2005 from the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society at Oxford. Before that she was a Fellow at the LSE. *Sources: Research Professional News, My London News, City University*

Round-up of news in the world of sociology

University of Lincoln: A book by Anna Tarrant exploring the dynamics of men's caring responsibilities in low-income families has been published by Policy Press.

Fathering and Poverty: Uncovering Men's Participation in Low-Income Family Life considers men's participation in family life across the lifecourse and how this is affected by the constraints upon them such as the impact of austerity.

The book contains eight chapters tackling themes including the historical and policy context of fatherhood, caring arrangements and urban neighbourhoods.

The book has been welcomed by Professor Bren Neale, of the University of Leeds, as "a sensitive and moving portrayal of men on the margins, the ebbs and flows of their family contributions and the challenges they face in securing a caring role."

Loughborough University: The university is establishing a new mini-Centre of Doctoral Training to support research into equality, diversity and inclusion.

The centre is led by Dr Line Nyhagen and will involve sociology staff and a multi-disciplinary team from across the university.

The centre will support six PhD students to examine opportunities and barriers for culturally diverse students, academics and professional staff.

Dr Nyhagen said: "The mini doctoral training centre will ensure that our work in this area is research-informed, innovative and collaborative."

The first PhD students are expected to start work in January.

Project to reveal Black experience

University of Cambridge: The Sociology Department launched an online national survey recently asking Black people about their experiences.

The survey was open to any Black person in the UK, and asked them about aspects of their lives, such as discrimination at work and in healthcare, and their views on policing, the news media, the arts and politics.

The survey was part of the Black British Voices project, which will give a portrait of Black Britishness in the 21st century, and is a partnership between the Sociology Department, the Black-led consultancy I-Cubed and Britain's only national Black newspaper *The Voice*.

The research is led by Dr Kenny Monrose, who said: "We want to hear from normal people on streets up and down the country

to uncover the reality of being Black in 21st century Britain. Do you see yourself as Black British? If so, are you proud to be Black British? Can Black people ever feel or be seen as English?"

The project also includes focus groups and interviews with Black activists, politicians and others.

"We want to unpack deep-seated feelings and sentiments about the Black British experience and show that we are not a uniform or homogeneous group," said Dr Monrose.

"We can use this information to transform the perception of Black people in this country, and help share an authentic and reliable version of Black British life that is obtained by consulting with and gaining consent from Black communities."

Lionel Jansen has completed the second volume of his analysis of the English examination system from a social anthropological perspective.

The first volume, *Classified and Classifier-Tilting at Windmills*, was based on his unsuccessful petition against the award of a lower-second classification for his degree in social anthropology at the **University of Sussex**.

His second volume, *Being and Madness*, has now been published by Aspect Design and is an account of his confinement and treatment in the mental health system under the 1983 Mental Health Act.

He challenges the negative stereotyping of mental illness and questions the veracity of the hospital dossier, asking if his treatment would have been different if he were white rather than mixed ethnicity.

For more details see: <https://tinyurl.com/5ykhywuf>

Research begins on statues, drugs and the Quaggy at Goldsmiths

Goldsmiths: Dr Chloe Peacock, a recent PhD graduate, has worked on a project on activism around contested statues in the wake of last summer's Black Lives Matter protests.

She worked with colleagues at the Centre on the Dynamics of Ethnicity at the University of Manchester to publish a policy briefing with the think-tank Runnymede on the government's punitive response to activism. This can be read at:

<https://tinyurl.com/4ze697zy>

Dr Peacock appeared with Professor Gary Younge on *The Guardian's* Today in Focus podcast, in which she reflected on the complicated aftermath of the toppling of the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, and how the past year has forced people to face important questions of how Britain understands its colonial past:

<https://tinyurl.com/yzx32yns>

She also wrote an article for *The Conversation* saying that while there is a meaningful debate about statues, the government was not taking part.

In other Goldsmiths news, Dr Jennifer Fleetwood has won the British Society of Criminology's Women, Crime and Criminal Justice Network 2021 paper prize. The prize celebrates excellence in research and scholarship.

Her co-written paper, 'Gendering research on online illegal drug markets', is published in *Addiction Research and Theory*.

Dr Natassia Brenman has had published a



Dr Chloe Peacock

research report she wrote on the effects of Covid-19 on dementia research. The report says that the long term effects of Covid have been recognised as an urgent priority for clinical research, and this has overshadowed other chronic illnesses like dementia.

This has led to many dementia research facilities being temporarily closed in order to facilitate Covid-19 research or vaccination programmes, making research assistant and coordinator roles challenging and precarious.

The findings of her report are derived

from online focus group discussions with researchers involved in similar aspects of dementia research:

<https://tinyurl.com/c2ysj9mm>

Events involving Goldsmiths researchers have included a roundtable discussion hosted by Afzal Khan MP on whether the government's counter-terrorism strategy, Prevent, is fit for purpose, in which Dr Fauzia Ahmad participated.

Dr Sobia Kaker presented research findings at the RGS-IBG annual conference entitled, 'Eviction and dispossession as acts of un-belonging: a case study of a Pashtun settlement in Islamabad'.

Dr Kaker, now at the University of Essex, will co-edit a special issue of the journal *Security Dialogue* on security provision from a South Asian perspective.

Dr Emma Jackson has worked with Professor John Drever from the Music Department and a local conservation group to develop the project called 'Sounding the Quaggy' that documents the sounds of the East London river and those who use it and care for it. They received a small grant from the Being Human festival to run sound workshops and develop an audio walk.

The department has a new head, Professor Monica Greco, who takes over from Professor Daniel Neyland. She researches the intersections of social science, history, and the philosophy of medicine and psychiatry, with a focus on psychosomatic medicine.

Covid 'brings broader UK vision'

The Covid-19 crisis has made it clear that Britain is a multicultural nation that cannot function without ethnic minority citizens and migrant populations, Professor Gurinder Bhambra told the **British Science Festival**.

Professor Bhambra, the 2020 President of the Sociology and Social Policy Section of the British Science Association, which runs the festival, said there had been a "sudden" awareness that ethnic minority citizens were on the frontline of dealing with the pandemic.

While the Brexit years had been defined by a narrowing vision of who constitutes the body politic, the Covid crisis showed us who we were in a different light, argued Professor Bhambra during her Presidential address, entitled 'Britishness: between Brexit and Covid-19'.

There was a need to rethink the histories that had produced narrow, parochial understandings of ourselves in favour of more expansive and generous ones, she said.

Noting that the EU referendum involved discussions of national sovereignty and

'taking back control' that were bound up in ideas of Britishness, Professor Bhambra said that Britain – an entity that came into being in 1707 through the Act of Union between the kingdoms of England and Scotland – had never been a nation, but had always been an imperial state.

The state had been supported financially and in other ways through the labour, resources and taxes of its imperial subjects as much as its domestic ones.

This understanding of a multicultural imperial past was absent from most accounts of what it is to be British, she said.

Her address, given at Anglia Ruskin University, was delayed by a year because of the pandemic.



Gurinder Bhambra

New sociology head at Oxford

University of Oxford: The Department of Sociology has appointed as its new Head of Department Federico Varese, Professor of Criminology and Senior Research Fellow at Nuffield College. He takes over from Professor Christiaan Monden.

Professor Varese's research focuses on organised crime. He was recently awarded an ERC Advanced Grant for a project that explores how organised crime groups trade and organise across the world.

He has published papers in various journals, is the author of three monographs about the mafia, and sits on the editorial board of *The British Journal of Criminology*.

Professor Varese said: "I look forward to working together with my colleagues to ensure the department continues to deliver high academic standards in teaching and research and furthers our commitment to promoting equality and enhancing diversity."

£7M project to improve collection of data on violence begins work

City, University of London: A five-year collaborative project to improve the collection and understanding of data on violence has begun.

The Violence, Health and Society project, funded by a £7 million grant, brings together public bodies, universities and third sector organisations to research more effective interventions for reducing violence.

It is led by Professor Sylvia Walby, Director of the Violence and Society Centre at City, and has as partners Public Health Wales, King's College London, University College London, and the universities of Lancaster, Bristol and Warwick.

The consortium will work with public services, including police, justice and health professionals, charities acting for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and national surveys including the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey and the UK Household Longitudinal Study.

It will use advanced computing techniques to improve the integration, management



Professor Sylvia Walby

and analysis of violence and health datasets.

The work is funded by the UK Prevention Research Partnership and will run from

2021 to 2026. It is one of three major research projects that the partnership, which includes research councils, charities, and health and social care departments, has launched recently, with the aim of understanding and influencing social, economic and environmental factors that affect health.

Professor Walby said: "Many organisations share the same goal of reducing violence, but co-operation can be hindered by differences in the way that violence is measured.

"Our contribution lies in improving the data on violence, making translations between different ways of conceptualising violence, and building shared forms of measurement of violence, in order to build better explanations and, hence, more effective interventions.

"We are honoured to be trusted with their data by so many professionals and practitioners that provide services to reduce violence. We intend to fulfil that trust by constructing the best dataset ever on violence."

Make results happen

Become an examiner

The last couple of years have been a tough test. And teachers like you have worked hard to help students get through it. In Summer 2022 take your expertise to the next level and become an examiner.

Apply now and make results happen.

aqa.org.uk/apply



AQA
Realising potential

New BSA Chair optimistic despite testing times ahead for sociology

Professor Louise Ryan has begun her two-year term as **Chair of the BSA**, saying she is optimistic despite “testing times ahead” for the association and sociology.

“The pandemic and associated restrictions meant that our 2020 annual conference was cancelled, with financial consequences for the association,” said Professor Ryan, Director of the Global Diversities and Inequalities Research Centre at London Metropolitan University.

“Moreover, changes in publishing associated with so-called Plan S and open access will have a significant impact on the valuable income the BSA has generated through its publishing endeavours. This projected loss of income will inevitably impact on our services, though the trustees are working hard with the CEO, Judith Mudd, and the highly experienced team of staff in the Durham office, to alleviate that impact.

“Furthermore, we have seen increasing threats to sociology as a discipline in several countries around the world, including the UK. The BSA has joined colleagues in challenging some of these threats in recent months.

“Thus, there are clearly some testing times ahead. But the BSA also has every reason to be confident in facing the future. We are fortunate to have a great group of highly engaged and enthusiastic trustees as well as a hard working staff team. With the ongoing support of the members, I am optimistic that we can meet and overcome the challenges.”



Professor Louise Ryan

Professor Ryan, a graduate of University College Cork, joined the BSA in 1994 and has maintained continuous membership since.

“When I first arrived in Britain, back in the early 1990s, I was coming from a very different academic system and did not know anyone within British academia.

“My first lecturing job – teaching sociology and women’s studies at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston – felt quite daunting as I grappled with new systems, terminology and procedures. However, by wonderful serendipity, the BSA came to town,

quite literally, as its conference in 1994 was hosted at my university. I quickly realised that as a young early-career sociologist, the BSA was my natural home. I joined up enthusiastically and presented what was to become the first of many BSA conference papers.

“Over the years, I have remained active in the BSA and really valued the benefits of being part of a large association of fellow sociologists. Having gained so much from my membership, I wanted to give something back to the community and so in 2012 I stood for election as a trustee and was delighted to be elected by the membership.

“Becoming a trustee really opened my eyes to all the work that goes on behind the scenes to run such a large and diverse organisation. Beyond the more familiar aspects such as the annual conference and the journals, I became aware of the enormous range of active study groups, as well as the important campaign work that the BSA undertakes on behalf of the discipline, including work with schools and teachers. The BSA is an essential neutral hub for sociologists, whose mission is to support and promote the discipline and where all income is ploughed back into that endeavour.

“The BSA has had many successes over the years, not least the huge success of the journals. For example, *Sociology*, *Work Employment and Society* and *Sociological Research Online* have all seen significant increases in their impact factors. However, there are several big challenges ahead.”

President says ‘rethink’ needed for sociology

The BSA’s members have elected Gurminder Bhambra as its next President, beginning in January.

She is Professor of Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies in the School of Global Studies at University of Sussex.

Professor Bhambra is also the author of *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (2007), *Connected Sociologies* (2014), and is co-editor of *Decolonising the University* (2018). She set up the Global Social Theory website, is co-Editor of the social research magazine, *Discover Society*, and directs the Connected Sociologies Curriculum Project.

She writes: “I’m very pleased to have been elected as President of the BSA. I’ve been an active member of the association since the early 2000s and appreciate the work that it does in promoting sociology.

“This is an important moment in British, indeed global, politics with the rise of populism and the denial of structural



Professor Gurminder Bhambra

inequalities. The latter have always been a focus of sociology, but it hasn’t always addressed their global dimension and the lasting impact of colonialism and empire.

“This global dimension has come to the fore in recognition of the historical formation of climate change, the inequality in vaccine distribution and in the experiences of disadvantaged communities in relation to

issues such as air pollution and access to health and other care. These are not simply additional issues for sociology to address, but also issues that require a fundamental rethinking of the discipline and the role of universities.

“My own route into sociology was not straightforward although, as I have come to realise, being the daughter and granddaughter of railway workers made it a much more likely prospect! Certainly, many postwar British sociologists seem to have been sons of railway workers.

“Growing up in Southall – both one of the most deprived areas of London, and the country more generally, and one of the most multicultural – has given me a keen perspective on issues of socio-economic inequality and the ways in which these are refracted through the legacies of Britain’s colonial histories.

“I look forward to taking over from Susan Halford and continuing her work and that of the association.”

BSA to sell its London room to cut losses

The BSA is selling its London meeting room and considering other cost-cutting measures to avoid running down its cash reserves over the next few years.

The association revealed that, if no action were taken, it expected to run at a £90,000 loss each year after 2022, which would exhaust its reserves by 2030 even if the meeting room at Imperial Wharf, Chelsea, is sold.

Its projected fall in income follows from the need to make its four journals open access, as research councils and other funders now require.

In order to cut costs, the BSA has not filled three vacant staff posts recently, reducing its staffing level to 11.

It is now looking at measures to bring in more funding, such as running training events and increasing its sponsorship income. It may also cut costs further by measures such as discontinuing its Discover Sociology and Everyday Society webpages and its eNews bulletins. It could also stop sending out paper copies of its journals to members.

The BSA has published a full account of its finances, which can be seen on pages 10-11 of the Annual Review section of this issue of *Network*.

In it, the association points out the range of activities it carries out, including convincing the Department for Education not to scrap GCSE sociology and meeting with exam boards to urge changes to A-level sociology.

"If sociology loses the BSA, we lose our central point of contact and with that our national identity, and that weakens us as a



The London meeting room

discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those in political spheres who'd rather see sociology disappear," the account says.

It says that its journal income has been important because it subsidises loss-making activities such as conferences and other events and its various members services.

"Although we are not in any immediate financial crisis we will need to adapt what we do to ensure a strong future for the BSA. Adapting what we do will not happen overnight and it is better (for members, trustees and staff), in terms of managing the change, if we can implement changes gradually."

It notes the BSA has seen a fall in membership from 2,750 in 2017 to just over 2,000 now, although its website and social media are growing in popularity.

Guides to help BAME careers to be published

Best-practice guides will be published that will help improve the progression of Black and ethnic minority scholars in their careers and change the teaching of race and ethnicity in British sociology.

The BSA and the Heads and Professors of Sociology group have commissioned Dr Barbara Adewumi, Dr Triona Fitton and Dr Alexander Hensby, of the University of Kent to collate relevant high quality teaching and recruitment material for the practice guides. These will be placed online next year.

The final report and data from the project will be owned by the BSA and Haps, but academic uses of the data will be permitted.

The team will focus their efforts within academia but also gather examples from outside academia to highlight the best resources available.

The initiative follows on from a report on the place of race and ethnicity in the teaching of British sociology commissioned by the BSA and published last year.

The research team, based at the University of Manchester, comprised Dr Remi Joseph-Salisbury, Dr Stephen Ashe, Professor Claire Alexander and Dr Karis Campion.

It examined the place of race and ethnicity in undergraduate sociology degree courses and considered the issues and barriers to the teaching of race and ethnicity.

Its report can be read at:
<https://tinyurl.com/352ua4yt>

BSA protests over sociology cuts in Australia

The BSA has said it is "deeply concerned" about the decision by the University of Western Australia to discontinue teaching anthropology and sociology.

The BSA's President, Professor Susan Halford, wrote to the university's Chancellor, Professor Robert French, to say that "it appears extraordinary to us that a university with the standing and ambition of the UWA would choose to take this step.

"I understand that all universities are facing challenging times and must make strategic decisions to secure their futures. However, it is hard to fathom the decision to close a discipline group that has been ranked 'above world standing' at a time when other global universities are investing in this capacity and both government and industry are calling for more skills in sociological and interdisciplinary research and education. We call on you to reconsider your decision."

Funding for UWA's School of Social Sciences will be cut by £20 million, with the



Professor Susan Halford

scrapping of sociology and anthropology research and teaching. Sixteen academic jobs will go, eight from anthropology and sociology, three from political sciences and international relations, three from geography and planning, and single jobs from Asian studies and archaeology.

• The BSA has also expressed its "shock" at the decision by the Greek government to end the teaching of sociology in its high schools.

Professor Halford said in a letter to Niki Kerameus, the Greek Minister of Education, that the decision to close sociology would mean that issues of social justice and inequity would no longer have a place in the high school education system.

"To deny high school students the opportunity to develop this knowledge and understanding, and the skills of critical, analytical and reflexive thinking that accompany a sociological education, seems extraordinary, given the challenges we are all facing.

"We are shocked to learn from our colleagues in Greece about your recent decision... We are aware of the many campaigns currently going on in Greece, led by teachers and academics, and we write to express our solidarity with those campaigns. We simply cannot understand why any modern democratic nation would pursue this path. We urgently call on you to re-consider this decision."

SAGE journal prize winners announced

The winners of this year's SAGE prize for Innovation/Excellence in journal articles have been announced.

For *Sociology* journal, the winner was 'Strategies for reflexive ethnography in the smart home: autoethnography of silence and emotion,' by Professor Christine Hine, University of Surrey:

<https://tinyurl.com/vdmv6rbm>

The *Work, Employment and Society* award was given to Dr Elizabeth Quinlan, Dr Susan Robertson, Dr Isobel M Findlay and Dr Beth Bilson, of the University of Saskatchewan, and Dr Ann-Marie Urban, University of Regina, for 'Ameliorating workplace harassment among direct caregivers in Canada's healthcare system: a theatre-based intervention':

<https://tinyurl.com/nvekcek8>

For *Cultural Sociology*, the award was given to Professor Larry Ray, University of Kent, for 'Social theory, photography and the visual aesthetic of cultural modernity':

<https://tinyurl.com/y68z4ywu>

The *Sociological Research Online* award was given to Dr Ruth Penfold-Mounce, University of York, for 'Value, bodily capital, and gender inequality after death':



Professor Larry Ray

<https://tinyurl.com/ynw42wy5>

The prize is awarded to the paper published in the previous year's volume judged to represent innovation or excellence in the field.

The prize is £250 worth of SAGE books or a free annual individual subscription to a journal of the winner's choice.

Journal section to run pieces on current issues

Sociology is inviting submissions to a new section of the journal which will publish short articles designed to provoke debate on contemporary events, issues, practices and theories.

The articles, of a maximum of 2,000 words, can also engage with debates and articles in the journal, and can contribute to recent discussions in the field.

The editors prefer pieces about creating a more just society, on topics such as Covid-19, the climate crisis, police violence, decolonising universities and Black Lives Matter.

Submissions will be subjected to editorial review and, if accepted, will appear in the Online First section and then be assigned to the next print issue.

"Our aim is for a prompt turnaround time so as to provide a platform for sharing ideas and stimulating conversations," the Editors say.

To submit an article, go to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/soc> and select the 'Interventions' Manuscript Type. To discuss a submission, contact Simin Fadaee: simin.fadaee@manchester.ac.uk

Crow given service award

Graham Crow has been given this year's BSA Distinguished Service to British Sociology Award, bestowed in recognition of an outstanding contribution to the BSA and the discipline over a long career.

"This is a wonderful surprise to be honoured by the BSA in this way," said Professor Crow, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and Methodology at the University of Edinburgh.

"I am grateful to the association for having helped me in innumerable ways over the last 40 years to build a rewarding career as a sociologist. In turn, it has been a privilege to have been able to contribute to the collective good through the association, and in the process to have worked with so many inspiring and dedicated people."

Professor Crow has been Director of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science while at Edinburgh. Before that he worked at the University of Southampton, including for a time as Deputy Director of the National Centre for Research Methods.

His interests include the sociology of families and communities, sociological theory, comparative sociology, and research methods, in which field he has worked on projects on research ethics and on unusual combinations of methods.

He is currently undertaking a mixed methods research project on the later stages of careers, and is also writing a book on the work of Ann Oakley.

Previous winners of the Distinguished Service award were: Professor Liz Stanley, Professor Alan Warde, Professor John Solomos, Professor Sara Arber, Professor David Morgan, Professor John Eldridge, Professor John Scott, Dr Sara Delamont and Professor Jennifer Platt. The award was first made in 2012.



Professor Graham Crow

BSA supports UCU strike action

The BSA has reiterated its support for members of the UCU union who have begun the latest round of industrial action in defence of pay, working conditions and pensions.

Strike action, or action short of strikes, by UCU members took place over three days in 64 universities in the UK.

"The BSA would like to reiterate our support to our members who are both facing the immediate financial pressures of being on strike and all those involved in the fight to protect pensions and resist the marketization of higher education," the statement said. "We are thinking of all those who will be on the picket lines and affected by the strike."

As part of its support, the BSA stopped issuing promotional tweets and emails on the three strike days, 1-3 December.

The BSA office staff continued working on those days as they were not university employees and so not directly involved in the disputes.

A link to UCU advice, information and answers to questions about the industrial action can be found here: www.ucu.org.uk/strikeforus

Socrel conference charts a way forward

Socrel has held its annual conference online, with the theme of 'Beyond binaries in the sociology of religion'.

The three-day event in July marked the 45th anniversary of the study group, though it was delayed by a year because of the pandemic.

The conference featured a panel of prominent scholars in the field of sociology of religion who reflected on how the discipline had evolved over the last four decades, what challenges it currently faces and the opportunities that lie ahead.

The panel comprised Professor Grace Davie, of the University of Exeter; Professor James Beckford, University of Warwick; Professor Eileen Barker, LSE; Professor Linda Woodhead, Lancaster University; and Professor Colin Campbell, University of York. It was chaired by Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray, Cardiff University.

Dr Sarah-Jane Page, Aston University, Professor Campbell and Dr Samuel Perry, University of Oklahoma, delivered keynote presentations reflecting on ways forward for the discipline.

Dr Page showed that a queer feminist framework would offer a lens to understand power relationships and give a voice to individuals and communities who are on the margins. Professor Campbell talked about the relevance of the 'cultic milieu', reflecting on its meaning for the discipline. Dr Perry spoke about religious nationalist movements and how they present the discipline with opportunities to revisit old assumptions and classifications.

Photos and comments from presenters



Professor Linda Woodhead

and delegates can be seen on Twitter at #SocRel21.

The group thanked Elaine Forester, Events Coordinator at the BSA, for her help in making the transition to online events, and also its committee members: Professor Gilliat-Ray, Dr Céline Benoit, Joanna Malone, Dr Caroline Starkey, Kim Harding, Dr Michael Munnik and Dr Rachael Shillitoe.

Group looks at social context of bereavement

The **Social Aspects of Death Dying and Bereavement study group** held its annual symposium in December, having invited members to re-engage with the group's origins in their papers.

Members were asked for abstracts on how the application of a sociological way of thinking about death, dying and bereavement can bring a broader and richer awareness about the end of life and what happens afterwards.

The study group committee believes that the academic study of this area has increasingly become associated with disciplines beyond sociology, such as medicine, psychology, psychiatry, and others.

Consequently, popular discourse about this has become focused more on individuals, symptoms and treatments, and less on the social contexts in which life is lived and the context in which loss occurs.

"Over the past two years we have witnessed the power of death as we have seen how significant political and social unrest can be triggered by an individual death, such as that of George Floyd and the associated resurgence of the Black Lives Matters movement," the convenors write.

"In addition, Covid-19 has reminded us of the limitations of individualistic discourses on death, and we have all witnessed the value and meaning of shared experiences of funeral rites and bereavement."

The group had a good response to this call for papers from across the globe and from researchers working at various stages in their career.

The themes included the deaths of Jade Goody and the rise of the Death Positive Movement, with some speakers using Durkheimian principles and sociological theories of time to examine how meaning can be made of individual experiences.

The international speakers included researchers from Turkey, who used sociological theory to study how death and the challenges of death are influencing current socialist debates there.

Speakers from India examined how the cultural legitimacy of death and grief is only permissible within some relational contexts.

The group planned to record the event and put it on their webpages on the BSA website: www.britsoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/social-aspects-of-death-dying-and-bereavement-study-group

Stats group hold event series

The BSA's **Social Statistics and Sociology study group** held a series of events in the autumn.

The study group began holding regular informal 'brown bag lunch' meetings on Zoom on a different topic each month, giving attendees a chance to share ideas and ask questions.

In October the group ran a 'Beyond "just stats": a feminist take on quantitative methods' event with FemQuant, a network of early career researchers across the social sciences. This explored how feminism can shape quantitative methodologies by placing intersectionality at the forefront of quantitative research.

The speakers were Professor Wendy Olsen, of the University of Manchester, and a study group convenor, and Dr Sara Rose Taylor, of the University of Ottawa.



Professor Wendy Olsen

Those interested in other events should join the group: <https://tinyurl.com/c2keafuk>

New Social Class group

In June 2021 the Social Class study group hosted its launch event 'Social class, where to next?'. The event opened with keynotes from Professor Yvette Taylor, of the University of Strathclyde, and Dr Kirsteen Paton, University of Liverpool, and was drawn to a close with a plenary panel made up of early career researchers and sociologists working within and outside of academia to discuss the theme of 'New voices, intersectional perspectives and the current state of social class in UK sociology'.

The day also included space for discussions around what BSA members would like to see in the future from the study group, and to make suggestions for the group's forthcoming activities (i.e. reading groups, supportive spaces) as well as planned conferences (i.e. intersections of class and gender in autumn 2021, and class, pedagogy and teaching in spring 2022). This short piece reflects on some of the key themes and messages raised throughout the launch event.

Dr Kirsteen Paton was initially to be one of our opening keynote speakers but, due to ongoing strike action at Liverpool University, was forced to withdraw from this role. Instead, she opened the event with an impassioned political intervention that problematised, with tact and sensitivity, the occupational hazard that positions academia as a vocation.

In doing so she highlighted the need to view academia as being not a vocation but a career, a job and a profession, asserting the need for us all to see ourselves as wage labourers and employees.

Paton argued that we need to think about class and academia in material ways, recognising that higher education serves as a key British export in the global knowledge economy and that the precarity underpinning



Professor Yvette Taylor

Carli Rowell and Hannah Walters launch of the BSA Social Class study group

it is often unseen and unrecognised.

Recounting her own career trajectory, Paton shared with us that she was warned by academic supervisors not to go into academia, the argument being that there was a growing reserve army of labour in which working class women find themselves, and that this would hinder her chances of a genuine career.

Despite such warnings, Paton shared with delegates the fact that she felt "lucky" to have found some success in academia, pointing out that 'lucky' is how we describe working class success.

Reflecting on ongoing union work and strike action, Paton noted that fighting back comes with consequences, and these are more acute for those who are working class within academia.

Her intervention came with warnings, too, against the seduction of conceptual fetishizations of class. As she noted: "lived experience and standpoint epistemology are vital to sociological enquiry but there is a danger of them becoming trivialised if they're not anchored, not only by the material but by the collective. The lived experience has to avoid being an individualised experience. If we lean too much in the standpoint epistemology of class we lose what matters. But equally we need to avoid falling into the other extreme of the purely material which completely denies the lived experience of class".

Paton argued that in moving and thinking forward, sociology and sociologists need to find the political value of the sociology of class, pointing to how sociology can productively contribute to political debates (evoking Grenfell, the Covid-19 pandemic and Windrush, amongst others), whilst also warning against the fixation on white working class victimhood.

Drawing her political intervention to a conclusion, Paton asked: "When has the sociology of class ever productively intervened in politics?" She concluded by asserting that we need to move away from thinking too much about what class is and what class is for, and that instead we need to ask, "what are we for as sociologists of class?"

Professor Yvette Taylor delivered a powerful keynote around the intersections of queerness and class, and the complexity of negotiating these sometimes competing identities, politics and overlapping research interests within and beyond the walls of the academy. In discussing the ways class studies sometimes ignores, overlooks or misrepresents queerness, Taylor noted how it is important to acknowledge the potential for re-thinking class through a queer lens. We need to think beyond discrete LGBT+ identities, encompassed only as a discrete 'equality, diversity and inclusion' (EDI) issue, or a subgroup of proper mainstream class analysis.

Drawing on her research on working class queers over a 20-year period, Taylor considered the political possibility of repetitions, collectivised in, for example,

A (busy) year in

Following a relaunch last summer, the Scottish Medical Sociology group has had a very successful year of online meetings and discussions. We began with a couple of informal meetings in June and July, mainly for planning future meetings and setting up a steering committee, but also a chance to have a catch up and a chat with colleagues across Scotland, which was welcomed by members who were working at home under varying circumstances.

Our formal programme began in October with a workshop on emotions in research; we've since had sessions discussing being a medical sociologist in a multidisciplinary setting, rural health, and perspectives on loneliness and social isolation.

We held a joint meeting with the Interdisciplinary Research in Sexual Health Network for Scotland on the impact of Covid-19 on research and service provision in sexual health, which was attended by over 40 people. We also had a Christmas quiz! While we're looking forward to being able to get together in person at some point, having online meetings has meant

asks 'where to next?'

write about the study group

feminist work in higher education. These repetitions might be intergenerational, spanning feminist (re)iterations in efforts from researchers, teachers, mentors and so on; repetitions may involve revisiting the very same battlegrounds time and time again and be acts of “doing and undoing”.

Indeed, the very act of taking up space in the academy as working class, queer and feminist is both fraught with exhausting, often invisible, labour, as well as providing an urgent lens through which to view contemporary queer class issues as expansive, enduring and exceeding ‘EDI’.

In negotiating these repetitions and re-imaginings, Taylor notes the violence of academic categorisations and the ways these serve to displace identities, positions and politics in favour of others: different

categorisations function in particular ways across public and private spheres of research, including social media but, again, repetitions allow a sense of departure and return – and where we want to go to next.

Taylor reflected on her recent work with the Lesbian Archives at Glasgow Women’s Library, and how she found archival material representing intersectional classed lesbian identities to be pluralistic and messy, competing and contradictory, and sometimes hostile. In doing so, Taylor brought to light the need for a nuanced and renewed interest in working class queer life – one which acknowledges ongoing repetitions, while re-imagining a space for a robust questioning of categories, including the ones we choose, including as academics in invested disciplines.

The BSA class study launch event was closed by the generous contributions of Chantelle Lewis, Berenice Scandone, Yusef Bakkali and Utsa Mukherjee, who shared their insights into the current state of social class scholarship. They who brought their expertise and experience in the field to address the themes of: class now and then; class definitions; class, its intersections and interconnections; the extent to which class identities are (still) a powerful category; and

what next for the sociological study of class?

The panel discussed the importance of looking beyond the go-to scholars of class in sociology and broadening out discussions to include critical race theory and theorists, Black feminist thinkers, and the function of coloniality in the construction of UK class categories and understandings, along with neo-colonial articulations of class. The panel also pointed out the ways in which, at times, class studies can feel somewhat toxic – a high conflict terrain within contemporary academia and something which should be unpacked as we move forward.

The BSA Social Class study group was founded by Dr Carli Rowell and Dr Hannah Walters, both ECRs with an interest in class and its intersections. We are currently happy to act as co-convenors of the group but welcome expressions of interest from others in the BSA community to take on more formal roles in the running of the group.

We are grateful to all the speakers, panellists and delegates who took part in the group’s launch event. Your ideas, energy and enthusiasm are hugely appreciated.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank those academics who lent support when we were proposing the study group.

the life of the Scottish Medsoc group

that we’ve had people attending from America, Australia, England, Nigeria, Norway and Sweden.

The year 2020 also saw the start of our journal club, which meets on the last Wednesday of every month, run by Cath Montgomery, Sue Chowdhry and Nicola Boydell. Orbiting around the theme ‘Travels in medical sociology’, each month we discuss an article, from medical sociology classics to the latest published work in the field.

Our travels have taken us from Phil Strong’s classic ‘Epidemic psychology’ to work on sonic patriarchy and anti-abortion harassment, from discussions of place-care ontologies in relation to virtual reality, to negotiating care through the materiality of dress in the context of dementia. The journal club has had strong and consistent participation, helping us spark connections with each other and new ideas, engage our brains in a different way and make space for engagement with a variety of texts.

We asked group members for a few thoughts on what they’d taken from the discussions; here are some of their responses: “I loved the friendly and informal



Dr Anna Terje

style and I gained so much from reading the paper and participating in the discussions – this has gone on to inform my thinking and research.”

“It has been great to geek out with people who are also passionate about the subject and so interesting to hear the different perspectives/takes. If I were going to

describe the club in one word it would be energizing.”

“I’ve found it very valuable, and I think my words would be: insightful, challenging, refreshing. Or: makes you re-think. Which is always a good thing.”

“...this club has been an incredible journey through aspects that probably I wouldn’t explore by myself. The articles and academics who lead the discussions push us to reflect and think beyond our comfort zones.”

The new group convenors are Anna Terje, of the University of the Highlands and Islands, and Aileen Grant, Robert Gordon University, and the steering group members are: Heba Farajallah, University of Aberdeen; Liz Ellis, UHI; Louise Marryat, Dundee; Natalie Dewison, Strathclyde; Nick Jenkins, UWS; Nicola Boydell, Edinburgh; Sally Brown, Edinburgh; Sara Macdonald, Glasgow; Shona Hilton, Glasgow.

The journal club welcomes new members. If you’d like to join a thriving group (80 members, representing every university in Scotland) email: scottishmedsoc@jiscmail.ac.uk

All around the world

Network takes a look at sociology beyond our shores

HE harassment 'is common'

Harassment is more common in academia than in many other workplaces, according to a recent study in Canada.

Thirty-four per cent of women and 22% of men employed at higher education institutions said they had experienced harassment in the preceding 12 months, the study said.

The findings, released recently, are from a 2019 survey of 27,000 full- and part-time university faculty: researchers, postdoctoral fellows, doctoral students and college instructors.

By comparison, a 2016 Statistics Canada survey found that 19% of women and 13% of men across all sectors of the economy reported harassment in the previous year.

The study of academia was written by sociologist Dr Darcy Hango, of Nipissing University, who examined verbal abuse, humiliating behaviour, threats, physical violence and sexual harassment.

Humiliating behaviour was the most common type of workplace harassment within colleges and universities, experienced by 22% of women respondents and 14% of men. This was followed by verbal abuse, with 20% of women and 13% of men stating that they were targets of this.

Seven per cent of women respondents reported unwanted sexual attention or sexual harassment, compared with 2% of men.

Indigenous peoples were also more likely to report being a victim of workplace harassment, with 40% who had experienced harassment, compared with 27% of non-indigenous staff and researchers.

The results also indicate that respondents from a sexual minority who were working in the academic community faced more harassment than their heterosexual counterparts.

Among postdoctoral fellows and PhD students, two-thirds of those who reported being harassed said the perpetrator was in a position of authority.

Dr Hango said that harassment may have declined since in-person classes were halted during the pandemic.

The research is reported on the higher education website universityaffairs.ca and other outlets.

Masking a lack of attendance

At a time when western universities are giving away bribes to encourage students to take a year off, one Indian sociologist is offering an unusual reward for students who log on to all his online lectures during the pandemic.

Panditrao Dharenavar (pictured right) is giving a N-95 surgical mask, which cuts out almost all virus particles, to students at the Postgraduate Government College in Chandigarh, to protect them in their off-line activities.

On World Bicycle Day, Dr Dharenavar, pedalled to his students' houses to give away the mask and 200 rupees from his salary, enough for one month's internet access, to those who attended more than 95% of his online classes.

Dr Dharenavar said he gave the donations because "there are around 40 students in the Sociology Department in the College. But most of them were not attending the online classes regularly. I will continue to do this holy work every month so that even during the Covid-19 pandemic the students do not miss online classes".



Macho men are all 'no mates'

A man's lack of friends is strongly linked to whether he will aspire to a macho version of masculinity, but his relationship with his parents makes little difference.

Sociologists George Van Doorn, Jacob Dye and Dr Ma Regina de Gracia, of Federation University in Australia, surveyed 188 men ages 18 to 62, asking about their childhood and how much they agreed with statements about risk taking, violence and power over women.

They found no connection between the quality of a man's relationship with his father or mother and his preference for macho masculine norms. Instead they found that the more closely men adhered to macho ideals, the lower the number and quality of their friendships.

The study, published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences*, could not say whether lacking close friendships caused these beliefs or whether these beliefs prevented close friendships.

"There's literature about men, and fathers in particular, being essential in their boys' lives and in their development," said Dr Van Doorn. "We just tested it and it didn't really come out the way I expected."

Wiseguy is top of the class

Tony Soprano and Don Corleone may have been guilty of many crimes but committing sociology was not among them.

Not so Salvatore Curatolo, 65, a member of the Mafia, who received a maximum cum laude score in his degree after presenting his thesis, 'Life imprisonment: pathways and survival strategies'.

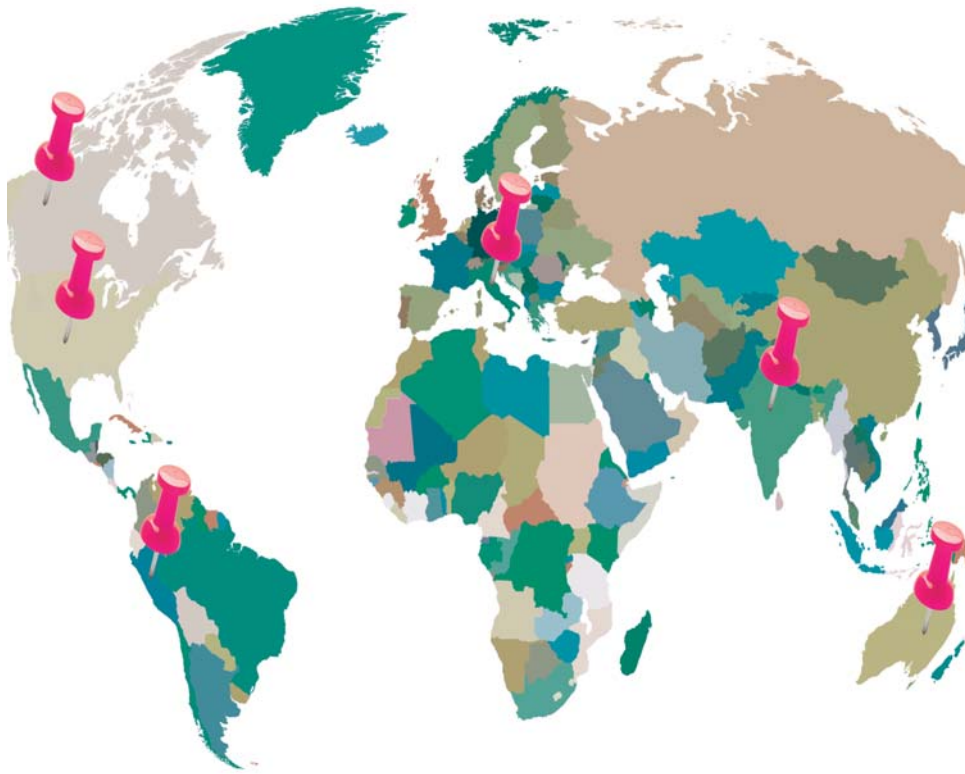
The degree is an autoethnography about how he has survived 28 years' jail time. Mr Curatolo is serving life imprisonment for offences carried out while in the Calabria-based 'Ndrangheta, Italy's most powerful organised crime group.

He said he took the degree because he "felt embarrassed with my daughters, who were always studying. So in prison I first took the elementary school, then the middle school, then the diploma and today I realise an unimaginable dream by graduating".

His supervisor, Professor Charlie Barnao of the University of Catanzaro, said: "For this man, who did not even have fifth grade [education], studying in prison and getting a degree in sociology was a way to approach the people most dear to him with new topics of discussion."

d...

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



Shedding light in dark corners

Sociology is a discipline that throws light upon society, speaking metaphorically, of course.

The Peruvian sociologist, Elizabeth Corzo Jara, has turned that metaphor into physical reality by running a scheme which brings electricity to small rural communities through the use of solar energy.

Dr Corzo is the project coordinator of the social enterprise PowerMundo, which provides people in the remote areas of cities with a lamp that illuminates, recharges cell phones and reproduces radio and audio-visual content, using solar energy.

She has received the Rural Youth Innovation Award in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021 for the project, called Illuminated Communities.

"I believe in sociology and social entrepreneurship to guide the understanding and analysis of the world towards actions with social impact," said Dr Corzo.

She plans to expand the project so that children who are kept at home because of the pandemic can restart their classes using a memory card that contains preloaded stories, audio books and songs, she told Agencia Andina.

More unmarried mothers

University-educated women in the US are now six times more likely to have their first child before getting married than their counterparts were 25 years ago, a study has found.

Sociologist Andrew Cherlin of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore studied data collected from three long-running demographic surveys in the US.

He found that today 24.5% of women with university degrees give birth before they get married, compared to 4% in 1996. More than half were cohabiting at the time of the birth.

Professor Cherlin also found that the overwhelming majority of women who had neither a high school degree nor a diploma were unmarried at the time of their first birth, 86.5% and 76%, respectively.

Women with a high school degree, meanwhile, were 61.8% more likely to have their first child prior to getting married.

"For increasing numbers, marriage would follow a first birth rather than precede it," he said. "This suggests a potential change in the role of marriage among college-educated emerging adults, although not necessarily a decline."

More Americans live with pain

The number of Americans living with chronic pain has grown substantially since the beginning of the millennium, research shows.

A paper in the journal *Demography* draws on a survey dataset with more than 441,000 participants to show how self-reported pain increased substantially between 2002 and 2018.

The survey asked if people had experienced pain for at least three months in any of five specified sites in the body.

The research found that the prevalence of those with pain increased from 49% to 54%, a change of approximately 10%.

The prevalence of joint pain increased by 21%, while low back and neck pain increased by around 16%. Facial or jaw pain increased by 13%, and headache or migraines by 5%.

Male, Black, lower-income, and less-educated respondents experienced significantly steeper increases in at least some pain sites compared with their female, white, higher-income, and higher-educated counterparts. The trends were also steeper for older adults.

"We looked at the data from every available perspective, including age, gender, race, ethnicity, education and income, but the results were always the same – there was an increase in pain no matter how we classified the population," said Dr Hanna Grol-Prokopczyk, a medical sociologist at the University of Buffalo. She is co-author of the paper with Professor Zachary Zimmer, of Mount St Vincent University and first author, Dr Anna Zajacova, of Western University.

"You might think that with medical advances we'd be getting healthier and experiencing less pain, but the data strongly suggest the exact opposite," Dr Grol-Prokopczyk said.

"It's important for policymakers to understand trends in chronic pain so we can wisely and appropriately invest resources in research and treatment. We hope this paper can help illustrate the issue.

"Pain is a leading cause of disability and there is evidence that pain has an impact on life expectancy. So the problem is one not only affecting quality of life but potentially even quantity of life."

She pointed to a strong link between stress and alcohol use and chronic pain among the young and middle-aged as one reason for the rise in reported pain. "Pain can be exacerbated by stress, and stress can bring about alcohol use."

Racism is a cause of a higher death rate for ethnic minority people, WES

Racism is one of the reasons that Black and ethnic minority people have a higher rate of deaths from Covid than white people, Emmanuel Ogbonna told a conference plenary.

Professor Ogbonna said that factors such as economic deprivation could account in part for death rates which were 3.3 times higher for Black males and 2.4 times higher for Black females, compared with white males and females respectively.

But even when this had been taken into account, there was still an “unexplained factor” that caused the higher death rates, something that he highlighted in a report he helped write for the Welsh government in his role as Professor of Management and Organization at the Cardiff Business School.

“In April of 2020, the Welsh Government invited us to look at the disproportionate impact of Covid-19,” he said. “Details were beginning to emerge that Black and minority ethnic people were disproportionately impacted by the outcomes of Covid. They were catching it more, they were dying more at the time.

“I was invited to lead one of the two sub-groups that was created from the main group, the socioeconomic sub-group. We began our work on the 19th of April 2020 and were asked to submit a detailed account to the First Minister by June of 2020. So, it was work at a frenetic pace.

“Our report for the Welsh Government identified institutional racism as that fourth factor.

“Contrary to what some people may want to believe, what is killing people is the racism that being Black and minority ethnic subjects people to – that is the thing that is making people die from the pandemic.

“Research in America has already established that repeated exposure to racism is tantamount to post traumatic stress disorder. That is what makes it difficult. Imagine what it must feel like for an ethnic minority person working under this pandemic – you have this anticipatory stress of racism, you know it is going to happen, and it just wears you down. Over time, it begins to eat into your own capacity to cope.

“The capacity that individuals have to be able to withstand diseases will just wear off, and your susceptibility to obesity, to heart disease, to hypertension, all this will increase the likelihood of catching and

This year's Work, Employment and Society conference featured addresses on racism and Covid deaths, and on the use of artificial intelligence in recruiting and monitoring staff

dying from Covid-19.

“For example, at the National Centre for Social Research, they did a sample of British households in 2017, and a staggering 26% of people in Britain admitted to being racially prejudiced.

“We haven’t opened ourselves up as a society to scrutinise these attitudes. In the past, racism was seen as an ugly word, nobody wanted to talk about it. It wasn’t until the coronavirus and the awful killing of George Floyd in America that people began to talk about it. Thankfully, we began to talk about it. Out of those horrible events, something positive might just emerge.”

It was social and not genetic factors that caused the excess deaths among BAME people, he said. “What is happening is that the coronavirus is killing people and it is continuing to. But it is not killing people because they are Black or minority ethnic – there is nothing inherent in the genetics that is making people die.”

Professor Ogbonna said another factor that caused higher death rates was that Black and minority ethnic people were more likely to be poor.

Because of this “they are more likely to work into their later years. They are less likely to own their own homes. They are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation.”

Their houses were crowded because they were poorer and less able to buy bigger homes, but also because “culturally, many people from Black and minority ethnic communities don’t tend to put their older relatives in care homes. So, they like to stay



in the same homes, to look after them.”

Another factor was one of “over-exposure” – BAME people were more likely to come into contact with the coronavirus. One reason for this was that many doctors were from an ethnic minority – about one in three in Wales. Taxi drivers and delivery drivers were more likely to be from an ethnic minority.

“We have the luxury of staying at home, but all these people go out to work during the pandemic. That level of over-exposure means that they are more likely to be exposed to the disease and suffer the consequences of it.”

A third factor was co-morbidities, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and dementia, which were strongly linked to deaths from Covid.

r death rate among plenary hears



"Diabetes tends to be common amongst black and minority ethnic people. Hypertension tends to be common."

But poverty, over-exposure and co-morbidities could not entirely account for the higher levels of death, he said.

This was demonstrated by the fact that old age was the single highest risk factor of dying from Covid, but the studies showed that people from ethnic minorities aged over 70 were still much more likely to die from the virus than white people of a similar age.

"That led the researchers to conclude that Covid deaths were not simply related to the factors that had previously been

identified, there were other factors that were currently unknown."

He said that the Welsh Government had accepted his report. "When we were writing the socioeconomic report, the civil servants in the group did not want us to come to the conclusion of institutional racism.

"I asked for a meeting with the then Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, and I said 'we will have to be allowed to do what we want', and the politicians overruled the civil servants and asked for us to be given a free hand to do what we wanted.

"The First Minister of Wales recognised that, like many white people, he and members of his cabinet may not have sufficient understanding of institutional racism, and they asked me to design a training programme for them.

"I ran a training programme with the First Minister of Wales and the entire Welsh cabinet on institutional racism, which lasted for about two hours, just before the election. I have done the same thing with the top 100 civil servants in Wales.

"My co-Chair on the steering group, the Permanent Secretary of the Welsh Government, who is the highest-ranked civil servant in Wales, has so much bought into this ideology that she has actually gone on to change her key performance indicators to include leading an anti-racist civil service as one of her key priorities.

"The Welsh First Minister then set about establishing a steering group to look into the issues and to develop the race equality action plan for Wales.

"We began that work shortly after we submitted our report in June last year. We have been given a free hand to develop a plan.

"This is an example of somebody putting their money where their mouth is, and if everybody in a senior position did that, then we would turn the country overnight to be anti-racist. Whatever the case, Wales is en-route to becoming the first anti-racist country in the world."

This contrasted with the situation in higher education, he said.

"How many British universities have developed policies to deal with institutional racism? Very few. I suspect one or two might, but I don't know that many have.

"The only way to deal with institutional racism is to develop policies of anti-racism but not many have."

WES conference

The conference was on the theme of 'Connectedness, activism and dignity at work in a precarious era' and was held from 25-27 August, for the first time online.

Delegates logged in from more than 28 countries to attend 64 sessions and four special events.

The programme included a doctoral stream with five sessions, providing a forum for PhD students to develop their research ideas.

An innovation for the 2021 conference was the introduction of an 'On the front line' format for presentations, following the idea of the section in the *Work, Employment and Society* journal of this name. The aim was to hear the voice of workers as co-authors or co-presenters, broadening the range of participants in the conference.

The organising committee was: Shoba Arun, Denise Currie (pictured below), Knut Laaser, Yao-Tai Li, Wendy Olsen, Katharina Sarter and Tessa Wright (pictured bottom).

They wrote that the theme of the conference had been chosen because "around a million people will have lost their jobs in 2020 while many more faced reductions in hours and earnings.

"The pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on some groups, with higher numbers of deaths among Black and minority ethnic groups, in part due to their predominance in high-risk sectors.

"Furthermore BME and young workers are overrepresented in the sectors worst hit by job loss. The widespread shift to homeworking has transformed work routines, with some possible benefits, but it has also placed additional burdens on women juggling childcare and work, and the longer-term effects of solitary working are not yet known."



“Contrary to what some people may want to believe, what is killing people is the racism that being of Black and minority ethnicity subjects people to”

Pandemic ‘ushers in a go

In her WES address, Professor Paula McDonald spoke about the way that artificial intelligence has revolutionised the recruitment and monitoring of staff, and the issues this raises for workers

The use of artificial intelligence technologies in the recruiting of staff is creating “profound economic and social impacts”, Paula McDonald told her WES plenary audience.

It was also “greatly enhancing” employers’ ability to track and discipline their workforce, said Professor McDonald, of the Queensland University of Technology Business School.

“One significant dimension of the broad transformations in the digital management of work has been in the recruitment and selection of staff,” she said.

“Until the mid to late ’90s, recruiting new employees was primarily a people-driven process, and then the years from 2010 to 2015 saw the emergence of AI-enabled tools. This really fundamentally changed candidate recruitment and selection.

“Today, AI-enabled recruitment systems represent a very substantial value-proposition to organisations. They offer a cost-effective means to attract a large and diverse group of qualified job candidates, and [bring] agility in responding to changes in the labour market, and the ability to free up resources for other human resource activities.

“AI can also screen candidates, improving the efficiency of recruitment by reducing time to hire and providing a strategic advantage when competing for talent. That’s especially the case in high-turnover industries. Some US developers claim that their software speeds up the hiring process by up to 90%.

“Applicant tracking software, such as Arctic Shores, can now automatically generate psychometric profiles about an applicant’s job, skills and organisational fit. There’s some evidence that machine-learning systems can perform better at identifying the best applicants than human HR managers can, and that candidates can benefit from increased awareness of vacancies and reduce delays in hearing whether they’ve been shortlisted.

“Assessing candidates can also be

automated via verbal computer-mediated communication and web-based interviews which score candidates on language, tone and facial expressions. Companies such as HireVue and VCV, which use speech interpretation and visual gesture analysis, can screen job candidates for qualities like grit, track how often they smile and analyse how a person’s face moves to determine, for example, how excited they are about certain job tasks or how they might behave around an angry customer.”

She said that AI-enabled recruitment had profound economic and social impacts, given that it could determine who gets a job and who doesn’t. AI-based recruitment introduced not only new opportunities but also challenges to ensure objective and fair hiring decisions.

“The challenges include, firstly, transparency. Most systems operate in the absence of any kind of specific requirements to disclose how they’re used for candidate selection, ranking and hiring. Companies, governments, NGOs and academics have dedicated substantial efforts to address this ethical problem. They’ve generated a range of AI ethics principles and statements, but these principles usually don’t say much about how accountability should work in practice.

“Another challenge that we see is validity. Affect-recognition technology claims sometimes to read inner emotions during selection interviews. This has been particularly contentious, especially in light of research which suggests that detecting emotions with high accuracy requires a context beyond the face and the body.

“The validity of the recruitment process may also be threatened if candidates can gain, disrupt or manipulate their responses to the automated system. AI-enabled recruitment also results in uneven risks and benefits to job candidates. Jobseekers with, for example, limited digital skills or access to technology – possibly people who are older, or who have a disability, or who live in remote areas – may be negatively impacted

by the automation of recruitment.

“Finally, there’s the issue of bias and discrimination, and this has been receiving increased attention. A recurrent justification for algorithmic management practices is that they can eliminate the individual bias of recruiters in managing the workforce, because the systems apparently apply objective and neutral criteria.

“However, some studies and a succession of media reports have challenged this claim. AI is programmed to recognise patterns and identify, but also ignore, certain defined attributes. If those characteristics are either not sufficiently diverse or if sub-populations are not well represented, then the underlying algorithm may replicate existing social and labour market inequalities. This is often known as the ‘dirty data problem’.”

She also talked about how AI had affected the allocation and oversight of work.

“Some of the digital management practices pioneered in the gig economy are starting to spread to the wider labour force. Algorithms are being used to implement just-in-time work practices, which involve offering workers shifts or contract work according to the expected business demand.

“Low-wage workers are disproportionately subject to these automated scheduling systems, which predict how much labour will be required to maintain staffing at a minimum level.

“In the gig economy, workers are said to be bound to platform tasks by the use of reputation rating mechanisms that use workers’ and contractors’ ratings as criteria for success.

“These algorithms also restrict and control the nature of work beyond the gig economy too, such as in restaurants, where individual waiters can be rated by patrons or their employers via an app. It has been reported that some questions ask about factors over which wait staff don’t necessarily have any control, such as the quality of the food or the condition of the restaurant.

“The history of worker surveillance is linked to the history of capitalism itself, in the sense that surveillance enables managers to extract more labour from workers. Algorithmic management systems greatly enhance the employers’ capacities to direct, evaluate and discipline employees, way beyond what could be accomplished through other, less invasive forms of control.

“Surveillance has become increasingly ingrained in many workplaces. In the US, it has been estimated that 7% of employers use video surveillance to track job performance, and 8% to track company vehicles, but these figures are considerably lower than the number of companies that monitor

'Golden age of surveillance'



employees' email, computer keystrokes and computer files, which is around 45%.

"Worker surveillance has become so extensive that employers can access a live feed of granular behavioural information about workers across a whole range of workplace settings, such as factories, offices and even in homecare.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has ushered in a golden age of surveillance and renewed techno-optimism. In the name of an emergency global health crisis, we've seen many commercial and government institutions increasing the scope and scale of data-driven surveillance infrastructure.

"I have known people – and these were professionals – who were required to work in the office during the day and then [during the pandemic] were suddenly at home all the time with a VPN and software that tracked how often they pressed a key on their keyboard and which reported to their manager in real-time. They were afraid to get up from their desk to go to the toilet or deal with a screaming child.

"In terms of the types and capacities of technologies around worker surveillance, these systems collect data about worker activities through a whole range of means, including handheld devices, point-of-sale systems, mobile phones, fingerprint scanners, fitness and wellness apps, GPS trackers, smart cameras, microphones,

'Most systems operate in the absence of any requirements to disclose how they're used for candidate selection, ranking and hiring'

webcams, body sensors and tools that scan emails and texts.

"These tools serve a multitude of purposes for employers, which includes tracking application usage and web history, assessing productivity, identifying the most innovative and influential workers, detecting deviant behaviour and other risks, and reporting business intelligence data analysis.

"A growing number of firms have begun using facial recognition software to analyse employees' concentration and mood, while

others use applications that assess whether certain documents and messages have been read. They can take photos with the computer's camera to ensure the employee is physically present.

"During Covid-19 there has been an explosion of new apps and wearable devices that can track really quite highly sensitive data, such as employees' health information and physical location. They do this in order to assess compliance with social distancing and hygiene goals. For example, Ford has developed a watch that can be worn by workers to help them keep a distance of two metres between them.

"The employers deploying biometric systems most prolifically tend to be concentrated in low-wage, hourly work industries, such as construction, hospitality, retail, agriculture and logistics. These contexts are more susceptible to datafication because tasks are more easily measured.

"The impacts of surveillance that track and evaluate employee productivity are many. They include technologically driven speed-ups. Amazon has been leading the pack here with the implementation of a video game called Mission Racer that makes workers compete against one another to fulfil orders.

"It has been noted that making work into a race contrasts with standard and accepted principles of engineering. This might explain why the injury rate for warehouse workers is twice as high as other private industries.

"Transparency has also been raised as a further issue. Surveillance is often hidden, multifaceted and continuous. According to the US retail worker advocacy organisation, United for Respect, Walmart managers have asked workers to download an app onto their personal devices that checks inventory and where stock has been misplaced on shelves. The managers reputedly didn't tell the workers that the app requires access to cameras and location services on their phone in order to function, and that it's constantly on unless workers deliberately turn it off.

"Another aspect of transparency is that workers may find it difficult to challenge algorithmically derived employment decisions, like discipline or firing. An example of this in retail is where cashiers are scored on their performance by monitoring technologies that are built into their registers or handheld devices. Then at the end of the shift the workers get an aggregate performance score but, at the same time, they're unlikely to know how the score was determined or what they might be able to do to improve their metrics.

Feature continued overleaf ►

'We might have to work harder to maintain income'

◀ From previous page

She said that it was often said that AI technologies would create new jobs, as well as eliminating some old ones.

"In general, I think it's increasingly accepted that the likelihood of large-scale technological unemployment is quite low. However, there's also an emerging agreement that the impact on jobs is by no means negligible. This can include deskilling jobs, and displacing jobs or tasks within those jobs. Forecasts also include, on the positive side, liberating humans from work that is either heavy, hazardous or repetitive.

"If we talk about the impacts on labour markets – much like the introduction of other general-purpose technologies throughout history, such as the internal combustion engine, electricity, computers and the internet – automated systems, including AI, are expected to be beneficial in the longer term in relation to growth and standards of living. However, in the nearer term, financial challenges are likely to encourage innovations that decrease labour costs.

"If the profits of the AI revolution are captured by only a small proportion of the population, many of us might find that we have to work harder just to keep our current levels of income.

"Overall, if history is any guide, the

projected efficiency gains from automation are likely to outweigh any argument for protectionism towards human workers who are threatened by technological redundancy. Whether or not this should be the case, of course, is an open question.

"Employment is becoming a more individualised pursuit and I worry about the limited opportunities for workers to resist collectively or individually when the conditions of their employment rest on subscribing to, interacting with, and being beholden to, these technologies, with very little regulation around how they are used. I guess individual resistance is all we have got."

She made recommendations to ensure greater fairness in recruitment.

"In recruitment, for example, we need to illuminate the full range of automated technologies that are available to different markets. We need to take a closer look at which industries are being targeted by vendors and what functionality the technologies promise and promote.

"We also need much more awareness of the espoused validity, reliability and fairness of the technologies in use, and awareness of the experiences of different cohorts of jobseekers who navigate AI-enabled recruitment processes that are used either by hiring

organisations themselves or who outsource the recruitment process to other providers.

"There's a need for increased advocacy. Collective agreements are said to be essential to limit managerial prerogatives, such as the monitoring of workers at both the company and sector level.

"Finally, we need to hold employers accountable for the conditions in workplaces. This is regardless of the system of control that created the conditions, and this is critical to protecting workers and maintaining basic workplace standards."

She also spoke about the use of data in her own institution, the Queensland University of Technology.

"For the last four and a half years I have been on the council, which is their governance board, and there is a lot of discussion at meetings about the kind of data that the university has available on students. They have real-time data about where students are via the university app – a massive amount of data on students about their attendance at various places and how they communicate with one another.

"It is quite extraordinary they have that information about staff as well but that is never a point of discussion – they might not use it, but who would know?"



Meet the PhD: Sheila Pryce Brooks

'It was extremely encouraging and motivating to be told by my supervisors that I am the expert'

My research is about sleep paralysis, in which the sleeper experiences an evil presence (sometimes accompanied by whispers or other sounds), bodily pressure on the chest, breathing difficulties, suffocation, a feeling that death is imminent, out of body experiences, lucidity and the inability to move.

The research also includes other extraordinary spiritual experiences such as near death experiences, precognitive dreams, deathbed visitations, energy healing and visitations from loved ones who have passed away.

Sleep paralysis is often attributed to mental or physical illness. People who experience it are stigmatised, leaving them without support, with feelings of isolation, to the extent that many will not speak about their experiences and will hide them from family, colleagues and friends.

I experienced sleep paralysis chronically for over 30 years and believe it to be a spiritual encounter. I experienced all of the features as well as the stigma and isolation. I was given no support by the medical sector, and information about sleep paralysis is very limited. No one knows what causes it and there is a need for more research to explore it as a spiritual experience, especially considering that 1 in 20 people has had a sleep paralysis experience.

I want to make changes within the health sector regarding sleep paralysis and provide support options for persons who experience the phenomena. I want to make changes to the treatments of sleep paralysis, as research demonstrates that meditation and relaxation techniques reduce the attacks. Currently medication is prescribed which does not stop the attacks.

The best part of doing a sociology PhD is knowing that this is new, ground-breaking work that will have a positive impact on society – it was extremely encouraging and motivating to be told by my supervisors that I am the expert! I am learning new things and seeing the practical application of my work. It is not something that will remain on a shelf to gather dust. The biggest challenge is that my area has not been researched much in the past.

I'm not sure at this stage what my career will look like, but I'd like to be doing talks and training, and speaking at events. I currently have a website which I will be developing over time: www.sheilaprycebrooks.com

I would say to those considering doing a PhD "go for it". Support is available to help you in whatever area you need it and you can take comfort knowing that your work can contribute to significant changes socially and globally.

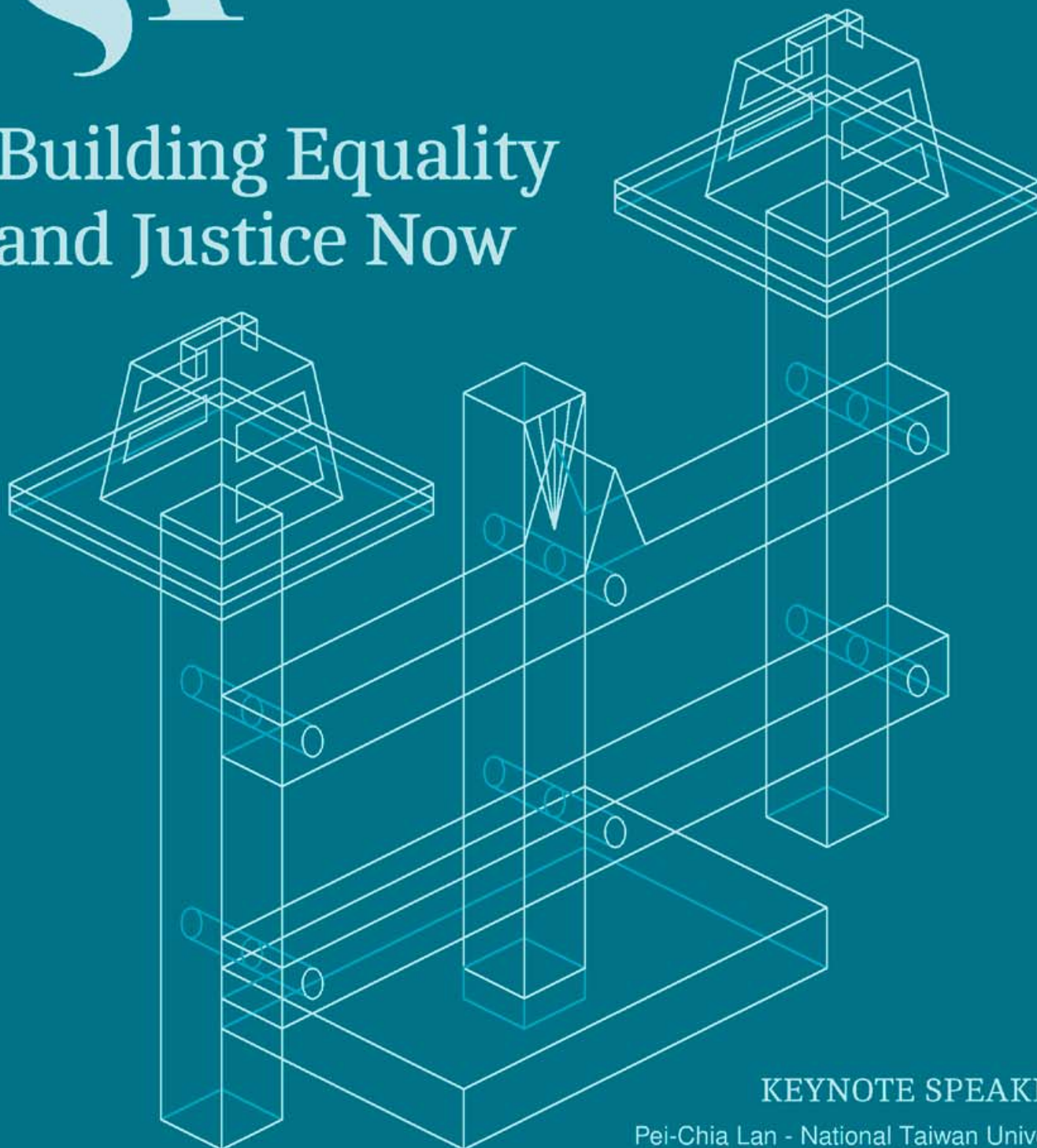
PhD at the University of York Sociology Department, January 2021 - December 2023, title to be decided saph502@york.ac.uk



2022 VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Wednesday 20 to Friday 22 April

Building Equality and Justice Now



PLENARY PANEL

Sociology Under Threat: International Solidarity

Panelists TBA

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Pei-Chia Lan - National Taiwan University

Nasar Meer - University of Edinburgh

**BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

www.britsoc.co.uk

#britsoc22

MedSoc 2021: 'awesome and brings together sociologists

This year's MedSoc annual conference was held online, with more than 160 delegates logging on from 12 countries.

The conference, run in a 'MedSoc month' format on all the Thursdays and Fridays in September, featured seven main events, including prize giving and a meet-the-editors of the *Sociology of Health and Illness* journal session.

There were panel discussions on suicide, the sociology of race and the care of isolated people during the pandemic, and a plenary panel on engagement beyond sociology. *See next page for more*

The plenary address was given by Professor Felicity Boardman, of Warwick Medical School, on 'Genomic futures: medical sociology at the frontier of modern medicine'. *See pages 26-27 for details of the plenary address*

This year's Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness prize was given for a book which tackles diabetes in Belize. *Traveling with Sugar: Chronicles of a Global Epidemic* won £1,000 for its author, Amy Moran-Thomas, of Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The prize is given for the book making the most significant contribution to medical sociology published over the previous three years.

In giving the award, Professor Judith Green, a judge on the chairing panel, said: "This is a book that everyone should read, certainly everyone working in public health or the sociology of health and illness."

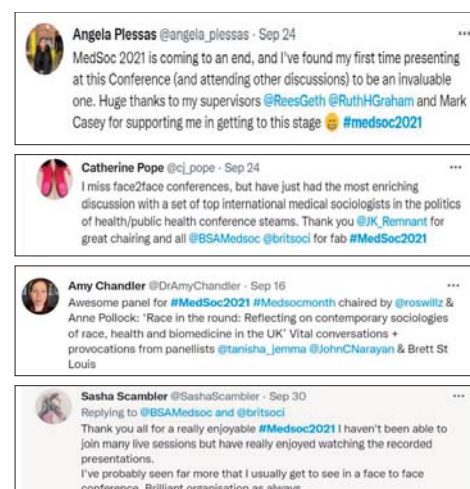
"Moran-Thomas's ethnography of the diabetes epidemic in Belize is an outstanding achievement."

"It's rich in detailed stories of people's struggles with limb amputations, with glucose machinery that doesn't travel, and unequal food systems."

"It's rich in the detailed stories of what it's like to live with diabetes in the midst of an epidemic, but is also magisterial on how those individual struggles fit in with wider systems, how the epidemic has affected global displacement, how it reflects inequalities of food systems, and how it affects living with the impact of trans-generational stress over long time periods."

"This is an urgent book, it unsettles any kind of biomedical understanding of chronic illness and is a wake up call to anyone still thinking that behavioural

This year's MedSoc conference saw addresses on the sociology of suicide, the pandemic and public engagement. Network takes a look...



nudges or just getting people to choose healthier food is going to do much for a global epidemic.

"If that sounds very worthy I should also say that it is beautifully written – the content will keep you awake at night, her style will keep you up past your bedtime just wanting to turn the pages."

The book is published by the University of California Press.

The joint winners of the 2021 Phil Strong Prize were Alankrita Anand, of the University of York, and Carmel Bond, University of Nottingham.

They share the £1,200 prize, given for outstanding postgraduate research and established in memory of Phil Strong (1945-1995), one of the post-war generation of sociologists who influenced the development of medical sociology in the UK.

Alankrita's work looks at the influence of

household gender dynamics on access to reproductive healthcare for young married women in Bihar, India. Carmel researches nurses and service users' experience of compassion in the context of mental health.

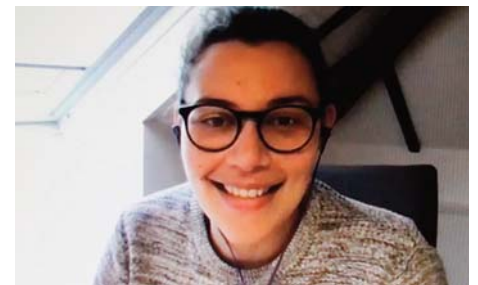
MedSoc runs 12 regional and special interest groups as well as the main group.

The MedSoc committee saw two new members join: Liam Arnall, of Queen Mary, University of London and Dr Julia Swallow, University of Edinburgh. Dr Jen Remnant steps down as co-Convenor, and Dr Sally Brown also steps down. The committee thanked them both for their service. Dr Jo Hope becomes co-Convenor, with Dr Catherine Coveney and Dr Shadreck Mwale.

Next year's MedSoc conference is likely to be held partly at the University of Lancaster and partly online. Future conferences are being planned at the universities of Sussex, Glasgow and York.

and enriching' conference ts for a month's events

y online
de, race,
ent.



Photos from the conference:

Top row, Tanisha Spratt, Judith Green

Middle row, Brett St Louis,
Catherine Coveney, Ros Williams

Bottom row, Amber Lascelles,
Jen Remnant



Medsoc month's events

The Medsoc Month began with a panel discussion on 'Thinking through feeling: embodied emotions in the study of self-harm and suicide,' given by Dr Hazel Marzetti and Dr Amy Chandler, of the University of Edinburgh, and Veronica Heney, of the University of Exeter.

The first plenary address was by Professor Felicity Boardman, of the University of Warwick, speaking on 'Genomic futures: medical sociology at the frontier of modern medicine'.

A panel discussion on 'Race in the round' featured Dr Dharmi Kapadia, of the University of Manchester, Tanisha Spratt, of the University of Cambridge, Dr Brett St Louis, of Goldsmiths, Dr John Narayan,

King's College London, and Dr Amber Lascelles and Dr Josie Gill, both of the University of Bristol.

Special events included a Meet the Editors session on getting published in the journal *Sociology of Health and Illness*, with Professor Flis Henwood, of the University of Brighton, and Professor Karen Lowton, of the University of Sussex.

They also included a session with the Scottish MedSoc group on 'Overlooked: the invaluable work of health and social care staff and volunteers in caring for lonely and isolated people during the Covid-19 pandemic', by Dr Anna Terje and Dr Liz Ellis, of the University of the Highlands and Islands, Dr Nicola Boydell

and Dr Sally Brown, of the University of Edinburgh, Natalie Dewison, University of Strathclyde, Dr Aileen Grant, Robert Gordon University, and Dr Louise Marryat, University of Dundee.

The closing plenary was an ECR panel on 'Getting sociology out there: reflections from engagements beyond the discipline', given by Dr Julia Swallow, of the University of Edinburgh, Dr Ros Williams, University of Sheffield, and Dr Oli Williams, King's College London.

For more information on MedSoc, see its webpage on the BSA site:

<https://tinyurl.com/53de8phw>

and details of its regional and special groups: <https://tinyurl.com/57mmbbd9>

Genetic screening ‘not so

In her address to the Medsoc conference, Professor Felicity Boardman highlighted how people living with genetic conditions feel about the prospect of mass screening for their disease

Mass screening to prevent genetic diseases can adversely affect people who already have these conditions, Felicity Boardman told her Medsoc plenary audience.

Technology has made it possible to test the population to see who might unknowingly be carriers for genetic diseases, allowing them to avoid having children with that condition by other carriers.

However, said Professor Boardman, this could have negative consequences for people with those conditions. The fact that a condition was screened for could “communicate negative valuations of people living with the conditions that are screened for, or disabled people as a whole,” she said.

“So it could be that people living with these conditions feel that a genetic screening programme for their condition would say something negative about the value of their own life.

“There’s also the possibility that there could be reduced funding for research or support services for conditions that decrease in prevalence once a screening programme is introduced.

“For screening programmes that are done prenatally, there can be a reduction in the birth rate of people with those conditions, which might then have a knock-on effect in terms of research and support, and the availability of funding for those who already live with the condition.

“There is the possibility that there could be reduced peer-to-peer support with fewer people living with that condition, and also for that condition to become more stigmatised as there are fewer people living with it.

“I distinctly remember one mother of a

child with Down’s syndrome saying to me, ‘You can’t underestimate the importance to my child when he goes into a room and sees someone else who looks like him, and he sees himself reflected back at him in the society around him’.

“So that sense of representation and belonging comes with having other people around them with the same condition as themselves.”

She carried out a mixed methods research study to see how people with genetic conditions and their families view the possibility of population screening for that condition.

In the study, which began in 2017 and is finishing this month, she carried out a survey of 1,273 people and interviewed 146 in-depth. They had conditions including cystic fibrosis, thalassaemia, spinal muscular atrophy, haemophilia and Fragile X syndrome, which causes learning difficulties.

“There was a wide variation in responses, both across and within condition groups.

‘I fundamentally can’t support screening without rubbishing my own life – it would make me such a hypocrite’

“You get a real sense of the polarisation of views found within the datasets from two quotes. The first one is from Azim, a man who was 43 and had beta thalassaemia, and he said, ‘Thalassaemia is a terrible illness to live with. I mean, you have your freedom, but it’s always on a leash. You’ll soon get poorly again and need another transfusion. That’s no life, is it? If you can screen for it and stop these lives from happening, then why wouldn’t you? It’s a no-brainer, surely.’

“But we contrast this with a quote from Tammy. She was 42 and has cystic fibrosis, and at the time I interviewed her she was waiting for a lung transplant, which was shortly due to go ahead. She said, ‘People think that life with cystic fibrosis is this terrible burden. They expect me to be quite miserable. It comes with its challenges, sure. For me, CF is not a strong reason not to bring a child into the world. There are lots of things that make life challenging, CF is just one amongst many others. Screening is fine for information, but not when it might become about getting rid of people with CF.’

“So, unlike Azim, Tammy is really seeing screening as a way of getting rid of people rather than preventing a disease. There’s a real difference in how they imagine the purposes of screening, whether it was about types of people or about conditions. I think this contrast between these two perspectives that I got within the dataset was so interesting.

“What I really wanted to do next was to explore why there was so much difference. What I found within the dataset was that the way in which people imagined the seriousness of their condition was inextricably linked to the way in which they viewed screening.

“Those who had more negative views about their condition as an illness identified more with the views of Azim and were much more likely to support preventative screening programmes. Whereas those who viewed their condition as a characteristic or a relatively benign part of their identity were much more likely to oppose screening and see their condition as one of many things, many facets of identity.

“I managed to identify some key factors that seem to influence which way these participants’ views went. These were to do with the age of onset of the condition and also whether the condition was one that was relatively fixed or stable or whether it involved deterioration, whether or not participants felt that their condition caused

upported by all patients'



illness or suffering, but, also, social conditions and stigma.”

Other contrasts could be seen between Rosie, who uses a wheelchair because she had spinal muscular atrophy all her life, and who told her, “For me, it’s just a fact of my life. My life has been set up around it, and it’s a part of who I am, really. So I, fundamentally, can’t support screening if it could stop SMA lives happening. It would make me such a hypocrite, wouldn’t it? I can’t support the eradication of SMA without rubbishing my own life.”

This contrasted with her sister who had developed SMA later in life and who found it hard to accept the disease because it had robbed her of the mobility she had previously enjoyed.

Andreas, who had cystic fibrosis, told her: “CF causes suffering, of course it does. When it’s bad and I can’t breathe, it’s one of the worst physical sensations you can imagine, and to me, that’s what suffering is – being tied to a nebuliser for hours every day, struggling for breath, facing a lung transplant.

‘If you can screen for thalassaemia and stop these lives from happening, then why wouldn’t you? It’s a no-brainer, surely’

“That’s why I think screening and preventing this illness is a good idea. You will always get those who think you shouldn’t terminate, or all life should be valued the same, but this isn’t about that. It’s not about saying a CF life is worth less. It’s about getting rid of unnecessary suffering

when we have the means and ability to do so. I don’t see how you can not agree with eliminating human suffering.”

Professor Boardman also talked about the stigma attached to genetic conditions and how that affected attitudes to screening.

She quoted Amira, who has thalassaemia, and who said, “It’s not the thalassaemia that’s the problem. It’s the way it’s reacted to in the community. People think they can catch it. You can’t get married because your family gets blacklisted. The prospective family will look at it like, ‘She comes with a problem. Let’s not bother’. And I’d get passed over, wouldn’t I? Employers, as well. So, the thalassaemia, I can deal with. It’s what comes with it that makes it hard.”

Professor Boardman said that the study’s data were “really useful in revealing what people who actually live with the conditions think about the continuation of their condition in future generations, as well.

“They really highlight the limits of medical information in being able to tell us the full story about the impact and severity of a condition. They also highlight the features of a condition, including its interface with social environmental factors that can lead these families and individuals to either support or reject the notion of genetic screening.”

She said that there was still much work that sociologists could do in this area.

“Medical sociology is doing a fantastic job, you’re doing a fantastic job, and that in the context of an ever-changing, therapeutic and technological landscape, people with the skillsets that medical sociologists have, and the critical minds that medical sociologists always develop, are needed now more than they ever have been.”

- Professor Boardman sits on the Foetal, Maternal and Child Health Reference Group of the UK National Screening Committee, and recently sat on the Oversight Committee of the Public Dialogue on Whole Genome Sequencing for Newborn Screening (Genomics England). She is an affiliate social scientist at the Society and Ethics Group, Wellcome Genome Campus.

The A-level sociology exam curriculum is out of date and there is a large drop-out rate among BAME teachers, a BSA event was told. Network takes a look...

Some of the sociology A-level curriculum taught in schools is “dangerous and difficult” because of its dated and racist content, a BSA event on teaching was told.

Also, teachers from ethnic minorities were less likely to progress to senior roles in schools because of a lack of support, the event, ‘Supporting the teaching of sociology: race and ethnicity in education’ heard.

Introducing the event, Dr Sarah Cant, a BSA trustee, said that sociology was “still incredibly popular in schools... and, of course, sociology is challenging. All teachers and students agree that it stretches them – it’s not an easy subject.

“What the surveys have shown categorically and overwhelmingly is that teachers love teaching sociology, they’re highly committed and highly enthusiastic, and they’re passionate about their subject, and we’re really delighted, in the BSA, to be supporting teachers in their role as best we can.

“However, sociology is often accorded low status within schools. It’s seen as a soft subject or a sink subject, even though, when they study it, they realise how stretching and challenging it is.

“It’s predominantly taught to students who have got lower qualifications on entry to sixth form or to the A-level courses, so it’s perceived to be easier, even though we know it’s challenging.

“The curriculum, despite its fantastic potential, is described by teachers as often dated. Some of the content is not just dated but is dangerous and difficult and, actually, sometimes embarrassing for teachers to teach when it doesn’t chime with the students’ experiences, and certainly doesn’t chime with their own views.”

Her comments came against a background of protest over some textbook content, including the third edition of the *A Level Sociology Book One Including AS Level textbook*, published in 2015, which includes passages on the “cultural deprivation theory”, which states that “many children from low-income Black families lack intellectual stimulation and enriching experiences”. Though the guide bears an exam board name on the front cover, the exam board concerned has said it did not sign off on the text.

Dr Cant, pictured right, read out tweets from teachers sent after she had written an

‘Some of the A-level content is not just dated but dangerous and sometimes embarrassing’

article on the situation. One read: “Yes, it’s time to bring the subject into the 21st century”, and another, which read, “I’m sitting in a café listening to a group of women discussing what A-levels they may take, and they’re weighing up the pros and cons, and one says, ‘Not sociology, though, it’s ...’ and you can fill in the blanks.”

One from a teacher said: “Much of the A-level content of the two leading exam boards could’ve been written in the 1970s. We need to keep pace.”

Another said: “I’ve re-read the paper and it chimes with every conversation I’ve ever had with teachers. The curriculum is stale, they feel unsupported by the senior leadership teams, the subject is popular but maligned. Is a curriculum overhaul needed?”

One said: “My students tell me it’s like a BTEC, as universities ask for lower grades if you study it at university. They, therefore, choose to go for psychology as they see it as being more academic. This is the case even though they tell me sociology is the most difficult subject.”

Dr Cant, a BSA Public Engagement Director, said the BSA had taken part in meetings with the AQA, Welsh Board and OCR, which had been “really valuable”.

“It’s important to grasp this energy and enthusiasm for change. This is not trying to drag people along – there’s a real desire for change because teachers are passionate and they are excited about sociology and sometimes don’t feel that the specification enables to showcase sociology at its best.”

She also said that while course content may be dated, “there’s nothing to stop students engaging with contemporary research and ideas coming out of the university – they aren’t going to lose marks for that. So one of the things we want to look at is how the BSA can facilitate easy access to the latest research.

“Certainly, there are things that I think we can do about updating the curriculum and also making sure that we’ve got really sensitive and careful content and studies that can challenge some of that dated and dangerous content that is sometimes perpetuated in the A-level as it currently stands.”

She said the BSA was “gathering a library



of videos from contemporary sociologists talking about their research – not just the actual findings but also the research methods they use – and, hopefully, that will be useful.”

Dr Cant noted that coursework had been removed from the sociology examination by Ofqual. “I guess this is something that we have to challenge, and the BSA can be an advocate for that.”

In a question and answer session, Catheryn Murrant, of the AQA, said of the reform of the A-level exam specification that, “typically we would say that the reform process comes around every five years, but we don’t know when that will actually happen.”

“Because of what’s been happening with exams over the last few years there’s been a lot of speculation that reform might come sooner rather than later, but we have absolutely no knowledge that that might happen.”

“What we have been doing in AQA is reviewing all of our specifications over the past year... with a very specific focus on equality, diversity and inclusion.”

“We have been talking to colleagues, to stakeholders, to schools, to get a sense of what improvements we can make to the specification, so if there is a view that the content isn’t right, that it is outdated, that it can be more representative, then we want to know – we are in that phase of trying to get information to help us understand what changes we could make.”

“That’s not to say that we might be able to make those changes quickly – there may be some changes we can make quickly and there may be other changes we want to think about for when we move to reform.”

“It’s important to recognise that once you start to look at one aspect of the specification you have to look at it all, which is why I think we have to consider changes very carefully – it isn’t necessarily a quick process. All feedback about the ways we can potentially improve and have a better and more diverse specification [is valuable].”

“We are really keen to talk to colleagues about that and welcome any thoughts and contributions. I would be delighted for anybody to email me and if you’re happy for me to contact you to have a conversation that would be great.” cmurrant@aqa.org.uk

Dr Richard Waller, of the University of the West of England, who organised the event with Dr Cant, said: “I taught A-level sociology, albeit quite a few years ago, but I am involved in a scheme whereby we send some of our undergraduates out to work with A-level students locally.”

“One of the problems, in comparison to university sociology curricula, is the speed at which we can respond to changes. I could write a module tomorrow and then be teaching it later this year, which, obviously, you can’t do with A-level.”

“The biggest events for most of the young



people who are studying A-level sociology at the moment are the coronavirus pandemic and the environmental emergency, and neither of those things features particularly prominently in the syllabuses.

“It would be nice if they were able to be incorporated, but we do face challenges logistically, so it’s like trying to turn an oil tanker, in a sense.”

Giving his presentation, Dr Jason Arday, of the University of Durham, pictured below, spoke about the careers of black and ethnic minority teaching staff in schools.

“One of the things that I’m often quite proud of, and say to people, is that I was a secondary school teacher for four years, and what was really interesting was not just my own experiences of being a teacher, but more importantly the drop-off rate of black and ethnic minority teachers upon gaining national qualified teacher status, which was quite a significant thing.”

“In the research that I’ve done over the years, working with teacher education programmes, initial teacher training and new teacher trainees, a couple of things were really apparent. Specifically, the absence of mentoring and professional guidance, and the lack of progression opportunities.”

“There was this feeling that, for many Black and ethnic minority colleagues, they were treated differently from their white counterparts who were at a similar stage and level. Obviously, this draws parallels with higher education in terms of the experience of academic and professional staff.”

“Our unconscious biases play a huge part in this. One of the things that I think is really important is challenging our unconscious bias and how we all lean into some of these false narratives at the expense of Black and ethnic minority people.”

“One of the most significant features of education is to prepare people to take their place within society. As custodians of education, one of the things that we need to be focused on is how we equip learners,

students and pupils to be able to take their place in the real world.

“Very often, you hear people say that when people engage in xenophobic or fascist discourse, it’s an older generation that does it. Increasingly, what we’re finding is that there is a new generation of people who engage in xenophobic and fascist discourses, and a lot of them are a lot younger than the older populace that we all historically gravitate towards.”

“The reason why I highlight that is because in some ways, our inability as an education system to prepare people to take their place within society has led people to have these beliefs unchallenged.”

“A lot of funding within schools needs to go towards thinking about how we develop and retain Black and ethnic minority teachers within the sector.”

“There is a lot of research to suggest that senior leaders also have a deficient way of thinking around their Black and ethnic minority colleagues in terms of their capacity to lead or to progress within educational spaces.”

• The other speakers at the event were Dr Rima Saini, of Middlesex University, Professor Louise Archer, UCL, and Andy Leach, from AQA. *Network* regrets that lack of space prevents coverage of all addresses.



Pioneers who forg

Carving a path

It's hard to imagine, in today's world of ethics committees and rigorous methodological standards, that there was a time when carrying out social research was a trek into the unknown, less like a hike along a path marked by signposts, more an expedition through jungle thickets.

In mid-20th century Britain, sociology had a basecamp, in the shape of the LSE. But in the decades that followed, it branched out across the country, as university after university set up courses and departments in the discipline, and researchers laid down methods and procedures.

Who were the researchers who led the way in setting up these research projects and departments? What was it like to fashion not just a way forward but a route for future travellers?

A new book by three Essex sociologists sheds light on this. *Pioneering Social Research: Life Stories of a Generation* (Policy Press) carries extracts from interviews with 58 'pioneers', as they call them, who made social research in Britain what it is today, many of them sociologists.

The roll call of names includes prominent figures such as **Peter Townsend**, **John Goldthorpe**, **David Lockwood** and **Stan Cohen**. Most were men, as we might expect in those times, but the women included authorities such as **Mildred Blaxter**, **Janet Finch** and **Ann Oakley**.

The book's authors, **Professor Paul Thompson**, **Professor Ken Plummer** and **Dr Neli Demireva** drew on interviews with some of the 58 given to Professor Thompson and others in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Their work interprets the importance of these accounts.

This is a world that younger sociologists may find difficult to believe. A time when a woman could get a research position after an interview carried out on the steps of a gentleman's club because only men were allowed to enter it. A time when you could be told that no one knew anything about research methods so you must make it up as you go along. And in making it up, the pioneers hewed a track that generations of sociologists would follow.

In this feature *Network* takes a look at their lives. This is our interpretation of the interviews – for a more detailed examination the book is the best guide, of course.

Network devotes six pages to a new book, *Pioneering Social Research*, and a website that relate the life stories of 58 pioneers in the field of social science, including sociological luminaries such as Janet Finch, Stuart Hall, Mildred Blaxter and Colin Bell

Children of dons and domestic servants

The pioneers came from a variety of backgrounds, but some common themes can be drawn out.

Most were British-born, of course, almost half of the 58 pioneers growing up in London. Their ethnic backgrounds were diverse: a few were Black or Asian, including **Avtar Brah** (born in India), and **Harry Goulbourne** and **Stuart Hall** (both born in Jamaica).

Another group of 10 were the second generation from families who had fled persecution in the East European pogroms or from Nazi Germany, including two important figures in post-war British sociology, **Ronnie Frankenberg** and **Frank Bechhofer**. Other pioneers of Jewish background included **Stan Cohen**, who grew up in South Africa, and **Leonora Davidoff**, who grew up in New York.

From a socio-economic point of view, a few came from working class families in the north of England, including **John Goldthorpe** and **Dennis Marsden**. **David Lockwood** grew up in a small town in Yorkshire – his father had a shoemaker's shop and died from wounds he suffered in the first world war, and his mother was a domestic servant and cleaner. Other pioneers were children of a shoemaker, grocer, clerk and tailor.

Some, including **Mildred Blaxter**, were from solid middle class stock, the children of teachers, bank officials, accountants, civil servants, doctors, journalists and business owners. A few, such as **Duncan Gallie**, were

from the Oxbridge establishment – his father taught philosophy at Wadham College. **Ann Oakley** was the daughter of Richard Titmuss, one of the founders of social policy at the LSE.

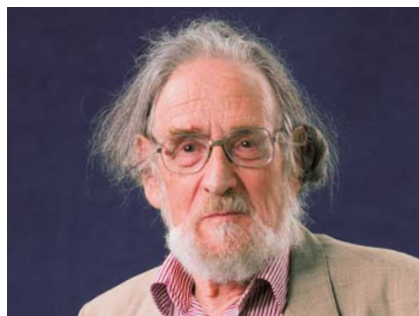
The class background had an effect on their attitudes. **Colin Bell's** father was an insurance clerk with aspirations for his children. Bell went to grammar school and realised later that, having read Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart, he couldn't identify with working class culture. As he says: "I might have come...out of the working class, but I've never really, in any sense, been a member of the working class in Britain, and nor am I a class warrior." For **Stan Cohen**, a Jewish man from South Africa, the separation was wider – English nationalism, food and pubs were particular dislikes.

All but one of the 58 pioneers who were in Britain as teenagers either passed the 11-plus exam and went to state-supported grammar schools or attended fee-paying public schools, split almost equally between them.

Most felt they had been well taught, some having "inspiring" teachers. Only six were critical of their schools' teachers. **Duncan Gallie** described his prep school as "brutal" and "hell on earth" for its harsh discipline and continual shouting. "That taught me something about authoritarian regimes which I think stayed with me forever! I worry about the effects on wellbeing of these authoritarian power structures."

Janet Finch resented how at Merchant Taylors' School she was forced to drop her

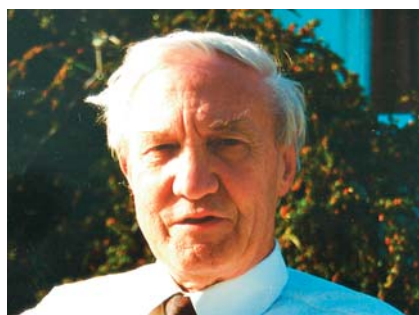
ed new pathways



Liverpool accent. “The one thing which they did do, which I’ve always deeply resented, was take my Liverpool accent away. It was the school’s policy. The small number of us who had got into the school with a Liverpool accent had to stay back for elocution lessons after school.”

The second world war, and the introduction of National Service from 1949-1960 shaped many lives. The sociologist **Robert Moore** was a Navy volunteer from a working class family, for whom becoming an officer in charge of a ship at sea proved a crucial boost to his social confidence. **Ray Pahl** did his National Service as an officer in the RAF from 1954-56.

It also brought opportunities for women. **Meg Stacey** worked in an armaments factory, where she “got on best” with the Communist shop steward. **Mildred Blaxter**, who volunteered for the Women’s Royal Naval Service during the war, said: “It was all extremely exciting. I was involved in the activities that went into training the fleets that went over on D-Day, and we lived in little lonely places in the north east of Scotland, waving flags on headlands at little ships in the bay, and going out in minesweepers and things like that.” But after hearing about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, she wanted to get out of the military, and passed an entrance exam for Oxford, leaving the Navy without a discharge. “Eventually I just walked out. So, technically, to this day, I am still a deserter from the Services.”



Photos:

Left column top – Harry Goulbourne
Left column bottom – Mildred Blaxter
Right column, from top –
 Frank Bechhofer, Diane Leonard,
 Stan Cohen, David Lockwood

Feature continued overleaf ►

Engineers, geographers and anthropologists

For the older members of the 58, it wasn’t at school that they first experienced sociology, since the subject didn’t enter into the O-level or A-level syllabuses until the 1960s and 1970s. University teaching was largely confined to the LSE until the 1960s. Instead, the pioneers were drawn to it after beginning other subjects at universities, or by pure serendipity.

Frank Bechhofer studied mechanical sciences at Cambridge. He became interested in industrial management and met John Goldthorpe, who recruited him to help carry out the now famous Affluent Worker study.

Mildred Blaxter read English at Oxford, with lectures by C.S. Lewis and Tolkien, before working in publishing and then going to study sociology at Aberdeen, which led to a job in the Medical Research Unit. **Stuart Hall** also studied English Literature at Oxford, on a Rhodes Scholarship.

Ronnie Frankenberg studied natural sciences at Cambridge, switching to anthropology in his third year. **Diane Leonard** found natural sciences at Cambridge disappointing and switched to archaeology and anthropology in her third year, finding the latter a “revelation”. **David Lockwood** was in the Army Intelligence Corps and was sent to Austria at the end of the war to assist in the de-Nazification of the country. He started evening classes in geography and economics while in the Army and passed the entrance exam to the LSE, continuing on to study for a PhD on industrial arbitration which led to work with the sociologist David Glass.

Ann Oakley studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford, taking the newly introduced option in sociology in the last year. She studied for a PhD in sociology before becoming a successful author.

Howard Newby studied sociology and social policy at Essex.

Many sociologists studied at the LSE, of course, including **Stan Cohen, Leonora Davidoff, Duncan Gallie, David Lockwood, Ray Pahl, Ken Plummer, Hilary Rose, Sara Arber, and Meg Stacey**, among others.

'I was offered three research jobs'

◀ From previous page

'Be polite to officials'

The same informality that saw researchers appointed to jobs after a phone call (*see right*) can also be seen in their approach to research methods. Sociology, at least in British universities, was a young science, still finding its way, and beginning to experiment with a variety of qualitative methods that went beyond surveys and number crunching.

Mildred Blaxter did not expect, when studying sociology at Aberdeen, to find young lecturers who used ethno-methodology and symbolic interactionism, often using games during tutorials. It was difficult to link this new theory with her practical experience of working in publishing before her degree.

When she took up a post in 1970 in the Medical Research Unit she worked with young researchers interested in new methodologies, using interviews, observation, tape recordings of interactions and documentary analysis.

"We were all inventing our own methods as we went along. I think this is terribly important. It was before qualitative methods had solidified. We all wanted to do something different, so we were all doing something different."

Ronnie Frankenberg chose Glyn Cereiog in Wales for an ethno-methodological study for his PhD at Manchester. He received no methods training, simply being told to work as anthropologists had always done: "Go there and do likewise. Don't go around offending. Be polite to officials."

Duncan Gallie recalled that while in the middle of his PhD on industrial relations he was given an SSRC research grant and a Nuffield fellowship that allowed him to hire two research officers, despite having published nothing. "It couldn't happen now," he said.

In the 1950s **George Brown** worked at the Industrial Research Operations Unit, touring the country to carry out time and motion studies. As he admits, his archaeology and anthropology degree had not trained him in participant observation: "Never been trained in anything. I mean, the thing I would emphasise about myself is my almost total ignorance and lack of training in anything. Incredible!"

Interviewed in a coffee bar

Getting a first job in sociology today can seem like a superhuman task. A track record of publications in the right journals, evidence of teaching excellence and proof of impact are usually demanded of applicants, even new post-docs.

So readers today will have the strongest sense that the past is a different country when they see how easy it was to find a job at a time when universities and sociology departments were expanding rapidly.

David Hargreaves worked as a teacher in Hull after finishing his degree in theology and psychology in the 1950s. He wanted more of a challenge so applied to the University of Manchester, where he met a professor of politics to talk about a research role.

"We chatted a bit – this was for a Research Assistant's post – and I said, 'but what, exactly, would you want me to do?' And he said, 'Well, I don't know. I don't know really'. And I said, 'Well, I really don't know anything about government'. He said, 'Don't worry about that, you can pick it up in six months. You know, you just have to do a bit of reading. I mean to say, we'll find something for you to do'.

"So anyway, he sat back and he said, 'Well, actually, there's another job going in the building. If you like, you could go and see Professor Chester', who was the Professor of Social Administration.

"So I went to see him, and he said, 'Oh yes, yes, you sound to be just the man for this job really'.

"But then as we were chatting, he said, 'if you've been in a school, there's a job going, upstairs in anthropology, studying schools. Why don't you go up and see Max Gluckman?'."

Gluckman also offered him a job, which he took. "So I was offered three jobs as a research assistant!"

He was then put in charge of research at the MRC Social Psychiatry Research Unit at the Maudsley, where at first his lack of training in analysis and statistics made it a struggle at first. He then had a "eureka experience" when he found a book in the Institute of Psychiatry's library with a chapter on analysing data by Paul Lazarsfeld, which advocated cross-tabulation

Sara Arber recalled that after she passed her degree at LSE with a first, she was given a scholarship to Ann Arbor in Michigan to study for a PhD. But she was bored there so she applied for a job at the University of Surrey.

Her application arrived after a candidate had been appointed to the post, but when he later decided not to take up the position she was interviewed once and appointed.

Robert Moore, after studying sociology at Hull University, went straight into a job at the University of Birmingham. He wanted to work with John Rex, whose *Key Problems of Sociological Theory* was one of the few books on social theory at that time, the mid-1960s.

Moore wrote to him and met him in a coffee bar in Golders Green, where Rex invited him to join his research team at Birmingham.

When Rex was appointed professor at Durham in 1964 Moore followed, and they wrote a book together, *Race, Community and Conflict*.

"The year I graduated [1964], of course, that was just at the beginning, there weren't all that many sociology departments, and those that were, were beginning to expand a bit. Heads of department were phoning round other heads of department, saying, 'Have you got any good graduates? I've got a vacant lectureship'."

Not all the sociology pioneers needed PhDs to progress their careers in academia. **Stuart Hall** never completed his doctorate on the writer Henry James.

Colin Bell went into academia after his Master's degree and **Mildred Blaxter** was offered a job at the MRC straight after her Master's in sociology at the University of Aberdeen.

for testing hypotheses.

This was "tremendously exciting, intellectually, because it was possible to bring vague ideas that one had, and also kind of serendipitous things that are coming out of the data, and what was so exciting was that you could pursue a series of hypotheses and generate them and test them, and go on, and it was truly exhilarating."

research jobs on the same day'



Sara Arber (right) accepting the BSA's Distinguished Service award in 2017 from Lynn Jamieson

'Punch girls' were the SPSS of the day

The sociologists were not just pioneers in methods of data collecting and analysis. The post-war research world saw the rise of computers as an important tool.

Frank Bechhofer recalled that for the famous *Affluent Worker* study in the early 1960s they used "steam technology", by which he meant that questionnaires were transferred to coding sheets which were key-punched by "punch girls", all done in-house. They had to have meetings to decide how to code the unstructured questions.

John Bynner recalled that when he worked for the 1963-70 Government Social Survey on Young People's Smoking that "there were no computers", just punch cards. "The idea of doing multivariate analysis, real statistical work, wasn't really feasible, even though, theoretically, it existed, but the technology wasn't up to it. It's hard to imagine how it was done," and yet "great reports were produced" which

"went down very well".

Sara Arber's time at Ann Arbor had shown her that America was "way ahead" of Britain in the use of computers. SPSS "was at the forefront, this was cutting edge stuff at the time, 1974. We were using punch-cards, we were analysing real data – General Social Survey data and other US [data] – so the US was way ahead of us in terms of methodology."

At Surrey, she taught students SPSS but had to send punch cards to the University of London Computer Centre. She wanted to use the data from the 1971/2 General Household Survey Report, but this was not provided in a usable format.

It was only when Nigel Gilbert joined the department and brought his skills to bear that it could be read. She later helped persuade the Census Office to make the 1991 Census available as a sample of anonymised records.

Biographies

Sara Arber joined the University of Surrey in 1974 where she remained for the rest of her career. She headed Surrey's Sociology Department from 1996-2002, and is co-Director of its Centre for Research on Ageing and Gender. Her focus then shifted towards women and gender. She was given the BSA Distinguished Service to Sociology award in 2017.

Frank Bechhofer was an expert on nationalism, especially national identity in Scotland and England. He took a first degree in Mechanical Sciences at Cambridge in 1959, and in 1965 went to the University of Edinburgh, where he founded the Research Centre for Social Sciences.

Colin Bell's books looked at wealth and power in the English countryside, planning issues, family life, community and kinship. He became Professor of Sociology at Aston University, later moving to Edinburgh. In 1998 he became vice-chancellor at Bradford University.

Mildred Blaxter: After wartime service in the Navy, she worked for the Medical Research Council, later moving to the universities of East Anglia and Cambridge, where she took a leading role on the first national survey of health and lifestyles, resulting in a bestselling book, *Health and Lifestyles* (1990).

Avtar Brah: After studying agriculture in the US, she came to Britain and switched to social sciences, eventually joining Birkbeck as lecturer, becoming senior lecturer, Reader, then Professor. Her books tackled themes of racism, identity and diaspora. She was given an MBE in 2001 in recognition of her research.

George Brown's main area of work has been in the field of mental illness. His research established the crucial role of social factors in causing depression. He began work at the Maudsley Hospital, London, and later at Bedford College, where he became joint Director, establishing the first, and highly influential, Masters degree in medical sociology in Britain.

Stan Cohen came from South Africa to London in 1963, where he worked as a social worker, before completing a PhD at the LSE, then lecturing in sociology at Enfield College and Durham University. A project in Durham Prison with Laurie Taylor led to three books. He later worked at Essex before moving to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, working with human rights organisations on their campaigns. He later moved as Professor of Sociology to the LSE.

Feature continued overleaf ►

'There are all kinds of b

◀ From previous page

Not allowed into a club

It may have been much easier to find a job in sociology then, but women and people from ethnic minorities were confronted with an academic world dominated by white men, even more so than today.

Leonora Davidoff was interviewed for a job on the steps of the Athenaeum Club because her interviewer, Charles Madge, was a member. "I was a bit taken aback – fortunately, it wasn't raining, it wasn't foggy, and I got the job. But it's things like that that sort of stick in your subconscious." It was not until 2002 that the club yielded to public pressure and removed its ban on women members.

The 1970s saw a reaction against patriarchy, with a wave of radical feminism in which sociologists played a large role. **Diane Leonard** found herself "sucked into" the women's movement of the early 1970s. She drew on the work of the French writer Christine Delphy, pointing out the lack of choice for women, and how men expected to support them financially, while women were in turn expected to obey them. She joined a local women's support group, which worked on consciousness-raising, and jointly organised the influential 1974 BSA conference at Aberdeen which pushed the BSA towards new gender equity policies.

Ann Oakley recalls how she joined a Women's Liberation consciousness-raising group in Ealing in the early 1970s. "I remember turning up at this house in Ealing, and the door was opened by a woman in hot pants and boots, and the pram was in the hall. Bizarre! And they were a couple of American women who were starting this group in West London, which I joined, and one of the women is still a friend of mine now. And so the experience of being in these small consciousness-raising groups was an important resource for me."

Janet Finch recalled how the BSA's Sexual Divisions and Family study groups and its Women's Caucus were all "intellectual anchor points".

"These were the places at which I met, on a regular basis, people from around the country who were in a similar position to me, with similar interests to me. We would just meet entirely at our own expense, for a Saturday afternoon, and go off for a curry, and it was great! It was often a mixture of intellectual work and ... how to become more influential in the BSA, and that kind of thing."

The increasingly vocal demands for equality did not sit well with some men. **John Goldthorpe** reflected that he stepped down as Editor of *Sociology* journal, disliking the "constant pressure from the BSA to publish Marxists, phenomenologists, women, people from polytechnics".

For people from ethnic minorities – mainly men – the experience could be lonely.

Harry Goulbourne said that Black academics were very rare in Britain during his career in the 1970s-90s. Some colleagues did have "up the wall" attitudes on British black and Asian minorities which he found extremely annoying.

"At a more subjective personal level, it was painful, irksome, annoying, frustrating, to have some colleagues making statements where it was their prejudices which were speaking, even though they were defending these, or presenting these in terms of objective social science, which it wasn't."

He believed that discrimination lay behind the failure to give him a Chair, and talked about coming into an interview room where the panel were clearly expecting another white candidate to appear.

Avtar Brah said: "If you're a person of colour, it's quite a struggle in academia. It's not something we've talked about actually, but it's difficult always to pinpoint. It's not that people are overtly racist or anything like that – heaven forbid in academia! But there



Photos: Above – Avtar Brah
Right – Janet Finch

©Mholland <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1740237>

are all kinds of barriers that you face. I mean, you have to be almost twice as good at something before you can be listened to, so to speak. So I've had a lot of struggles within the academy, although I have done very well as well, I can't say that I haven't. But it's been a struggle throughout – the work relationships."

As the book notes, the 1960s were a time of sexual revolution, as evidenced by **Ken Plummer**, who found a lifetime's research theme in coming out as gay. "1966 was my critical coming out year. But there was another coming out, which was in the Gay Movement in 1970, which is when I first marched in the streets."

Harry Goulbourne, who was born in Jamaica, is Professor of Sociology and Director of the Race and Ethnicity Research Centre at South Bank University. He has published numerous books, including *Race Relations in Britain since 1945* (1998), the four-volume edited *Race & Ethnicity* (2001) and the co-edited *Caribbean Families in Britain and the Trans-Atlantic World* (2001).

Stuart Hall, who was also born in Jamaica, was an important figure at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, becoming its Director in 1972. Hall left the centre in 1979 to become a Professor of Sociology at the Open University. He was President of the British Sociological Association from 1995 to 1997. He retired from the Open University in 1997 and was Professor Emeritus.

Diane Leonard became active in the Women's Liberation movement, editing *Trouble and Strife*, a feminist journal, and helping to found the Women's Research and Resources Centre (later renamed the Feminist Library) in London in 1975. At the Institute of Education she established the Centre for Research on Education and Gender in 1984, remaining at the Institute until retirement in 2007.

David Lockwood worked at the LSE, writing *The Blackcoated Worker* (1958), which sought to analyse the changes in the position of the clerical worker. In 1958 he left the LSE for Cambridge, working on The Affluent Worker project. He then went to Essex as Professor of Sociology, serving as Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dean of Social Sciences and as Head of the Sociology Department.

carriers you face'



Robert Moore, after service in the Navy, studied sociology at Hull, later moving to Birmingham and co-writing in 1967 *Race, Community and Conflict: A Study of Sparkbrook*, which examined housing shortages and the rise of racial conflict. He moved to Durham University, where he researched coal mining communities, and then to Aberdeen, writing *The Social Impact of Oil* (1982), before working at Liverpool.

Ann Oakley worked at Bedford College on women's experiences of the transition to motherhood. She worked in medical sociology at Oxford, before moving to the Institute of Education in London, setting up its Social Science Research Unit, and writing influential books, *The Sociology of Housework* and *Housewife*. These pointed out that the social sciences ignored housework as a form of work.

Sociologists' impact

Then as now, sociologists' impact involved not simply academic research and teaching. Several mentioned their work for the BSA as an important part of their lives.

Diane Leonard, with David Morgan, ran a BSA study group on the family. With Sheila Allen, she organised the 1974 BSA conference at Aberdeen on the sexual divisions in society.

Sara Arber was very involved in the BSA as Assistant Treasurer, President and Honorary Vice-President. She was given its Distinguished Service to British Sociology award. **Stuart Hall** was President of the British Sociological Association from 1995 to 1997. **Meg Stacey** was elected President of the British Sociological Association in 1982.

Several sociologists moved away from research in favour of academic promotion. **Janet Finch** was appointed Vice-Chancellor at Keele, and **Howard Newby** held the leading role at the universities of Southampton, West of England and Liverpool. **Ray Pahl** helped set up the Central European University with George Soros.

Sociologists were also prominent outside of academia. **Peter Townsend** was co-founder of the Child Poverty Action Group in 1965, and co-founded the Disability Alliance in response to the Thalidomide scandal, chairing it for 25 years.

David Hargreaves was Chief Inspector for the Inner London Education Authority and Chair of the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency, the lead agency in the United Kingdom for the integration of IT in education.

Pioneering Social Research: Life Stories of a Generation (Policy Press) is written by Professor Paul Thompson, Professor Ken Plummer and Dr Neli Demireva, of the University of Essex. Video clips of interviews with pioneers can be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/y68s39ps>

Ray Pahl was appointed as lecturer at the University of Kent and to a personal Chair in 1972. In the late 1970s he carried out a study of the informal economy of the Isle of Sheppey, as a result of which he published *Divisions of Labour* (1984). In the 1980s he helped set up the British Household Panel Study at Essex. He also contributed in the 1980s to the Archbishop of Canterbury's report, *Faith in the City*.

Biographies

Leonora Davidoff was born in New York City, taking an MA at the LSE on the employment of married women and later teaching at Essex on the UK's first MA in women's history. She is best known for her book *Family Fortunes*, which traced the evolution of capitalist enterprise in England.

Janet Finch joined Lancaster University in 1976, working there for almost 20 years and becoming Pro Vice-Chancellor. She became Vice-Chancellor of Keele University from 1995 until her retirement in 2010. She was awarded a DBE in 2008 for services to social science.

Ronnie Frankenberg studied for his PhD the former slate-mining community of Glyn Ceiriog in Wales, forming the basis of his book *Village on the Border* (1957).

This overturned the nostalgic romantic belief that small-town communities had a settled sense of hierarchy. He was appointed inaugural Professor of Sociology at Keele, and was Director of its Centre for Medical Anthropology.

Duncan Gallie worked at Essex, Warwick, and then as a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford. His research is in economic sociology, including the quality of work, the social consequences of unemployment, and changes in skills and employment conditions in Britain.

John Goldthorpe worked at Leicester, King's College London, Cambridge and Oxford. His work on social class led to the well-established Goldthorpe class schema, one of the standard approaches to classifying class in sociology. He was also known for his vocal critique of the concepts of cultural capital and habitus, as initially formulated by Pierre Bourdieu, which he argued were empirically and theoretically ill-informed. He was part of the team that carried out *The Affluent Worker* studies.

Peter Townsend took up posts at the Institute for Community Studies and the LSE before becoming one of the first professors at Essex. In the 1980s he moved to the University of Bristol. His work on poverty took in issues including children's rights and nursing homes. He co-founded the Child Poverty Action Group and the Disability Alliance in response to the Thalidomide scandal, and chaired it for 25 years.

Oli Williams

Dr Williams's research focuses on health inequalities, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, 'obesity', weight stigma, equitable intervention and participatory research methods. He co-founded the art collective Act With Love to promote social change. In recognition of his work on weight stigma, the British Science Association invited him to give the Margaret Mead Award Lecture for Social Sciences and 'The weight of expectation' project won 'Best doctoral or early career research' at the AHRC Medical Humanities Awards.



Your first choice is *Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport*, edited by Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald – why did you choose this?

My first book could have been any number of edited collections and introductory texts from the sociology of sport, such as Patricia Vertinsky and Jennifer Hargreaves' *Physical Culture, Power, and the Body*, John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson's *Power Games: a Critical Sociology of Sport*, or William Morgan's *Leftist Theories of Sport: a Critique and Reconstruction*.

When I was younger, I was not much interested in books or reading. I was 16 before I read a book through my own volition and did not anticipate continuing beyond compulsory education. My life revolved around sport (both playing and watching) and I only ended up at college because doing a BTEC in Sport and Exercise Science meant I could just study sport. When I went on to do the equivalent degree at university I was exposed to the sociology of sport. Sport was my route into sociology and without the sociology of sport I would not have become a sociologist.

From then books played a much more prominent role in my life. Books like *Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport* made social theory and analysis (that I was largely ignorant of and may have otherwise found impenetrable) accessible and engaging to me, and therefore not only helped me to better understand sport but also the world around me. This book in particular presented ideas, values and critiques that chimed with me and helped me to get to grips with the social processes and politics that shape societies and lives. In part it got the nod ahead of others because it contains a brilliant chapter 'Re-appropriating Gramsci: Marxism, hegemony and sport', by Professor Alan Bairner. I was taught by Alan. He is an exceptional sociologist, lecturer and writer

and he, perhaps more than anyone else, ignited and developed my sociological imagination. He did so in part by directing me to books like this.

What made you choose your next selection – *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, by Susan Faludi?

Before university, I didn't know a great deal about feminism. It was not something I was taught much about at school or had much exposure to outside of education. I got the clichéd summary that I think the majority of young people (especially boys) who grew up in the '90s got – women causing unrest and suffering and dying for the vote and later on burning bras and declining to shave armpits and legs to reject the idea that women are merely sex objects for men. But gender politics and feminism are key areas of study in the sociology of sport and so, as an undergraduate, I was for the first time exposed to books that laid out the history of feminism and the ideas, principles, politics and events that informed and defined the different waves and kinds of feminism.

I remember early on reading Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* and her theory that all men benefit from the culture of rape. At the time I did not have the experience or critical capacity to resist responding by clawing for the comfort of the 'not all men' defence and subsequently questioning if I was on board with feminism. Later I read *Backlash* and it was life changing. Faludi documents the backlash against feminism after the advances made in the 1970s, and how feminism was painted as having won the fight for equality, but how this led to more, not less, misery for women.

I found Faludi's deconstruction of the arguments that promoted and sustained this backlash both captivating and incredibly

convincing. The way she presented her argument made me conclude that anyone who was against feminism was a mug and this fundamentally altered my reading of feminist theory. For instance, from this position I better understood and now accepted Brownmiller's rape theory. I've not re-read it since but at that time in my late teens this book had a profound effect on me. We need more books that can convince young men that anyone who is against feminism is a mug.

And what made you select for your third book *Education, Disordered Eating and Obesity Discourse: Fat Fabrications*, by John Evans, Emma Rich, Brian Davies and Rachel Allwood?

John and Emma taught me when I was an undergraduate. They ran a module called 'Equity and inclusion in physical education' that not only highlighted inequalities and exclusionary practices that detrimentally impacted pupils' experience of PE but also presented more equitable and inclusive alternatives.

This book was published while I was an undergrad, at which time I was more interested in and focused on the dietary and eating practices of aspiring and elite sports performers. So I had read, researched and written about the normalisation in sports of otherwise pathologised eating practices, as the pursuit of sporting excellence promoted 'positive deviancy' in relation to diet, activity and bodily form. But this book in particular got me interested in looking beyond sporting subcultures and instead considering how health is conceptualised in contemporary societies and the emphasis placed on the





relationship between health and body weight. It provided some of the best critique of obesity science at that time.

For instance, I still vividly remember sitting in a library and reacting to their critique of BMI being used to measure health – in particular the story of when the decision to change the boundaries of the BMI risk categories came into effect, meaning that millions of people were deemed to have gone to bed ‘healthy’ but woke up ‘unhealthy’. It was one of my first encounters with the concept of body pedagogies – a concept with origins in sociology but under-utilised by sociologists. This text was in many ways my gateway to what was at the time critical obesity studies and the scholarship of Fat Activists and played a significant role in shaping the focus of my research career.

Your fourth choice is *The Phenomenology of Perception*, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty – what made you opt for this book?

Merleau-Ponty is perhaps best known for his critique of Cartesian dualism and as such this is often considered his defining text. I first encountered it as a heavily-cited classic in

more contemporary work, which I then went back to read for myself. The body and embodiment have always been central to my research interests, and I loved the way Merleau-Ponty argued for the centrality of the body in understanding and articulating human experience. The ideas of the body as being our ‘anchorage in the world’, and our sense of ‘being-in-the-world’ fundamentally being an embodied one, are foundational concepts that were, when he was writing, neglected.

As with *Backlash*, I think one of the reasons I found this book so engaging was because it presented new ideas within a critique of more established thinking and in so doing made the alternative appear far more compelling and convincing. Unlike those who read *The Phenomenology of Perception* at the time of publication, I was able to read this classic alongside Nick Crossley’s *Reflexive Embodiment in Contemporary Society*, Deborah Lupton’s *The Imperative of Health: Public Health and the Regulated Body*, the work of Chris Shilling, and others. All of these books helped me to gain a better understanding of the relationships between the body, identity and experience, and society, and to develop my own contributions to the theory of embodiment and critiques of healthism.

Your last book is *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, by Nikolas Rose – what led you to this?

I read this in tandem with another of his books, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self*, and their relevance to each other means I came to think of them as two volumes of the same book. I think Rose distinguishes himself from many sociologists in the way he uses social theory. It strikes me that many sociologists are disciples and defenders of particular theorists, more concerned with showing how contemporary societies can be explained by theories and concepts developed in vastly different times than having the imagination and making the time to do the work of adapting and adding to them to create analytical lenses more attuned to contemporary societies.

I remember laughing out loud when reading in the introduction Rose’s response to criticism from these types: “There are those who seek to be Foucault scholars. That

is their privilege”. Rose takes a looser approach – less concerned with staying faithful to Foucault as the source of authority and more concerned with taking what is useful from Foucault and developing theory and concepts tailored to the time and context of concern. I consider this book particularly important because of the angle it offers from which to understand and critique neo-liberalism.

There are plenty of very limited sociological analyses and critiques of neo-liberalism. There’s enough about for people outside of sociology to joke that all sociologists do is blame neo-liberalism. Rose cuts through this in recognising modern individuals as not merely being positioned as ‘free to choose’ but rather as obliged to be free. I was particularly taken with this theoretical sophistication and found it incredibly useful for the research I have done on contemporary health promotion, inequalities and the interaction between public health and consumer culture.

Which luxury item would you like to take to your desert island?

In terms of a luxury, given the precarity and toxic performance culture that now defines many of our experiences in academia, being stuck on an island with a pile of good books and the time to read and think with them seems like luxury enough to me. So I guess the real luxury would be to have another book.

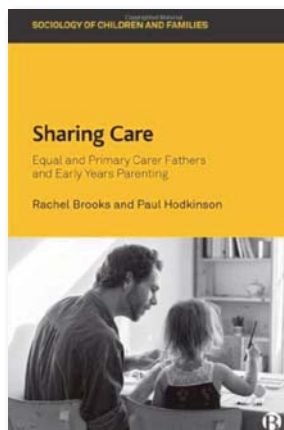
As my research career has taken me away from the sociology of sport, reading academic literature on sport has become a luxury.

It would feel like a real luxury to have the time to sit with a new edited collection – like those that were my initial gateway into sociology.

Ali Bowes and Alex Culvin’s *The Professionalisation of Women’s Sport: Issues and Debates* was recently published and looks like a great collection. Women’s sport is such a rich area for anyone interested in gender politics. It provides injustices to get angry about and triumphs to celebrate. As Sundays came around on the island and I couldn’t take up my usual place on the Kingsmeadow terraces, I expect this collection would offer some consolation and captivate me like Emma Hayes’ side.

Dr Williams’s choices:

1. **Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport**, edited by Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald (2009) Routledge
2. **Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women**, by Susan Faludi (1991) Crown
3. **Education, Disordered Eating and Obesity Discourse**, by John Evans et al (2008) Routledge
4. **The Phenomenology of Perception**, by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2010) Routledge
5. **Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought**, by Nikolas Rose (1999) Cambridge University Press



Sharing Care: Equal and Primary Carer Fathers and Early Years Parenting

Rachel Brooks and Paul Hodkinson
Bristol University Press
2020
230 pages
£60 hbk, £19.99 pbk
ISBN hbk: 9781529205961

The role of fathers in early years caregiving has gained attention in public discourse in recent years. This book discusses contemporary fathers' caregiving journeys and parenthood in the UK from a qualitative point of view. Drawing extensively on the existing literature and examining relevant policies, Brooks and Hodkinson focus their attention on fathers who took their care roles beyond simple support for their partners. In doing so, they manage to achieve an in-depth understanding of what such arrangements can look like and how they play out in practice. Particular interactional dynamics between men and women in heterosexual relationships are investigated, with respect to the responsibilities taken by the parents when providing childcare.

The study is based on in-depth interviews with fathers in heterosexual dual-parent households who regarded themselves as the primary caregiver or as sharing care equally with their partners.

The book comprises seven chapters: after the introduction in chapter one, chapter two places the study in the framework of existing literature on fathering, chapter three focuses on developments in family policy that are designed to encourage fathers to take a greater share of caregiving to young children, whereas chapters four and five provide an in-depth analysis of the lived realities of fathers who take on care-sharing roles and their care arrangements. The diverse parental styles of men are specifically discussed in chapter five.

Chapter six takes into account a set of significant limitations on fathers' caregiving identities and horizons, which help one in understanding fathers' tendency to (often) feel out of place within daytime public spaces outside their home, as well as eventual difficulties in interacting with other parents. In the final chapter the authors bring together the key points from the preceding chapters, drawing empirical and conceptual conclusions from the study and providing a number of useful policy recommendations.

As noted in chapter five, despite some persistent differences in the styles of parenting employed by mothers and fathers, little evidence emerges that fathers are avoiding or feeling uncomfortable discharging more traditionally feminine aspects of care such as those relating to emotional comfort. Many of the interviewed fathers perceived positively the possibility of developing gentler, more intimate and nurturing aspects of their parenting.

Nevertheless, Brooks and Hodkinson identify certain areas of persisting disparity between the fathers interviewed and their partners with respect to emotional and organisational aspects of caregiving, this being due to the endurance of deep-rooted maternal pressures to feel ultimately responsible for care. The authors observe that persisting social barriers prevent UK fathers from embracing full responsibility when caring for their children, including "the ways that mothers and fathers can, between



Book

them, collaboratively reinforce continued maternal dominance of some aspects of caregiving", as well as "how caregiving fathers are positioned by external organisations, professionals and others – institutionalising and reinforcing notions of default maternal responsibility" (p.142).

Brooks and Hodkinson conclude by showing convincingly that policy in the UK should convey more effectively that men's contributions are not tied exclusively to their participation in the labour market and that adjusting work to care for children contributes to both individual and social good. In this way, they provide an idea of the way forward towards a more equal and just society. In short, providing new academic insights and a number of practical recommendations for policymakers. This book can be praised for being essential reading for those interested in parenting, families and gender, including researchers, students and practitioners.

■ **Mitja Stefancic**
Independent researcher

Social Divisions: Inequality and Diversity in Britain

Geoff Payne and Eric Harrison, eds
(Fourth edition)
Policy Press
2020
512 pages
£23.99 pbk
ISBN pbk: 9781447355120

Perhaps now, more than ever, we are aware of the consequences of policy decisions. These decisions can determine our health, wellbeing and success. As some will suffer ill health due to the work they undertake or the areas that they live, others will continue to thrive and succeed, even in the most difficult of times, due to the education they receive or the families that they are born into. This demonstrates how personal, political and social issues drastically affect our personal outcomes. *Social Divisions: Inequality and Diversity in Britain* contextualises the practices and procedures that influence one's life chances in contemporary Britain. The aim of this book is to critically examine wide-ranging

issues such as race, sex, class and disability that can define and divide us.

This welcome fourth edition discusses the complex social divisions that affect us all in a diverse, contemporary society. Payne and Harrison are both academics, experts in social stratification, inequality and social mobility. The societal changes over the 20 years since the first edition are acknowledged and discussed within. Chapter one by Payne lays the foundation for the remainder of the book in discussing the meaning and real-world implications of social divisions and inequality on both a micro and macro level. The following 17 chapters are distinct yet equally relevant and well researched.

Reviews of recent books in social science and sociology

ends

I was conducting field research when the pandemic broke in early 2020 and my field sites were physically shut off from me. At that time, academia was collectively thinking of creative ways to conduct fieldwork as most field sites eventually moved online. In *Digital Social Research*, Giuseppe Veltri provides a timely account of how researchers could conduct field research using digital data and methods, since “[t]here is little doubt that digital data are changing the way social science is done” (p.2). Veltri intends for this book “to provide an overview and understanding of the most used digital research methods of data collection” (p.4) and to reflect on methodological and theoretical issues.

This book focuses more on the quantitative approach (p.61). Chapter one introduces social research using digital data and methods by considering prevalent issues such as the “volume, velocity, and variety” of big data (p.13), representativeness of the research population, and native digital data. Veltri also asks questions on how data created in a digital platform needs a specific method

Chapters focusing on sexuality, gender, age, and education are also included in this volume, amongst other important factors such as identity, religion and community. Contributors to this book are academics and sociologists with a wide range of expertise and knowledge of social inequality and diversity, offering both theoretical and empirical explanations for the inequality that constrains and enables us as citizens in Britain.

While the themes under investigation are complex, the discussions and analysis are not, as they are nuanced, accessible and concise. Easy to navigate, this book is well structured with helpful signposting throughout. It is divided into four distinct parts, with each part

to deal with it. Chapter two compares unobtrusive and obtrusive methods and elaborates on collecting social media data, including the tools that can be employed. Chapter three discusses methods for online obtrusive data collection, such as qualitative interviews, surveys and experiments. Chapter four talks about epistemological and methodological challenges in quantitative data analysis. Chapter five describes network analysis. Chapter six moves on from content analysis to text mining. Chapter seven briefly discusses the ethical issues in conducting digital social research.

The book is compiled from Veltri’s research and his methodology workshops for masters students. I find this book to be suitable for his intended audience of emerging researchers as it gives a clear introductory framework for those new to digital social research. This book can also be read as a toolkit or reference text for more experienced researchers, since each chapter provides ‘tools’ and further readings. While there are similarities across the social sciences, it is helpful that Veltri points out that techniques may not be equally applicable in different disciplines with their own epistemological positions and methodological preferences.

Veltri highlights several concerns of the field, such as “data becoming ‘old’ very quickly” (p. 2), the “fading division between

featuring multiple chapters that are relevantly grouped together. This is both a sociology book and a policy book, as each distinct section is underpinned by research data and key sociological perspectives such as Marxism, classical elite theory and feminism. Key themes such as class stratification, patriarchy and multiculturalism are skilfully conceptualised, providing a framework of understanding of the causes and effects of inequality. This edition is comprehensive and each chapter can be read as a standalone resource or as a complete guide for those trying to understand the unequal share of social and political capital that is visible in society today.



online and offline research” (p.2), the “overwhelming and confusing” nature of data collected from online sources (p.3), and unequal access to data and participants, who are primarily from Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic countries (pp.194-195). While his survey is helpful for a quick understanding of the field of digital research, I find his angle Anglocentric. Veltri argues that “[t]he issue of access to social media data was already, from the start, skewed towards Western academics (in particular North Americans, who controlled almost all the main social media platforms)” (p.46).

As a Sinophone academic, I would like to push back on that point: China has its own social media platforms, which are obviously not based in America. Mandarin Chinese has the most native speakers in the world, so it is no surprise there are many around the world using WeChat, Weibo, Bilibili and the like. Moreover, TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, was founded in China and TikTok is widely used, even by those in the Anglophone world. I would argue that, in analysing digital social data, it is important to bear in mind that China and India, rather than America, are up and coming powerhouses of digital platforms and together could drive the future of digital social research.

■ Ann Gillian Chu
University of St Andrews

This book is highly recommended. Payne and Harrison achieve their aim with this offering, producing incisive insight into the social divisions that shape us, whether we are aware of it or not. This is a timely and necessary offering and a great resource for teachers and students of sociology and social policy. It is also equally suitable for policymakers. This research contributes to the social sciences field by highlighting the key social issues that should be recognised, understood and mitigated if we are to build a fair, diverse and equal society.

■ Ruth Austin
University of Leeds

Professor Martyn Hammersley (pictured below) takes a fresh look at the life and work of Karl Mannheim

I first came across Karl Mannheim in 1966, when I was studying for A-levels. I found his book *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* in the local public library and took it out. I'm not sure how much of it I read, and I probably understood even less. However, I remember being struck by the idea that one could think in a scientific way about how society is organised, how it is changing, and what might be required if its problems are to be overcome. I used some of his ideas and phrases in a history essay, much to the disgust of my history teacher. This was my first contact with sociology, and I decided then and there to study it at university.

Later, when I went to LSE, I had very little, if any, contact with Mannheim's work; it was not on any of the reading lists for the courses I did – even though he had taught there in the late 1930s. Nor did I read his work much during my subsequent career as a sociologist. It was only in 2019, after I had formally retired, that I became interested in Mannheim again. I was working on a chapter about ideology for a book I was writing, and turned to Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia*. I had long been aware of this book through secondary sources, but had never read it. I went on to explore quite a lot of the secondary literature about Mannheim, of which there is now a considerable amount, in order to get some overall sense of his work and of its context. In the process, I became fascinated by the parallels, and differences, between his time and ours, both as regards sociology and the state of the wider world.

Mannheim was born and educated in Budapest around the end of the 19th century, and participated in the lively intellectual circles that flourished there before and during the first world war. He left for Germany in 1920, after the failure of the Communist revolution in Hungary, studying in Heidelberg and then obtaining a teaching post there, before being appointed to a chair in sociology at Frankfurt when he was 36. He was an influential figure in Weimar culture but, like many others of Jewish descent, lost his job and was forced to leave as a result of the Nazi takeover in 1933.

He settled in London, having obtained a junior post at LSE. At this time he participated in the influential Christian discussion group The Moot, coming into contact with the poet T. S. Eliot and other significant cultural figures of the time. He

‘Mannheim said that liberal democracy was transitional and could not be sustained’

was awarded a chair at the London Institute of Education, but died soon afterwards in 1947.

Mannheim's ideas have often been dismissed outright. Like Max Weber, who strongly influenced him, he has sometimes been accused of being a 'bourgeois Marx'. An alternative, though perhaps less accurate, version of this charge is that he was a 'bourgeois Lukács': Lukács had been his mentor and friend in Hungary, but Mannheim did not follow him into communism. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge has also been dismissed as relativist, the charge being that it effectively undercuts its own position. And his idea of relatively 'socially-unattached intellectuals', who are able to gain a more objective

perspective than others in society, has been the target of much ridicule.

It is certainly true that he both drew on and broke away from Marx, but it is not clear why that, or being bourgeois, should count against his work. And while he does sail close to the relativist wind, he was well aware of the danger: he wanted to avoid relativism but at the same time to recognise that all ideas are shaped by their social contexts. His concept of 'socially-unattached intellectuals' was borrowed from Alfred Weber, one of his teachers; and, despite the misleading phraseology, he did not believe that the ideas of intellectuals could be free of all social determination. His argument was that because they were subject to conflicting ideological currents they were in a better position than others to recognise what is true and of value in conflicting ideological positions.

When I had finished *Ideology and Utopia*, I went on to read most of the rest of Mannheim's work, concentrating especially on the two books he published after his exile to England: *Man and Society* and *Diagnosis of our Time*. These books are perhaps even less likely to be on sociology reading lists today than they were when I was a student. Returning to the first of them after a period of 53 years, I understood a little more clearly why Mannheim had written this book, and in particular why he was so preoccupied with the notion of social and economic planning:



he was trying to get the British to recognise that what had happened in Weimar Germany – the collapse of liberal democracy – derived from inherent weaknesses in this form of society, and that fascism could happen in the UK too.

Mannheim argued that the Western ideals of freedom and democracy could only be preserved if they were reinterpreted for the new social conditions: he insisted that all ideals are socio-cultural products and must adapt to social change. He emphasised that the market could not solve the problems that were characteristic of modern societies. Furthermore, while he viewed democratisation as desirable and inevitable, he also saw it as posing a threat. He believed that government decisions must be made by an elite, albeit a democratically open and elected one; and that this elite must draw on sociology in making its decisions. He viewed sociology as a synthesising discipline, integrating not just what is valuable in competing ideologies but also the knowledge coming from other scientific disciplines, so as to produce a comprehensive picture of the development of society and its current situation. This is, of course, a very different conception of the nature and role of the discipline from that held by most sociologists today.

All of Mannheim's writings are in the form of essays aimed at developing and illustrating ideas rather than presenting a finished system. There is much to disagree with in what he writes, and his line of argument is not always easy to follow, not least because he draws on literature that is no longer familiar to us. But his work is stimulating nonetheless, even if he does not provide solutions. This is particularly true given the similarities between his time and ours. Current concerns about populism echo the reaction back then to fascism; criticism of unrestricted capitalism was widespread at that time and is again now, and the deep ideological divides that emerged in the 1920s and 30s continue to prevail today, albeit in somewhat different form.

Particularly intriguing for me is Mannheim's idea of a dialectic of history in which different ideologies, tied to different social groups, collide but can be rationalised via intellectual engagement amongst their representatives, in such a way that the differential insights available to diverse social groups can be drawn together to serve collective purposes. He put this notion of intellectual synthesis into practice in his own work, drawing on a very wide range of ideas: for example, not only the works of Marx and Weber but also those of Carl Schmitt, a contemporary legal scholar who went on to serve the Nazis. He applied the same approach to his teaching, emphasising the role of sociology in political education. While today there is much emphasis on the political role of sociology, this is usually conceptualised in oppositional rather than



governmental terms.

A related feature of Mannheim's thinking that contrasts with much contemporary sociology is that, while he acknowledged the importance of recognising the possibility of social transformation, he also saw utopian thinking as dangerous unless the structural constraints that operate within particular types of society are respected; he emphasised that these cannot be wished away. In this

respect he built on Marx's argument that, while human beings create social arrangements, they do not do so in conditions of their own choosing. At the same time, Mannheim differed from the early Marx in rejecting the idea that there is an inherent teleological process of societal development towards the realisation of human ideals.

His view of history is closer to Weber's concept of rationalisation: that there are trends which carry losses as well as gains. There is also a parallel with Durkheim's characterisation of late 19th century European societies as transitional in character. Mannheim insisted that liberal democracy was a transitional form, one that could not be sustained; indeed, that it threatened to degenerate into fascism unless there was a move towards more governmental coordination of society.

I am very glad I reacquainted myself with Mannheim. For all his failings, he may have something to teach us today.

‘He emphasised that the market could not solve the problems characteristic of modern societies’

**Professor Tim May,
of the University of
Sheffield, writes
about the values
that should inform
a civic university**

‘Universities do not reward the work of reaching out into communities’

Institutional reforms in higher education are embedded in wider processes. The aim is to produce a ‘world-class’ competitive higher education system that succeeds in a global knowledge market where diversification, stratification and hierarchy all feature – ‘moving forward’. The need to be competitive, cost-effective and respond to the market has the effect of turning the institutional gaze towards commercialising activities in research and teaching. In the context of constraints on public funding, universities have sought alternative support from private sector funds and a wider range of interests now shape university education, with student fees in the UK orientating the focus towards ranking in customer satisfaction surveys. Indeed, expanding student numbers may be a condition of increasing income streams to service institutional debt when the very limit of intake has historically been taken as an indicator of quality.

Interpretations of these effects converge around concerns regarding the intensification of environmental pressures on the distinction of institutional life. A process of re-engineering these organisations has occurred with “each move designed to protect the elite and expose the majority. At the same time, the gamble involves running the risk of subprime degrees. Existing quality assurance, which has its faults, is supplanted by ‘value for money’, a ‘risk-based’ system, and a regulator tasked with promoting competition” (McGettigan 2013: 185). Accompanying this is an emphasis upon the search for innovation, which implies a freedom and preparedness to take risks. Yet that stands in direct tension with the narrow focus on efficiency, auditing requirements, user engagement and meeting identifiable outputs, as well as cost-centre budgeting that manifests itself in an organisational silo mentality bolstered by the comfort of disciplinary allegiances.

The salaries of strategic university managers are often justified through assumed attributes found in the private sector, which themselves do not stand up to scrutiny (Sayer 2015). In the meantime, stress and anxiety increase as academics are expected to do more, with less. Learning

from experiences is met with an indifference which does not seek to understand difference. Organizationally, politics tends to become sealed within sub-units that claim distinction through professional cultures that are often seen as reducible to peculiarities of the individuals who comprise them. Such techniques of individualisation “supports a deeply political and authoritarian view of public higher education whilst claiming to banish ‘liberal’ political indoctrination from universities” (Levin and Greenwood 2016: 4).

The relations between the exceptionality of an academic character who produces the content of cutting-edge research, despite these changing contexts, mixes with these techniques and produces uneasy parallels between an individualism found in both managerialism and academic professionalism (May and Perry 2013). Rather than examine the relations between context and content and consequence in knowledge production, we see an emphasis upon issues associated with, for example, heterogeneity, distributed expertise, user relevance, collaboration and the construction of knowledge exchange units that turn knowledge into a commodity through supply and demand.

In these processes, a core question remains to be answered: what is different about the knowledge universities produce which is distinctive from other sites of knowledge production? Time and distance, combined with methodological rigour, are frequently invoked as the defining

elements. The former no longer accords with the experiences of academic staff and ‘slow movement’ has found its expression in calls to transform academic life (Berg and Seeber 2016). What consultancy, high-tech company or R&D division of a transnational corporation would say that the work they produce lacks methodological rigour? So, do we seek distinction in a combination of elements? Would those not include exhibiting care and support in collegial practices and providing a culture that learns not just from success but also failure and shuns the features of what is hailed as ‘best practice’? Whilst institutional boundaries are not simply being torn down and have varied historically, there is now an intensity in their dismantling in the name of a promise of a narrow future for a few.

The work that goes into avoiding general consideration of the question of distinction is considerable. Strategic managers tend to resort to narrow constitutions of environmental necessity to avoid confronting these issues. If that culture continues, these institutions are just reflections of dominant societal interests and should cease all talk of distinction in terms of distance and proximity, social mobility, access and fairness and the rhetoric that surrounds recruitment practices. Nor is it assisted by those for whom such necessities are used as weapons against those who resist changes because they speak on behalf of an apparently unproblematic reality. With that wholehearted embrace comes disparaging

glances at those who do not understand the supposed self-evidence of environmental determinants.

What results is a separation between the production of knowledge and its contexts through means to determine the 'how' of organisational practice via organisational audit. The overall result is that the 'why' and 'how' of knowledge are subsumed within the narrow confines of the measurability of 'what': external income generation, citation indexes league tables and publications in suitable international outlets. We see a clash in knowledge practices in universities leading to displacement, embrace, calculated adjustments, along with withdrawal and varying forms of resistance. Whenever someone reaches for self-evidence and refuses to ask questions, another arises: if strategic management of universities is no more than the translation of environmental necessity, what exactly is the justification for the salaries they receive? None of this is assisted by the unfortunate features of academic professionalism in which the play of individual exceptionality feeds a pervasive individualism. The casualty is an institution whose distinction lies in the promotion of learning.

Taking the relations between the content of knowledge and the context of its production seriously, we find a paradox at work in relations between the university and society. Its distance constitutes a way of seeing that marks out the distinction and value of the work that it produces. Yet that same distance can enable knowledge production to become implicated in relations of dominance. Co-constructing research is seen as one way to overcome this paradox. However, whilst such knowledge may clarify what is needed, it is within collective practice that transformation is achieved. All forms of practice, in turn, need to be reflexive in orientation to remind itself of the values that inform its process, as well as to guard against succumbing to a continuation of what already exists by turning means into ends.

Critique, to inform this possibility, needs to first gain a purchase on this reproduction which "requires an examination of the intersection of a theory of representation and of the political economy of global capitalism. A theory of representation points, on the one hand, to the domain of ideology, meaning, and subjectivity, and, on the other hand, to the domain of politics, the state, and the law" (Spivak 2010: 237). Knowledge is not simply a mirror of reality, but a form of social criticism that recognizes that it is embedded in social processes. Relations of domination inform not just systems, but meanings, claims and demands. To reach out into communities in order that the work of universities is seen as legitimate is time-consuming and requires a preparedness to understand and learn. At present, such work is not rewarded in universities. Instead, career progression is



Photo: Professor Tim May

based on increasingly narrow criteria.

Alternatives to what is described here have been examined: from cooperative universities to the role of active intermediation in research practice (May and Perry 2018). The values informing a civic university require navigation between varying paths and are concerned with how to recognise different viewpoints and ways of knowing without undermining the sites of knowledge production that enable a critical distance. That brings the disposition and position of the researcher within the remit of reflexivity in social inquiry, along with those who enter these spaces of engagement and learning. For all concerned, it becomes a process of seeking to understand what is seen, how it is constructed and its place within social relations and that includes a greater variety of what are so often excluded voices in forging futures.

Whilst a critical orientation to work, in terms of its processes, purpose and potential is needed, it is support for practices informed by a new ethos that is also required. Those outside of the confines of research communities need to be more involved and that means moving away from the very institutions that can provide varying degrees of shelter from contemporary pressures and being attentive to relations of power. That necessitates high degrees of effort from all those concerned, but whose capabilities to act are variable. It is not an easy task and one that requires good cultures of support. Yet it is equal in effort to the work that goes into the narrow constitution of what now exists yet remains hidden in presuppositions and the frenetic efforts that are directed towards its reproduction.

REFERENCES

- Berg, M. and Seeber, B. K. (2016) *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* University of Toronto Press
- Levin, M. and Greenwood, D. (2016) *Creating a New Public University and Reviving Democracy: Action Research in Higher Education* Berghahn
- May, T. and Perry, B. (2013) 'Universities, Reflexivity and Critique: Uneasy Parallels in Practice' *Policy Futures in Education* Vol 11 (5). pp. 505-514
- May, T. and Perry, B. (2018) *Cities and the Knowledge Economy: Promise, Politics and Possibilities* Routledge
- McGittigan, A. (2013) *The Great University Gamble: Money, Markets and the Future of Higher Education* Pluto Press
- Sayer, A. (2015) *Why We Can't Afford the Rich* Policy Press
- Spivak, G. C. (2010) 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Revised Edition In Morris, R. C. (ed) *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* Columbia University Press

Professor Andrew Webster

Professor Nik Brown, of the University of York, writes about his friend and colleague, Professor Andrew Webster

In a letter dated 1st of February 1992, R.K. Merton wrote a lengthy note amounting to two typed pages addressed to the young author of the new monograph *Science, Technology and Society*. Merton, long recognised as a founding figure in the sociology of science, compliments the author on his “repeated effort to inform the reader about the currents, and cross currents, in the sociological study of science and technology without introducing noisy, controversial rhetoric”. Then, towards the end of his exegesis, he apologises for going on at such length having made a “fairly recent acquisition of a computer”, which “tempts one into greater detail than originally intended”. I’m guessing Andrew must have been quite taken aback to get such a letter from Merton.

Andrew Joseph Webster was born on the 8th of August 1951, growing up in a quiet suburb of Manchester. He had a strong sense of identification with Manchester, becoming an ardent lifelong Man City fan and seeing the club through its many changing fortunes over the years. He was raised and educated a Roman Catholic, attending first St John’s RC school and then later Xaverian College from 1962 to 1969. He excelled at music, becoming an accomplished pianist and chorister, passions that would continue throughout his life.

He left school believing himself to have a religious vocation and was sent by the Xaverian religious order to Boston, Massachusetts, to undertake his novitiate. His time in Boston was defined by the turbulence of the early 1970s, the civil rights and anti-war movements, in which he played an active part. In a curious twist of events, Andrew narrowly avoided conscription, having been issued with US

military draft papers in error, until he was able to convince the authorities of his British citizenship. Returning to the UK in 1971, he lived at Xaverian House in Strawberry Hill, London, but deeply missed the more open and progressive scene in Boston. Feeling increasingly constrained, he put religious life, and indeed Catholicism itself, behind him. Nevertheless, this said something important about the motives of a young person guided by the need for vocation, a calling and sense of purpose. These are all qualities that Andrew’s friends and colleagues would come to recognise in him in years to come.

He had enrolled in a degree programme in social science at the South Bank Polytechnic as it was then, later leading to a PhD in the Department of Sociology at the

University of York, moving there with his wife Helen in 1974. At York, Andrew was supervised by Mike Mulkey, another major contributor to the emerging sociology of scientific knowledge, working alongside a cohort of other young PhD students who would go on to play leading roles in Science and Technology Studies internationally.

His first academic post was as a lecturer in sociology at the Cambridge College of Arts and Technology, now Anglia Ruskin University, where he worked for the next 21 years. Even with an enormous teaching load, Andrew was able to develop a formidable research and publishing profile. He brought out *Introduction to the Sociology of Development* in 1984 and the 1991 book, *Science, Technology and Society*. This was followed by one of the most widely used sociological textbooks to emerge in the 1990s, *Introductory Sociology* (with colleagues at Anglia).

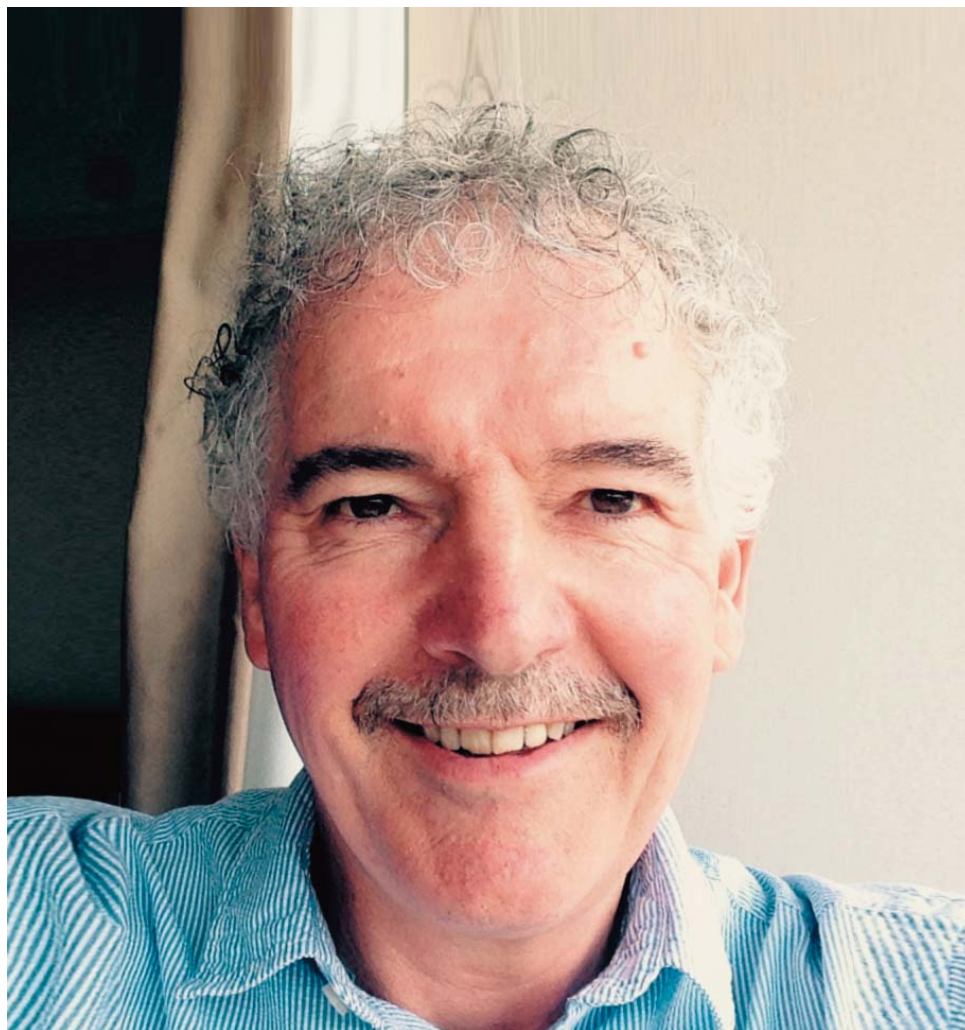
In 1988, Andrew established the Science and Technology Studies Unit (SATSU) as a way of reaching out to a broader community of sociologists seeking to understand fundamental shifts occurring across the knowledge economies. Much of his work around this time pioneered sociological research into the changing relationships between academia and industry, public and private sector knowledge producers, and the increased blurring of institutional identities. One of his first ESRC funded projects was a study of the restructuring of public research organisations under Thatcher’s programme of privatisation. Andrew’s work with others focused on the increasing commercialisation of public science, with ESRC projects on patenting, and critical research on government Foresight programmes in the UK and globally (ESRC and EU-funded).

In 1999 Andrew and SATSU, including a small group of international researchers, moved to the Department of Sociology at the University of York, something of an intellectual home for Andrew over the years. Shortly after arriving, Andrew was appointed the programme director of the ESRC/MRC’s major five-year programme of research on ‘Innovative health technologies’, an initiative that went on to involve over 100 researchers and 30 or so separate projects. This was then followed by further funding to establish SATSU as a Marie Curie training site to mentor a



'Beyond and Within' by Joanna Mowbray

Webster, 1951-2021



community of doctoral students from all over Europe, researching the sociology of the new genetics. And, in turn, this then led to the more global 'Bio-objects network' directed by Andrew and funded by the EU Cooperation in Science and Technology Action initiative, with 70 or so members from over 20 countries. Work published by the network received the Amsterdamska award from the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology. As Andrew himself had to acknowledge with classically understated modesty, the concept 'bio-object' had become "very mobile".

Andrew was boundlessly energetic, engaged and insatiably interested in so many sociological aspects of the life sciences, medicine and biology. Further ESRC and EC funding led to projects on

the sociology of regulation in the context of stem cell science and regenerative medicine (the REMEDIE and REGenableMED projects). He co-edited Palgrave's Health, Technology and Society series, resulting in over 20 books to date. Regionally he established the Science and Technology Studies doctoral training programme in collaboration with colleagues at Leeds and Sheffield. And then nationally he was pivotal in founding the UK's Association for Studies in Innovation Science and Technology.

Andrew was a highly recognised facilitator and insightful leader of people, serving as Head of the Department of Sociology at York (2005-2009) and then Dean of Social Sciences (2010-2014). He 'retired' in 2018, becoming Emeritus but

sustaining a demanding research schedule now coupled with one of his favourite pastimes, hiking in the hills and woodlands of North Yorkshire with Helen, his lifelong friend and companion.

Andrew will be as much remembered for his truly wonderful personal qualities as his professional achievements. His door was always open and, no matter how incredibly busy he must have been, he was available to listen, to advise and to share a witty anecdote or two. His whole personal ethic was, in a way, about hospitality. He was brilliant at the art of making connections, the cross-over no one had thought of.

Many of us will recall fond memories of Andrew and Helen's summer BBQs where Andrew, with that twinkle in his eye, would ply everyone with just another glass. He also made the effort, every year, to take his research group out on a day trip somewhere. It was on one of those occasions that Andrew took SATSU to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park to walk amongst work by Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore and others. While walking around, Andrew spotted something, a huge iron artwork in a storage area of the park. He wandered off for a bit, and then reappeared. No one thought more of it. But some months later an enormous truck and crane appeared outside the Department of Sociology and installed that same vast monumental artwork on the lawn. It's four metres high and four tonnes heavy. It's a colossal organic hollow shape made of hot rolled steel called 'Beyond and within', by Joanna Mowbray. It looks like it's been there forever and will be there forever more.

Nestling amongst those trees. That was Andrew, beyond and within, a gentle and lasting force in the world. Our mentor and friend is survived by Helen his wife, his two wonderful sons Matt and Nick, and now a growing brood of grandchildren.

• A web page has been set up in memory of Professor Andrew Webster, at: www.york.ac.uk/satsu/inmemoryofprofessorandrewwebster

NETWORK

Autumn 2021

“For an ethnic minority person working under this pandemic, you have this anticipatory stress of racism and it just wears you down – over time, it begins to eat into your own capacity to withstand diseases”

“The Taliban are going to people’s homes, questioning them and taking documents – I would pay every penny I had to get them out of Afghanistan now, I am very afraid for them”

“If sociology loses the BSA we lose our central point of contact and with that our national identity, and that weakens us as a discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those in political spheres who’d rather see sociology disappear”

Magazine of the British Sociological Association

Registered Charity (no. 1080235)

Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 3890729)

Network is published three times a year:

Spring

Summer

Autumn

ISSN: 2634-9213

Available online to members:
www.britsoc.co.uk

BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



Annual Review 2020



BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
www.britsoc.co.uk

BSA Annual Review, 2020

President's Report

This may be both the hardest and the easiest annual report that a BSA President has faced writing, at least for some time. Looking back over the past year is dizzying. Perhaps more so as I sit in my office at the University of Bristol for the first time since mid-March 2020 (on 28 July 2021). Everything is just as I left it and yet so much has changed outside this room. In this space, the 'time before' is visceral and all that has happened between then and now comes crashing into view. It is hard to make sense of. And at the same time there is so much to say!

From the outset, it was clear that sociological research would be critical for making sense of the pandemic. And so it has been. From medical sociology to digital sociology, across the sociologies of work and organisations, race and racism, families and relationships, markets and economics (for example), sociologists have shown how the workings of the pandemic have been filtered through social practices, social inequalities and the operations of power. Responding with impressive speed to the first lockdown, the BSA organised a livestream panel on sociologies of Covid in lieu of its annual conference in April 2020. And throughout 2020 (and into 2021) the BSA study groups have been active in co-organising events to coordinate and discuss research on Covid, as well as more broadly. Moving the whole conference fully online in April 2021 was a massive undertaking but defied expectations, with 745 registered participants embracing the theme 're-making the future' with a remarkable range of papers, plenaries and keynotes – attesting to the appetite and relevance of sociological research for future-making, followed up with a current call for contributions to a Special Issue of the BSA journal *Sociology* on Sociologies of the Future and the Future of Sociology.

Sociology is central to thinking about and making futures. Yet over the past year we have seen a series of moves to undermine sociology research and teaching, both at home and internationally, at school and university level. This calls on us all to demonstrate the value and importance of our discipline in whatever way we can, and resist these moves to shut us down which – at best – represent short-sighted failures to see the value of sociology, or – at worst – represent deliberate moves to undermine critical thinking about the social challenges that face the world in the 'bounce forward' from Covid. Addressing these challenges through narrow solutionist perspectives that strip out the social complexity is clearly insufficient. It is up to us, as sociologists, to demonstrate the power of our analysis. There is no doubt that this will be more powerful if we act collectively through the BSA.

Please, get involved, make the case, help make the future for sociology!

– Susan Halford



BSA Charitable Objectives

The advancement of public education by the promotion and diffusion of the knowledge of sociology by lectures, publications, the promotion and publication of research and the encouragement of contact between workers in all relevant fields of enquiry.

Our Three Strategic Priorities

1. Promote sociology

We will seek promote the contribution and value of sociology by:

- Enhancing the status and understanding of sociology through wider public and media engagement.
- Developing partnerships with policymakers and non-governmental organisations involved in shaping society who could help us bring sociology to the decision-making table.
- Building alliances with organisations who share our passion for sociology whose supporters could help us promote the discipline.
- Gathering and promoting examples of where sociology is making or could make a positive difference

2. Support sociologists

We will seek to nurture a strong and vibrant community of sociologists who feel connected to us and to each other by:

- Promoting BSA membership as being an essential feature of identifying as a UK sociologist.
- Creating new relationship options to increase the number of people associated with sociology and the BSA.
- Developing better ways for members to connect with each other and supporting a strong sense of community.
- Increasing diversity within the BSA and the discipline, including working to implement the recommendations of the BSA report on Race and Ethnicity in British sociology.
- Fostering positive interactions between members and the BSA.

3. Sustain the British Sociological Association

We will seek sustain the charity through responsible use of resources by:

- Protecting our current income streams and exploring new funding opportunities.
- Supporting the wellbeing and investing in the care and development of our staff and volunteers.
- Making operational savings where feasible.

Four Areas Identified for Special Attention

Members: Supporting members through the changes that they are experiencing, especially the impact and aftermath of the pandemic, e.g. providing more listening and sharing opportunities, and conducting an in-depth survey about membership needs and benefits, including the addition of external review of the website e.g. by teachers.

Schools: Creating new resources including videos and carrying out a survey of teachers to find out how we can support them best.

Equity: Implementing the recommendations of the BSA Report on Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology

Climate emergency: Exploring and implementing new ways of working which will better for the environment.

Publications

Despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, our publications work has continued to progress and we include heartfelt appreciation to our editors and peer reviewers who continued to give generously of their time and expertise to fellow colleagues and authors via the BSA journals in a challenging year.

There were several new appointments in 2020: Catherine Pope and Jason Arday joined as Publications Directors and BSA Trustees. New Editorial Teams joined SRO (Kahryn Hughes, Anna Tarrant, Angharad Beckett, Greg Hollin, Jason Hughes, Katy Wright, Lucie Middlemiss). WES welcomed nine new editors (Michael Brooks, Clare Butler, Rory Donnelly, Donald Hislop, Andy Hodder, Jo Ingold, Angela Knox, Paul Sissons, Joana Vassilopoulou). Christopher Thorpe joined as a new Editor for *Cultural Sociology* (we thank Lisa McCormick who finished her term on this journal). We also welcomed several new editorial and associate board members.

The largest strategic publishing decision facing us in 2020 continued to be the shift to open access. In February 2020 we met to understand the impact of Open Access Sales Deals (also often referred to as Transformative Agreements or 'Read and Publish') on the BSA journals and we have contributed to a number of consultations about open access policies (including the UKRI consultation). We continue to be concerned about the sustainability of new publishing models for sociology as a discipline, but have participated in shifts to increase open access this year as this appeared to be the best option for authors, readers and the Association in the short term.

Notwithstanding the challenges noted above, our publishing arm continues to be vibrant and productive. The Impact Factors for SOC (3.068) and WES (3.171) increased, and SRO (1.163) and *Cultural Sociology* (1.24) remained steady. Our journals published a number of special issues/content and hosted online debates throughout the year, including a session on Nationalism's Futures and the WES debate on Industrial Relations of Mental Health.

We congratulated the winners of the SAGE Prizes for Innovation and/or Excellence, awarded to authors of papers in each of our four journals, and welcomed new titles to both the 21st Century Standpoints and Sociological Futures book series.
– **Jason Arday, Stevi Jackson, Catherine Pope, Richard Waller, Publications Directors**

The BSA currently publishes a variety of academic books and journals. We thank the many people who contribute their time to these publications, including editors, board members, peer reviewers and our publishing partners: SAGE, Policy Press and Routledge.

Cultural Sociology (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 1.224
Board Members: 29 Editorial Board members,
29 International Advisory Board members
Issues per year: 4 – March, June, September, December

Sociological Research Online (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 1.163
Board members: 36 Editorial Board members,
22 Associate Board Members
Issues per year: 4 – March, June, September, December

Sociology (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 3.068
Board members: 30 Editorial Board members, 30 Associate Board members, 15 International Board members
Advisory Board members
Issues per year: 6 – Feb, April, June, August, October, December

Work, Employment and Society (published by SAGE)

Impact Factor: 3.171
Board members: 31 Editorial Board members, 35 Associate Board members, 28 International Board members
Advisory Board members
Issues per year: 6 – February, April, June, August, October, December

Sociological Futures Book Series (Routledge)

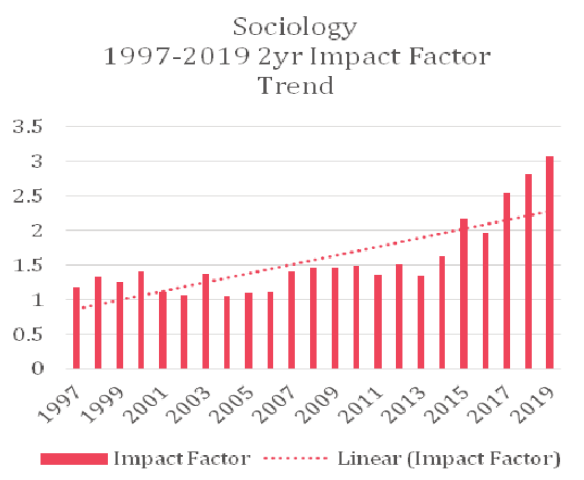
Volumes published in 2020:

- *Social Research and Disability: Developing Inclusive Research Spaces for Disabled Researchers*, Edited By Ciaran Burke and Bronagh Byrne

21st Century Standpoints Book Series (Policy Press)

Volumes published in 2019:

- *Cars* by Yunis Alam



Impact factors 1997-2019 for *Sociology* and *Work, Employment and Society* journals



Public Engagement

As the public face of sociology in Britain, the BSA engages in a number of activities to promote the discipline beyond academia and showcase the value of BSA membership. There has arguably never been a more important time for sociologists to be active in the public domain. The BSA responded to Sir Patrick Vallance's request for details of impactful Covid-19 research by collating evidence of the wide-ranging contributions being made by sociologists from all across the country. More than this, our website pulls together all the opportunities and resources that can help colleagues maximise the impact of their research in these uncertain times.

We were delighted to learn that sociology is now the sixth most popular A-level in the UK: the 8% increase in entries compared to last year means that almost 40,000 students are experiencing the benefits of a sociological education. As such, during the last year the BSA has increased the level of support offered to sociology teachers. We have commissioned classroom resources such as short videos by academics that showcase their research, and we would be delighted to work with other colleagues who would like to contribute to this series! Our annual A-level competition attracted a record level of entries, with students inspired to reflect on what it meant to be part of the 'Corona Generation'. The essays, which often drew on primary research, showcased how sociology can help young people make sense of the pandemic.

To better understand the teacher perspective, an online questionnaire was designed by Dr Sarah Cant to elicit sociology teachers' views of the A-level and to better understand how the BSA could support school-based delivery. The survey garnered passionate interest: during the three weeks that the survey was open, 416 teachers responded, providing extraordinarily detailed answers to the open-ended questions. Reports have been written for the three main awarding bodies (AQA, OCR, WJEC) and the results have been reported back to teachers and at the OCR forum. The BSA will be offering a teacher conference on November 2021 to enable a 'big conversation' about the curriculum at A-level and, drawing on the findings of the BSA's Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology Report, will support teachers in their teaching of racism and inequality.

The BSA President, Professor Susan Halford, supported by trustees, has been very active in defending and supporting sociology. The BSA has stood in solidarity with colleagues under threat of redundancy and has written to universities and governments to raise concerns when there have been moves to reduce or remove sociology from school or university education. During this last year, the BSA has issued a new public statement about freedom of speech, condemned the racist murder of George Floyd, reaffirmed our own commitment to tackling racism within sociology, and has responded to the sociological flaws in the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report.

Domestic Violence –

Video Resources for A-level Sociology

The BSA sought to support sociology teachers and students during the pandemic by creating video resources. The first video we published, on domestic violence, was created by emeritus researchers Rebecca Dobash and Russell Dobash. This 20-minute video now has over 600 views and we have a growing playlist of videos for teachers and students. See:

BSA Video Resources for Sociology Teachers

A list of public engagement activities

Academy of Social Sciences	Submitted case studies on the value of learned societies
Academy of Social Sciences	Represented BSA at learned society meetings and provided society-to-society support
A-level	Circulated a survey of teacher needs to guide future BSA support of sociology teachers
A-level	Produced video resources for school teachers
British Academy	Represented sociology on the BA Strategic Forum
British Academy	Submitted evidence to a report provided to the government on societal impacts of Covid-19
BSA	Published the Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology report
BSA	Held the 'Sociology On and Beyond the Covid-19 Crisis' symposium
BSA	Circulated the Track and Trace member survey on impact of Covid-19 on sociology in higher education
Government	Co-signatory on New Deal for Higher Education letter
Government	Provided evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Diversity and Inclusion
Government	Letter calling for action to stop violent clampdown on peaceful protests in India
The Guardian	Fielded speaker for Upside series (Graham Crow)
Public statement	On the death of George Floyd
Public statement	Peaceful protest (Hong Kong)
Public statement	The impact on the discipline of planned University of East London redundancies
REF 21	Submission of further panel nominations
The Times	<i>Sociology</i> journal article Black Lives Matter press coverage (18.6.20)
University of East London	Letters to VC on redundancies

BSA Report on Race and Ethnicity in British Sociology

This report is the result of funded work by the BSA. It provides important insights about the inequalities that exist in the teaching of British sociology and makes recommendations that should be considered by all sociologists, as well as by the Association. The BSA will carry out work to adopt and implement the recommendations on which it can take direct action, and will bring the report to the attention of other bodies who need to take action.



Communications

The BSA has a strong online presence through a variety of channels. A lot of time and effort (both staff and members) goes into ensuring that the voice of sociology is heard.

Everyday Society and BSA public statements

Visits to our Everyday Society grew based on previous years, seeing particularly high activity during the early months of the pandemic and lockdown in the UK. Not surprisingly, many of the most popular posts were Covid-related.

Top 5 most read blog pieces

1. Sociology and the Social Sciences in the Covid-19 Crisis, Susan Halford
2. CoronaDiaries: Documenting the everyday lived experiences of a global pandemic, Mike Ward
3. BSA Statement on Strike Action, BSA
4. Important Update: BSA Annual Conference 2021, BSA
5. 'Led by the Science': Changing the Role of Experts from Brexit to Covid-19, Louise Ryan

Statements published on Everyday Society in 2020

January 2020 - BSA Condemns Crackdown on Peaceful Student Protest in India

February 2020 - BSA Statement on Strike Action

June 2020 - BSA Condemns Racist Murder of George Floyd and BSA Condemns China's Threats to the Rule of Law in Hong Kong

November 2020 - BSA President writes to UEL regarding The Future of Sociology and President writes again to UEL

Media Coverage

In 2020 the Media Consultant, Tony Trueman, issued four press releases (12 in 2019) and took around 25 enquiries from the media. The lack of BSA conferences because of the pandemic reduced media activity.

Directly as a result of our press releases, the BSA was mentioned in the following media:

Media type	Number in 2020	2019
National newspapers and websites	4	12
National radio	0	1
International media online	3	9
Specialist media online	8	22
Local radio	0	0
Local media websites	0	0
Magazines	0	0
Total	15	44

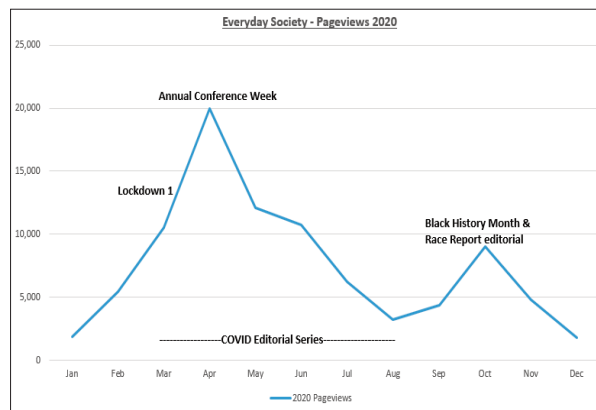
The national media included the *Guardian*, *Times* and *Metro*. Press releases can be read on the BSA website Media Centre.

Network

In 2020, Tony edited three issues of *Network* with a total of 140 pages. He wrote or edited in-depth pieces on the following:

- survey of jobs during lockdown
- the challenge of Brexit
- the BSA's report into race and ethnicity in British Sociology
- a tribute to David Morgan
- PhD students' experiences

Members can read all past issues of *Network* by signing into the BSA members' area. *Network* moved to online publication this year in response to the pandemic. The first issue of the year was in the traditional paper format but subsequent issues moved online as the BSA considered cost savings, green issues, pandemic-related postal delays and online publication options.



Britsoc.co.uk

This year saw page views reaching over 513,000 during the course of the year – a 29% decrease in traffic from last year. It's likely the decrease in traffic was due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent reduction in activities. The most popular pages in 2020 were the Origins of Sociology, followed by our Events and Ethics Guidelines for sociology researchers.

Discover Sociology

There were 133,837 visits to our dedicated website supporting sociology school teachers in 2020, averaging 2,574 each week.

YouTube and Vimeo

The pandemic year created a significantly greater video resource of sociology. Many of the BSA events were recorded and posted on our Vimeo or YouTube channels. Through the BSA, sociologists posted over 25 videos on every topic of sociological enquiry.

Top 5 most watched YouTube videos from 2020

1. Sociology On and Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis
2. 'Then and Now' Domestic Violence Sociology A-level
3. Grace Davie – Believing without Belonging (Sociology of Religion Teacher Resources)
4. The Life and Work of Erving Goffman: A Conversation with Peter Lunt
5. The Industrial Relations of Mental Health: WES Virtual Debate

Watch BSA videos on Vimeo

Watch BSA videos on YouTube

Podcasts: 5

Twitter followers: 26,000



Professor Sue Scott's YouTube video

Events

Within BSA activity, the Covid-19 pandemic had, arguably, the greatest impact on the events programme. The first major change to the events diary in 2020 was the cancellation of the face-to-face annual conference, which was due to take place at Aston University in April. We regretfully cancelled the event before the formal announcement of the first lockdown occurred, as the direction of the pandemic was apparent and we felt a duty of care to our delegates, members and staff. We wanted to make an unambiguous decision with safety foremost and there was a need to send a clear message to our members and delegates. The progression of events showed that this was the right decision and we had full member support for the cancellation. The decision was not without financial implications for the Association, and we have to continue to be careful in how we plan ahead for the return of face-to-face meetings – although they will be very welcome indeed. Very quickly the staff began to explore the possibility of moving at least some event activity online, primarily via the possibilities enabled by Zoom – we quickly became very familiar with the instruction to ‘unmute’.

To mark the date when the Annual Conference should have taken place, Honorary Vice President Sue Scott led the organisation of a free webinar that was ‘attended’ by 260 participants and helped us recognise the potential to use virtual spaces as a vehicle for ensuring members remained connected and supported. Speakers Bridget Anderson, Nik Brown, Ipek Demir, Danny Dorling and Susan Halford, chaired by Sue Scott, discussed the emerging reactions to and implications of the pandemic, including the role of migrant workers, hospital architecture, underlying demographic trends, the use of technology and the failure of the West to react quickly enough. The video of this event is available on the BSA YouTube channel and marks a very important moment in our history.

We held 57 events in 2020, a small number in person before March, with the others moving into virtual spaces, supported by the hard work of the events team and the event organisers. Unfortunately, 10 events did have to be cancelled, while a further 12 were postponed.

Study groups embraced virtual routes for retaining their activities and connections and provided clear examples of how we could expand the presence of virtual opportunities in what we do – including beyond the pandemic. ECR and PGF regional events that had been due to take place in 2020 were rolled over to take place in 2021 – primarily virtually. HaPS had a very successful virtual meeting on 1 December with 42 participants. The Disability Study Group ran a series of six webinars in the summer, with an emphasis on making them as accessible as possible. The Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations study group also ran eight webinars,

while the Violence against Women study group ran 12 webinars. Other groups who ran successful events in 2020 include Auto-Biography, the Mental Health study group and the Education study group. Many of these sessions are reporting higher delegate attendance than would have been the case had the events been face-to-face. What virtual can enable, in terms of participation for those who would not have been able to join in the ‘normal’ way, is important to retain going forward.

The number of online events supported by BSA members in 2020 was larger than the number of face-to-face events held in 2019, and the latter half of 2020 saw a significant rise in the number of study groups holding virtual events and bringing sociologists together.

Transforming large conference formats into virtual events presented a significant challenge in 2020. The BSA programme of smaller events was very successful. The annual MedSoc Conference ran as a free virtual three-day conference and had 172 registered delegates, a drop of 40% from the previous year. The WES conference chose to postpone their event, due to take place in Cardiff, to 2021 in the hopes of change to the pandemic circumstances.

As planning for large annual conferences occurs far in advance, 2020 saw the trustees grappling with difficult decisions for the 2021 conference in a possibly virtual environment: possible restrictions for the spring; the financial balance of costs and delegate charges in a pandemic reality; the technological requirements for a large online conference; the format of the sessions and the presentations. Trustees and staff had to undertake in-depth research in order to make decisions for the 2021 Annual Conference, announcing in the autumn of 2020 that we would hold an online event. Those reading this review will know how it went but at the close of 2020 the Association was still in a very uncertain situation with our fingers crossed for a good conference.

– *Aminu Musa Audu, Mark Doidge, Janice McLaughlin, Chrissie Rogers, Membership Trustees*



BSA Youth study group online event

Membership

For our members, 2020 was a year of upheaval, uncertainty, isolation and, for some, personal loss. As the year began, the indications were there that the UK would become part of the Covid-19 pandemic, but that it remained the dominant force in our work and personal lives across the year and into 2021 was, perhaps mistakenly, unforeseen. The pandemic shaped the work of the BSA in many ways. With the possibilities for face-to-face meetings and events severely curtailed and associated work on hold, all but three members of staff were furloughed for a time. We extended renewal timeframes in recognition of the exceptional circumstances and introduced rolling membership. Our membership number for 2020 ended at 2,002, still notably lower than the peak in 2017 of 2,749. Retention rates stood at 60.7%, which indicates that the majority of members continue to see a value in being part of the BSA, but that work is needed to continue to ensure we offer services of value to membership that are in keeping with the differing needs of members and for the varied fee levels we charge. We had identified in our annual strategic review in 2019 the need to review what we provide for members, particularly for constituencies such as early career researchers

and sociologists working outside higher education contexts, including sociology teachers. Some initial work has been done in this area, for example, obtaining better data on why people join, with people highlighting professional development, as well as data on why members leave. The plans we had begun to develop to create a working group (which goes beyond trustees) to look at this issue had to be put on hold due to the challenges faced by the staff in the office and also the work pressures trustees themselves were experiencing. Nevertheless, we recognise the absolute need to return to this work and retain it as a strategic priority even as we continue to live with the effects of the pandemic. Positively, core aspects of membership activity continued across the year and are discussed further in the Events section above. Our partnership with Heads and Professors of Sociology (HaPS) continues and the new Chair, Tom Hall, is keen to ensure HaPS and BSA work together to support the challenges Sociology Units face in a higher education context increasingly focused on STEM subjects as value for money. Study groups – totalling 55 in 2020 – remain at the heart of the BSA and are needed more than ever to provide collegiate, if virtual, spaces for members trying to cope with the pandemic and its impact on research, teaching and the broader higher education climate.

Events List 2020

Date	Event
24 January	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event: Facilitating Holistic Wellbeing in the Research Process
05 February	South-Coast Medical Sociology Study Group: Creating Health and Wellbeing through Creative Endeavour(s)
08 April	Violence Against Women Study Group: Institutional Responses to Staff Sexual Misconduct in Higher Education - Webinar
20 April	Violence Against Women Study Group: Misogyny-Domestic Abuse-Parental Alienation - Webinar
20 April	Creating Solidarity as Early Career Researchers: Strategies for Making Life Liveable in the Academy: BSA Pre-Conference Day 2020
23 April	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up - Webinar
24 April	Webinar - Covid-19 - Sociology Symposium of Manchester
04 May	Violence Against Women Study Group: Using Crime Scripts to examine Child Sexual Exploitation Cases – Webinar
18 May	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar - 'We do not Consent to Die': Stop This Sadistic 'Defence' by Misogynists
21 May	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up – Webinar Glasgow Caledonian University
01 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Queering Narratives of Domestic Violence and Abuse
04 June	Youth Study Group Seminar Series Event: Youth Work and Socially Engaged Arts Practice: Pre- and Post- COVID-19
11 June	Disability Study Group Webinar: Disability and Health Inequalities in Times of Covid-19
11 June	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up - Webinar
15 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: FGM, 'Honour'-based Violence and Social Media Activism
25 June	Disability Study Group Webinar 1: Recognising Disabled People?
29 June	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Early Discursive Themes From Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation Serious Case Reviews
02 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 2: Education
09 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 3: Intersectional Inequalities, part 1
13 July	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Victim Blame and Sexual Violence - How Agencies Blame Women
15 July	Digital Sociology Study Group Book Launch: 'Designing the Social: Unpacking Social Media Design and Identity'
16 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 4: Disabled Responses to the Covid-19 Pandemic
22 July	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event - Spelunking 2020: Games, Cultures, Societies Webinar
23 July	Disability Study Group Webinar 5: Intersectional Inequalities, Part 2
27 July	Violence Against Women Study Group Webinar: Sex Work and Intimate Partner Violence
11 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar - Researcher Positionality I: Standpoint and 'Neutrality'
18 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Ethics of Researching the Far Right
25 August	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
01 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
03 September	Postgraduate Forum Regional Event - Youth Transitions: Past, Present and Future Workshop
04 September	Sports Study Group: Virtual Postgraduate Forum
08 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
10 September	Medical Sociology Study Group Annual Conference 2020
15 September	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar
17 September	Alcohol Studies Study Group Virtual Workshop: Alcohol Transitions: Past, Present and Post- Pandemic
21 September	Violence Against Women Study Group: Better the Devil you Know? Examining the Promises and Pitfalls of 'Clare's Law'
23 September	Sport Study Group Teaching and Research Workshop 'The Purpose of the Sociology of Sport: Challenges and Opportunities'
24 September	Youth Study Group Monthly Meet Up
01 October	Auto/Biography Study Group Seminar / Reading Group
08 October	Work, Employment and Society Journal-hosted Webinar: The Industrial Relations of Mental Health
19 October	Violence Against Women Study Group: Developing an Intersectionality Statement for the Study Group
22 October	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Reconfiguring the Empire at Home
05 November	Auto/Biography Study Group Seminar / Reading Group 'Lockdown Moments: Doing Auto/Biography'
16 November	Violence Against Women Study Group: The Contentious Relationship Between Sex Workers and Researchers
19 November	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: W.E.B Du Bois, Racialized Modernity, and the Global Colour Line
26 November	Families and Relationships Study Group Autumn Webinar: Decolonising Families and Relationships
01 December	Heads and Professors of Sociology December Event
02 December	Social Theory Study Group Webinar - The Life and Work of Zygmunt Bauman: Izabela Wagner and Jack Palmer in Conversation
03 December	Death, Dying and Bereavement Study Group Virtual Symposium: Transitions and Transformations
03 December	Digital Study Group Online Event: Sex and Social Media, with Harry Dyer
04 December	Auto/Biography Study Group Christmas Conference 2020: Auto/Biography and Community
08 December	Digital Sociology Study Group: Media Distortions with Elinor Carmiand Community
09 December	Early Career Forum: Designing and Undertaking Participatory Research: Practical Issues, Successes and Challenges
10 December	Emotions Study Group Webinar: The Conflicted History of an Emotion
10 December	Post/Decolonial Transformations Study Group Webinar: Decolonising Climate Discourse
10 December	Social Theory Study Group Webinar - The Life and Work of Erving Goffman: A Conversation with Peter Lunt

Constitution

The British Sociological Association (BSA) is an incorporated Association and is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and Not Having a Share Capital under company registration number 3890729. The Association holds charitable status under registration number 1080235. As a charity, the Association controls a trading subsidiary: BSA Publications Limited. BSA Publications Limited publishes sociological works on behalf of the parent body, the British Sociological Association. The activities of the BSA are overseen by an elected Board of Trustees which is made up of ordinary members of the Association. The elected members of the Board are the legal Trustees of the Association. Current activities in any given year are driven and directed by the Board of Trustees and supported by an Advisory Forum which represents members across a broad range of constituencies. The Board of Trustees is also supported by a dedicated team of staff based at the Association's registered offices in Durham.

Registered office: Chancery Court, Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW; **Registered Charity Number:** 1080235; **VAT Registration Number:** 734 1722 50; **Tel:** 0191 383 0839; **E-mail:** enquiries@britsoc.org.uk **Website:** www.britsoc.co.uk

Prizes

The BSA publicly recognises the outstanding contributions that individual members and sociologists make to the discipline in a number of ways, including through award schemes. In 2020 the following awards were conferred:

Distinguished Service to British Sociology Award:
Professor Liz Stanley

National A-Level Sociology Competition:
Georgia Hanna, Kendrick School, Reading

Phil Strong Memorial Prize:
Thomas Wadsworth, Goldsmiths, University of London

BSA Philip Abrams Memorial Prize:
Anna Bull - *Class, Control and Classical Music*, awarded jointly with Owen Abbott - *The Self, Relational Sociology and Morality in Practice*

SAGE Prizes for Innovation and/or Excellence:
Sarah Neal et al, Community and Conviviality? Informal Social Life in Multicultural Places, 53(1), 69 *Sociology*

Felix Lang Bourdieu, Latour and Rasha Abbas
The Uses of Actor-Network Theory for Studying the Field(s) of Cultural Production in the Middle East and North Africa
Vol 13, Issue 4, 2019 *Cultural Sociology*

Michael Donnelly, Alex Baratta, Sol Gamsu
A sociolinguistic perspective on accent and social mobility in the UK teaching profession Vol 24, Issue 4, 2019
Sociological Research Online

Jenna Pandeli, Michael Marinetto, Jean Jenkins
Captive in Cycles of Invisibility? Prisoners' Work for the Private Sector, 33(4), 596 *Work, Employment and Society*

Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness Book Prize:
Ruth Holliday, Meredith Jones and David Bell,
Beautyscapes: Mapping Cosmetic Surgery Tourism
Manchester University Press, 2017

This prize is offered by our fellow Association the Foundation for the Sociology of Health and Illness (FSHI). Because of the historic closeness of our Medsoc study group and the FSHI, the BSA offers staff support for this prize.

Finance

The three principal sources of income for the Association are membership subscriptions, annual conference registration fees, and publication royalties. The Association is also now generating rental income from tenants occupying the ground floor of the offices in Durham. This income is used to meet a range of expenditures connected to the provision of services to members and support for the wider promotion of sociology. Staff salaries at the BSA office are the principal financial outlay (the position of Trustee is voluntary and carries no stipend).

The year-end consolidated financial statements for the Association in 2020 show a surplus of £315,218 against a surplus budget of £1,001. This result is mainly attributable to the increase in value of investments (£80,904), the financial treatment of part of the Durham building as an investment property (£105,000), government grants relating to the Covid-19 furlough scheme and business support (£47,771) and savings on events and activities, as these were unable to take place due to the pandemic. The Association holds unrestricted reserves of £1,173,230, sufficient to enable the running down of the Association over a period of one year should members vote to discontinue the Association or it prove no longer (financially or otherwise) viable. Additional reserves are maintained as designated funds for BSA study groups (£185,402) and property funds (£1,093,639).

Auditors Haines Watts were re-appointed for year-end 31 December 2020. They have continued to monitor and enhance financial controls within the Association.

– Dr Chris Yuill, Treasurer

Risk Management

Trustees review the Association's objectives and identify the major risks (within and beyond the Association's direct control) to which the charity may be exposed on an annual basis. For the financial year under consideration, a review was undertaken in November 2019, with discussion around a range of risks facing the Association. As well as meeting the requirements of charity law, the review provides an excellent basis for forward planning. Long-, medium- and short-term risks identified included the following:

- IT infrastructure including cyber-security;
- overseeing the output of contractors with regards to IT, journals and media;
- reputation due to social media and press coverage;
- publishing industry developments in relation to journals, particularly the introduction of Plan S and increased open access publishing with anticipated income reduction;
- changes in higher education policy and funding;
- diversity within the BSA;
- website functionality;
- General Data Protection Regulation changes;
- socio/political climate;
- conference attendance and financial impact.

More details of the BSA risk register are available on request and are included in the Annual Accounts as part of the Annual Report of the Trustees of the Association. – Dr Chris Yuill, Treasurer



Philip Abrams prize winners: Anna Bull and Owen Abbott

Acknowledgements

The BSA thanks all those who gave generously of their time and expertise during the 2020 calendar year, serving in many important roles vital to ensure the smooth running of the Association and its many activities.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dr Jason Arday	Publications Director	Dr Catherine Pope	Publications Director
Dr Aminu Musa Audu	Membership Services Director	Professor Chrissie Rogers	Membership Services Director
Dr John Bone	Chair	Professor Louise Ryan	Vice Chair
Dr Sarah Cant	Public Engagement Director	Professor Michael Savage	Public Engagement Director
Dr Mark Doidge	Membership Services Director	Dr Richard Waller	Publications Director
Professor Stevi Jackson	Publications Director	Dr Chris Yuill	Treasurer
Professor Janice McLaughlin	Membership Services Director		

ADVISORY FORUM

The Advisory Forum is made up of representatives from many constituencies of the BSA. Where the representatives are not named elsewhere in the Annual Review, we have thanked them here: Activism in Sociology Representative; Chair; Chief Executive; Company Secretary; *Cultural Sociology* Journal Editors; Early Career Forum Representative; HAPS Chairs, Prof John Solomos (to 1/12/20), Professor Thomas Hall (from 1/12/20); Honorary Vice President (Prof John Scott); MedSoc Representative; Membership Services Directors; Postgraduate Forum Representatives; President (Prof Susan Halford); Public Engagement Directors; Publications Directors; Publications & Membership Manager; *Sociological Research Online* Journal Editors; Sociologists Outside Academia Representatives; *Sociology* Journal Editors; Study Group Representatives (Dr Julie Parsons); Treasurer; Vice Chair; *Work, Employment and Society* Journal Editors.

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS

Martin Albrow; Sara Arber; Michèle Barrett; John Brewer; Robert Burgess; Joan Busfield; John Eldridge; John Holmwood; Lynn Jamieson; David Morgan RIP; Geoff Payne; Jennifer Platt; John Scott; Sue Scott (all professors).

STAFF MEMBERS

Sophie Belfield, Publications & Social Media Coordinator; Liz Brown, Membership Development Officer; Sandria Charalambous, Events Officer; Kerry Collins, Company Secretary; Alison Danforth, Publications Manager; Elaine Forester, Events Coordinator; Lyndsey Henry, Events Coordinator; Margaret Luke, PA to the Chief Executive; Gillian Mason, Finance Officer; Judith Mudd, Chief Executive; Jackie Murphy, Administration Assistant; Donna Willis, Digital Content Officer.

STUDY GROUP CONVENORS

Ageing, Body and Society: Wendy Martin, Julia Twigg; **Animal Human:** Rhoda Wilkie; **Auto/Biography:** Anne Chappell, Carly Stewart; **Bourdieu:** Jessica Abrahams, Ciaran Burke, Nicola Ingram, Steph Lacey, Amy Stich, Aina Tarabini, Derron Wallace; **Childhood Studies:** Liam Berriman; **Cities:** Emma Jackson, Kirsteen Paton; **Citizenship:** Mastoureh Fathi; **Climate Change:** Catherine Butler, Emmet Fox, Jessica Paddock, Thomas Roberts, Kathryn Marie Wheeler; **Consumption:** Emma Casey, Irmak Karademir Hazir, Adrian Leguina, Thomas Thurnell-Read; **Deconstructing Donation:** Laura Machin; **Diaspora, Migration and Transnationalism:** Julie Botticello, Paul Dudman, Rachel Humphris, Polina Manolova; **Digital:** Mark Carrigan, Cristina Costa, Huw Davies, Kate Orton-Johnson, Michael Saker, Christopher Till; **Disability:** Dieuwertje Dyi Huijg, Sara Ryan, Alison Wilde, Sarah Woodin; **Emotions:** Lisa Kalayji, Fiona McQueen, Lisa Smyth; **Families and Relationships:** Charlotte Faircloth, Alison Lamont, Katherine Twamley, Julie Walsh; **Food:** Julie Parsons, Andrea Tonner; **Gender and Feminism:** Madeline Breeze, Grainne McMahon; **Happiness:** Laura Hyman, Alexandra Jugureanu; **Historical and Comparative Sociology:** Martin Booker; **Human Reproduction:** Kylie Baldwin, Cathy Herbrand; **Leisure and Recreation:** Alan Tomlinson, Mark Turner; **Medical Sociology:** Catherine Coveney, Sarah Hoare, Jennifer Remnant, Shadrack Mwale; **MedSoc East Midlands:** Nicky Hudson; **MedSoc Environment and Society:** Richard Compton; **MedSoc Ethnic and Religious Minorities:** Zahira Latif; **MedSoc London:** Oliver Bonnington; **MedSoc North East:** Bethany Bareham, Rebecca Patterson, Holly Standing; **MedSoc North West:** Donna Bramwell; **MedSoc Scotland:** Suzanne Grant, Shona Hilton, Sara Macdonald; **MedSoc South Coast:** Chris Allen, Jo Hope, Shadreck Mwale; **MedSoc South West:** Gayle Letherby; **MedSoc Wales:** Julie Latchem-Hastings; **MedSoc West Midlands:** Geraldine Brady; **MedSoc Yorkshire:** Paul Bissell, Christopher Till; **New Materialisms:** Pam Alldred, Fay Dennis, Nick Fox; **Postcolonial and Decolonial Transformations:** Gurminder Bhambra, Ali Meghji, Saskia Papadakis, Sara Salem, Meghan Tinsley; **Race and Ethnicity:** Narzanin Massoumi, Sweta Rajan-Rankin, Rima Saini; **Risk and Society:** Gemma Mitchell, Joanne Warner; **Science and Technology Studies:** Emily Ross, Julia Swallow, Ros Williams; **Scottish Studies:** Paul Gilfillan, Alex Law; **Social Aspects of Death, Dying and Bereavement:** Sharon Mallon, Laura Towers; **Social Network Analysis Group:** Alessio D'Angelo, Paola Tubaro; **Social Statistics:** Charlotte Brookfield, Stefanie Doebler; **Social Work:** Rosie Buckland, Rachel Hughes, Louise Isham; **Sociology of Alcohol:** Katherine Jackson, Claire Markham; **Sociology of Education:** Nicola Ingram, Jon Rainford, Michael Ward; **Sociology of Media:** Julian Matthews; **Sociology of Mental Health:** Andi Fugard, Nick Manning, Rich Moth, Ewen Speed; **Sociology of Religion:** Celine Benoit; **Sociology of Rights:** Martin Crook, Michele Grigolo, Hannah Miller, Alice Nah, Damien Short; **Sociology of Sport:** Mark Doidge, Aarti Ratna; **Sociology of the Arts:** Katherine Appleford; **Sociology, Psychoanalysis and Psychosocial:** Julian Manley, Peter Redman; **Theory:** Matt Dawson, Barry Gibson, Charles Masquelier, Lisa McCormick, Christian Morgner, Susie Scott; **Violence against Women:** Louise Livesey; **Violence and Society:** Anthony Ellis; **Visual Sociology:** Julia Everitt, Terence Heng, Helen Lomax, Daryl Martin; **Work, Employment and Economic Life:** Rachel Cohen, Jonathan Preminger, Jill Timms; **Youth:** Benjamin Hanckel, Karenza Moore, Caitlin Nunn.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP CONVENORS

Activism in Sociology: Peter Burgess, Rumana Hashem, Spyros Themelis, Tom Vickers; **Applied Sociology:** J K Tina Basi, Nick Fox; **Early Careers Forum:** Sarah Burton, Kasia Narkowicz, Carli Rowell; **Postgraduate Forum:** Ross Goldstone, Gaby Harris, Owen McGill, Emma Seddon; **HaPS:** Tom Hall, John Solomos.

BSA PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTORS

21st Century Standpoints Series Editors: Prof Les Back, Prof Pamela Cox, Prof Nasar Meer; **Cultural Sociology Advisory Editors:** Prof David Inglis (Advisor), Dr Lisa McCormick, Prof Nick Prior, Dr M. Angélica Thumala Olave, Dr Christopher Thorpe; **Sociological Futures Series Editors:** Prof Eileen Green, Prof John Horne, Dr Caroline Oliver, Prof Louise Ryan; **Sociological Research Online Editors:** Dr Karen Lumsden (Chair), Dr Angharad Beckett, Dr Greg Hollin, Prof Kahryn Hughes, Prof Jason Hughes, Dr Lucie Middlemiss, Dr Anna Tarrant, Dr Katie Wright; **Sociology Editors:** Prof Tim Strangleman (Chair), Dr Andy Balmer, Prof Wendy Bottero, Prof Bridget Byrne, Prof Tarani Chandola (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Simin Fadaee, Dr Helen Holmes, Dr Remi Josphe-Salisbury, Dr Vanessa May (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Prof Alan Warde; **Work, Employment and Society Editors:** Prof Irena Grugulis (Chair of the Editorial Board), Dr Maria Adamson, Dr Alexandra Beauregard, Dr Uracha Chatrakul Na Ayudhya, Dr Elizabeth Cotton (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Anne Daguerre, Dr Alessio D'Angelo, Dr Rory Donnelly, Dr Donald Hislop, Dr Janroj Keles, Prof Eleonore Kofman (Co-Editor-in-Chief), Dr Daniela Lup, Dr Paul Sissons, Dr Ian Roper (Co-Editor-in-Chief).

EXTERNAL PROFESSIONAL AND SPECIALIST ADVISORS

Acamedia, Media Consultant; DMWM, Digital Designer; Ellis Whittam, Health and Safety Advisors; Haines Watts, Auditors and VAT; Natwest, Banking; The Pensions Trust, Pensions Managers; Policy Press, Book Publisher; ProTech, CRM Provider; Renew Publishing Consultants, Strategic Publishing Consultancy; Routledge, Book Publisher; Ruffer Investments, Investment Fund Managers; SAGE Publications, Journal Publisher; TSG, IT Systems Support; The Access Group, IT Systems Support; UK Engage, Elections Services; Ward Hadaway, Legal Services; Waterstons, Website and IT Support; Yellowback Ltd, Peer Review Management for Journals.

Addressing the Challenges Ahead

As the BSA heads towards a turning point in its history, the trustees have embarked on a series of wider conversations with members, communicating about the changes and discussing how best to respond. In November they met with members of the BSA Advisory Forum (the main member representative sounding board) and study group convenors (at the heart of the Association's academic research networks) to discuss the challenges facing the BSA, what matters most to them about the Association, and how we might adapt to help secure our long-term future. A version of a paper prepared for the meeting by our CEO, Judith Mudd, is shared here for all members to read. Although fairly lengthy, the trustees are keen for members to see this level of detail so that they can better understand where the Association stands.

The BSA has entered a transition phase, which is about planning and adapting to a known future reduction in our main source of income – publications.

We have been predicting a fall in publications income since the Finch Report on open access published in 2012. We did not know exactly how much or exactly when but we have been actively monitoring and communicating with members about the coming challenges since 2012.

We now expect to see a significant drop in our publishing income from 2023. At the same time, our membership, and therefore our membership income, has been reducing.

Together, these changes in income and membership present a challenge to the Association and, although we are not in any immediate financial crisis, we will need to adapt to ensure a strong future for the BSA.

Adapting what we do will not happen overnight and it is better (for members, trustees and staff), in terms of managing the change, if we can implement changes gradually. For this reason, the trustees are beginning to take steps now to cut the Association's coat to fit its cloth.

With the action that the trustees have already taken, and assuming all other things being equal, we are projecting that the Association now has enough funds to continue operating without further change until 2030.

However, it would not be wise to do nothing more until we reach the cliff-edge. It would be better to find ways of changing what we do over the coming eight years so that we have a plan which we can implement when we need to.

A bit of history

In the beginning, we were a small group of academics drawn together by a common passion, meeting infrequently, much like some of the study groups wholly supported by volunteers. In time, wanting to do more and needing funds to do more, we became a charity (in 1951) wholly maintained by membership subscriptions.

Our programme of activities grew and with this our need for professional and administrative services and to build institutional knowledge and create continuity of support became apparent. Still, these were sustained primarily by membership subscriptions, sometimes with some income from events.

The establishment of the BSA's wholly-owned journals – first *Sociology* (1967), and later *WES* (1987) – published under the auspices of the charity's trading subsidiary, BSA Publications, added a new layer of service need, both administrative (e.g. managing the copy-editing, type-setting, proof-reading, printing, subscriptions and distribution of the journals) and professional

(e.g. managing the accounts and providing legal advice). For the first 35 years, the journals were just about self-sustaining or subsidised by the charity, i.e. membership subscriptions.

In 2002, a major change occurred in the history of the BSA, i.e. a new publishing contract was signed with SAGE.

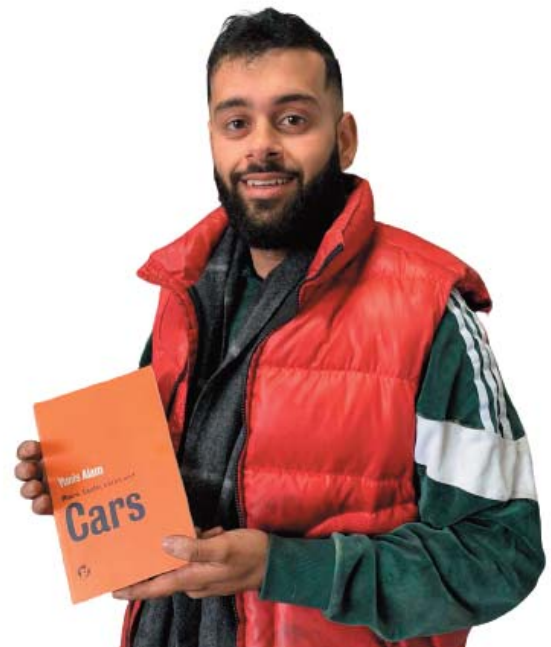
The move to SAGE was primarily about sustaining the journals (out previous publishers had told us that our journals were old and journal subscriptions could only go one way – down) i.e. we did not anticipate the kind of large surpluses that our journals ultimately made, but it changed the trajectory of the Association.

Suddenly, with significant funds being donated to the charity by its publications trading subsidiary, the Association was able to do much more, e.g. there were funds to:

- support bursaries for postgrads and early career researchers;
- maintain and increase support for prizes and awards for excellence (e.g. the BSA Philip Abrams Memorial Book Prize);
- build and maintain microsites for every study group and a new website dedicated to supporting school teachers;
- funds to ensure a sociological presence at major annual sociology events;
- support new book series;
- underwrite losses e.g. arising from events;
- support the production, editing and uploading of videos which promote sociology;
- pay for specialist support and advice (e.g. publishing, public relations);
- support small-scale research projects (e.g. the BA report on race and ethnicity in British sociology);
- support high profile public lectures (e.g. Annual Equality Lecture);
- purchase a meeting space in London for members to use; and
- purchase a permanent home for the Association in Durham.

The income created by the journals hugely exceeded our expectation and overtook by some margin member subscription income as our primary source of income.

Yunis Alam, author of *Cars*, in our 21st Century Standpoints series



What's the financial picture now?

The Association fared much better in 2020 than expected helped by:

- the severe curtailment of face-to-face meetings due to the pandemic leading to reduced expenditure, e.g. on travel;
- an unexpected windfall from our investments which performed better than most during the pandemic;
- an unexpected auditing revision to the treatments of our property in the accounts as a result of the decision to offer more of our office space to let; and
- unexpected income from the government furlough scheme.

This meant we ended the year with a consolidated surplus of £315,218, of which £185,904 relates to gains on investments.

We are also set to have weathered the storms in 2021 better than expected, helped mainly by:

- More people attending our first full virtual conference (745) – we prudently projected less because this was unknown territory;
- Additional, unexpected money coming in from our publisher (about £50,000);
- A non-return to face-to-face meetings resulting in continued reduced expenditure e.g. on travel (we predicted a blend for 2021);
- An unexpected low (virtually nil) take up of grants from our Support Fund for postgraduate and early career projects.

At the time of writing, for 2021 we are currently projecting an end-of-year surplus of about £60,000.

For 2022, we are working to a budget which is expected to give a small surplus of about £4,500.

We hold about £800,000 in investments with our advisors Ruffer and have projected cash reserves at the end of 2021 of around £300,000, making a total of about £1.1 million assets. But this includes £165,000 ring-fenced for the BSA study groups and so cannot be counted, so in effect we have £935,000.

Under good governance guidelines the BSA is required to hold one year's expenditure to enable the Association to wind down should there be a need to close the Association, i.e. £575,000.

This leaves the Association with £360,000 contingency (£935,000 minus £575,000), which is well below one year's expenditure.

Currently, we also have our two properties as assets.

Short-term, the BSA is in a secure position.

So what's the problem?

It's the longer-term that we're focused on, especially balancing recurring costs with recurring income.

A new publishing contract is currently being negotiated and we could see a reduction of about £90,000, reducing further year-on-year.

Assuming income remains roughly constant and a 2% inflation rate is applied to expenditure, if no action is taken, the BSA cash reserves would start to be depleted from 2023 and reduce to a nil balance in early 2026.

Thereafter, we would need to begin cashing in our £800,000 investments and these would be wiped out by 2030 if no alternative streams of income are found or savings achieved.

What about property assets?

The BSA owns a property in London historically used for meetings and bought as a way of diversifying assets, and a property in Durham that houses the staff and the BSA archive and which is also used for meetings.

- The London property has an estimated sale value of £400,000.
- The Durham property has an estimated value of £800,000.

We have carefully considered whether to sell or rent out more of our property.

What action have we taken so far?

The London meeting room is currently for sale on the grounds that it is now not being used enough and it is not socially responsible to have empty space in a prime location. This will generate a one-off sum which will buy us some time while we adapt. One quarter of our office space at Durham is currently let to tenants.

More space at the Durham office is currently being advertised to let. If successful, this would provide a new and recurring income stream, but there has been no interest to date.

Moving *Network*, our members' magazine, online has allowed us to see how many members are prepared to read a screen-only version: only 267 people clicked the link to the summer issue. The BSA is reviewing whether to move *Network* back to print production, given that most people read the paper copy when it is sent to them personally.

A series of small cost-cutting measures are being implemented in the office, e.g. not renewing our franking machine contract and changing our leased line providers, to provide recurring savings on expenditure.

The last three staff leavers have not been replaced.



Judith Mudd (left) and Kerry Collins (right) at the BSA office

With the proceeds from the sale of Imperial Wharf, the depletion of cash reserves will be delayed from 2023 until mid-2026. Other income generation and cost saving ideas are being considered including:

- Running training events (either exclusive to members or charged with differential rates for members and non-members);
- Increasing video publishing (either making BSA video content exclusive to members to help increase membership or developing the professionalism of our video output and promotion; also, seeking licensing opportunities and possible advertising revenue);
- Extending sponsorship opportunities to include non-traditional sponsors, i.e. organisations other than publishers such as software providers;
- Offering proof-reading or captioning services;
- Reducing activities which place a high demand on resource and have little take-up or create no direct financial return. This is a difficult question because so many things that fit this category might be highly valued and losing them might have a disproportionately negative impact e.g. public statements, letters and consultation responses; eNews; Everyday Society; Discover Sociology; *Network*; PAM Prize;
- Condensing our peripheral publications and websites e.g. *Network*, eNews and Discover Sociology (what do members actually want/read?);
- Stopping sending paper journals to members (we have agreed this will happen when our new journals publishing contract starts in 2023);
- Making face-to-face meetings the exception.

Feature continued overleaf ▶

◀ From previous page

The hidden work of the Association

An important consideration is that much of what the Association does to support the discipline is hidden or not acknowledged but has great value to sociologists and the discipline.

Significant resource is directed towards the promotion and defence of sociology through our press and public engagement work.

From a place of non-entity as far as the media were concerned, sociology now has increasing presence. We cannot claim that is all down to our work but in 2009 we contracted a professional media consultant and since then around 1,800 articles have resulted from our press releases, an average of 150 a year.

Coverage is becoming harder to achieve with newspapers cutting back on staff. Despite this, we did get 10 national news items from this year's conference, including *The Guardian* home page, *The Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Mirror*. Even with this reduced press interest we generally have more national coverage than the British Society of Criminology and Social Policy Association, and are similar to the Political Studies Association. Getting media coverage takes skill and persistence.

Our public engagement work is very important to the future of the discipline e.g. supporting school teachers, challenging proposed cutbacks to sociology staff in universities, and questioning public policy and statements which would have negative impacts on society.

Notably, there is a difference between what's done to support sociology locally, i.e. within universities, and what the BSA does.

What's done locally, at an individual university or school level is necessarily self-focused and self-promoting because of the competitive nature of universities.

In contrast, as the subject association for sociology in Britain, the BSA only has one interest and that's sociology, regardless of where it's taking place.

The BSA's neutral status, independent of any university, is terribly important: it means that interested parties can be sure that we speak without bias.

We are internationally recognised as the pre-eminent learned professional society for sociological teaching, learning and research in Britain (this is how The British Library refers to us) and we are often asked for our advice or to contribute to important consultations.

A recent example is the major part the BSA played in the British Academy's response to the government (Patrick Vallance) on the medium- and long-term impacts of Covid-19 on society (based on the responses we got through an open call to sociologists).

You can read the British Academy's report on their website. The contribution of the BSA / sociology / sociologists is referenced on page 14 – we are one of only two learned societies to be directly referenced in the report.

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3238/COVID-decade-understanding-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf>

Other organisations that contact us because of our standing and our unbiased, holistic view of sociology include:

- The A-level exam boards – we currently meet regularly with them and work with them to provide support and resources for school teachers.
- Department for Education - our work with them has included saving GCSE sociology from disbandment.
- REF – each cycle they rely on us to act as official neutral conduit for sociology panel nominations. They cannot approach individual universities, for obvious reasons.

Organisations seeking to work with us know that we have an inclusive understanding of sociology with special interest groups and study groups which speak to the breadth and complexity of sociology.

We are the anchor for the discipline of sociology, unfettered by the push and pull of university policy and priority, vested only in

one thing i.e. sociology.

If sociology loses the BSA, we lose our central point of contact and with that our national identity and that weakens us as a discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those in political spheres who'd rather see sociology disappear.

Without the BSA, sociology GSCE would have ended (we fought successfully to save it), and there would be no neutral subject association to act as conduit for REF.

Sociology would miss the BSA if it disappeared!

What kind of charity are we?

We could say that we started out as the kind of charity that only received funds (to sustain a limited amount of activity).

Over time, especially in the 20 years from 2002–2022 and as a result of significant funding increases arising from our journals, we became the kind of charity that both received funds AND gave out funds in the form of Support Fund grants and prize money. We have changed from a charity run by volunteers only receiving funding to a charity with paid staff both receiving and giving money.

However, the ability to be a charity that both receives funding and gives funding depends on income exceeding costs.

Why do we need staff?

The BSA is a charity and a company limited by guarantee supporting a relatively complex annual programme of activity including: 60+ study groups, 50-60 events, including a large association conference attended by 600-800 people, four journals, four prizes, a support fund, two websites supporting those teaching and studying at pre- and post-tertiary levels, and a programme of public engagement and subject promotion activities. It is also a membership association with about 2,000 members.

Running an operation of this scale requires significant and skilled administrative support.

Each year, the staff answer thousands of calls and emails from members, authors, editors, study group and stream convenors, the media, suppliers and external bodies. The staff take care of all manner of administrative and professional activities including: administering the legal reporting requirements and duties of the

Professor Kalwant Bhopal, left, giving the BSA-British Library Equality Lecture



charity and the company, GDPR, specialist advice on publishing, book-keeping, vat returns, management accounts, annual financial returns, payroll, HR, pension; maintaining the membership data system, promoting membership, processing renewals and responding to enquiries; monitoring and generating social media content (mostly Twitter) for the BSA and individual journals; managing contracts for research (e.g. recent EDI projects) and suppliers (e.g. press officer, auditors, solicitors, publishers, health & safety); providing administrative support for the Board of trustees, the Board's sub-committees, the journal editorial boards; monitoring and reporting on the impact of policy and regulatory changes e.g. open access, charity and financial; maintaining and refreshing our two websites (BSA and Discover Sociology); generating and soliciting content for Everyday Society, *Network* and eNews; promoting and managing the administrative side of our conferences and events from online platform builds to venue arrangements, abstract submission processing, delegate bookings and on-site trouble shooting; producing detailed analysis of BSA and other activity to inform BSA strategy; writing press releases and working with the media to secure coverage; providing administrative and writing support for public engagement activities, such as public statements and responses to high level consultations e.g. Patrick Vallance report on the social impacts of Covid-19.

Could we reduce staff number to save on cost?

Currently the BSA has a team of 11 staff.

The staff exist to support the work of the charity. They are wholly dedicated to the project that is sociology. Their livelihoods depend on the success of sociology. The BSA is not an add-on to other projects or jobs that they do.

With the BSA offices in Durham, staff are recruited locally on non-university contracts. Salaries are benchmarked with similar jobs in the non-profit sector and in the north east of England. Since this area is one of the lowest paid in the country, staffing costs are lower than, for example, if the office was based in London.

Staffing costs are annually reviewed by the trustees, with external benchmarking carried out every five years and the staffing

complement kept as lean as possible. Nevertheless, in the context of reducing income, two posts at the office which recently became vacant have not been filled which, combined with another not filled earlier, has provided some saving on recurring staff costs.

Any further natural attrition in staffing levels could allow for shifts in emphases of tasks.

The team has already been reduced by about 21% from 14 to 11.

Without scaling back activities, there is little room to further reduce the number of staff at present.

Why be a member of the BSA?

Members need reasons to join and stay in membership and we are increasingly offering everything to members and non-members with no differential.

We are carefully considering the need for member benefits e.g. exclusive content, early access to content, and preferential rates to events, asking ourselves whether it is right that so much of the BSA content is freely available to non-members.

Preferential rates for members is a very important matter because our legal status with HMRC requires that members of the association receive preferential rates for the activities or services that we offer.

We have to evidence this and one of the key ways that we do is through our events.

Where a charge is being made for BSA events, members need to be offered lower rates than non-members.

With the move to more online events, there is reluctance to charge anything for attendance and, if non-BSA members attend (which mostly they do), this means that there is no differential between members and non-members.

Navigating being both a charity and a membership organisation is a perennial challenge, i.e. how best to balance the need for public benefit with the need for income to support the public benefit work we do.

Whatever happens, members and membership are at our heart: this is where the knowledge of sociology that we want to promote lies and we need more sociologists to join to help us to this better.

Coming up with strong reasons beyond utilitarian ones is a challenge and we have been working on this with a view to changing our messaging around membership.

*Some reasons to be a member of the BSA are at the end of this article.

What about membership income?

Association membership peaked in 2017 at 2,749. Since then membership (and therefore membership income) has been falling.

In 2020 we ended the year with just over 2,000 members.

From 2018 to 2020, our membership income reduced by £58,000.

We have been looking closely at the possible reasons for this and observing how engagement with the BSA has been changing in recent years.

The fall in membership appears to have coincided with dramatic growth in online access to and interest in our work.

We had 125,000 unique visitors (from all around the world) to our website in 2020 and we currently have over 27,000 Twitter followers.

Given that our membership is now about 2,000 and, at the last count, there were known to be less than 3,900 sociologists working in academia, we are evidently reaching a lot more people beyond our usual community.

We are successful in our charitable aim of advancing public education by the promotion and diffusion of the knowledge of sociology.

e in 2018, with the event Chair, Professor Louise Ryan



◀ From previous page

However, as more and more of our resources become freely available online and easily accessed via our websites, there is less incentive to be a member, which could be a key reason that membership numbers have reduced.

Analysis of attendees at our events in 2020 shows that, on average, around 60% were non-members.

With membership numbers falling there is less income to pay for the administrative support that underpins the work of the Association, including the cost of maintaining our websites and refreshment and development of online resources.

Currently, membership fees do not cover the cost of membership activities and support. All membership subscriptions are subsidised by journals income.

The current cost per member (calculated by taking the cost of everything the Association does which is not directly paid for by other means e.g. conference fees) is over £200.

£200 is more than any of our membership category rates, i.e. at present, all membership subscriptions are subsidised by income from our journals, sometimes by conference income, and sometimes by investment gains.

To help balance the books after 2030, either the current subsidy for membership will need to be generated elsewhere and/or fees will need to increase and/or administrative support/activities will have to reduce.

How about income from conferences and events?

This is a misunderstood and contentious area.

Most BSA events do not set out to make a surplus and events are a relatively low source of income for the BSA.

Other learned societies are known to be much more reliant on event surplus income, in some cases it is their main source of income.

People often assume that the BSA conferences always make a sizeable surplus but this is not the case. Our annual conference has made surpluses some years but other years it has made a loss or broken even.

We can never say exactly how many people will attend our annual conference nor what the split of full member/concessionary member/non-member will be, which means we never know precisely whether a conference will make a loss, break even or make a surplus.

Our approach is to budget prudently i.e. to assume attendance will be roughly the same as it was last year or the last time we were at a particular venue, for example.

Our last conference (2021) was a completely new adventure for us, being our first fully virtual conference. More paying delegates (605) attended than we anticipated and the conference made a deficit of about £6,000.

The budget for our next conference (2022), which is also fully virtual, is based on our experience in 2021 but (as above) we can never predict exactly what the outcome will be. We received 515 abstract submissions, of which a number will withdraw (our experience is about 100 people withdraw each year). If 100 withdraw that leaves us with 415 presenters and we would need 180 non-presenters to take us back up to break even or small surplus.

Unless the fees were increased, the annual conference is unlikely to ever be a guaranteed, recurring, annual source of income.

Larger BSA events are fully costed and charged because they involve significant technical and administrative support.

One area that has been under consideration is how to make

smaller study groups self-financing such that the cost of administrative support for them is covered, for example by their event fees.

Larger study group conferences, like the Medical Sociology conference, already has full cost clarity and the cost of BSA support is accounted for and directly paid for out of the funds in the study group's designated fund.

However, we have about 60 study groups, all of which are supported by the BSA. They all carry the valuable imprimatur of the BSA, are provided with a microsite presence on the BSA website, and are part of the bigger Association.

Additional support for study groups varies but is more often than not concerned with events which can include promotion/marketing on our website and on social media, budgeting and payment processing system support, event platform provision and technical support, editing and uploading of event videos to BSA YouTube, legal advice and crisis intervention.

Where smaller groups make use of BSA staff support for events and don't charge fees to cover the administrative costs, this means that support is subsidised by income from journals and membership i.e. the wider Association is paying to support the many individual pockets of activity.

This might be fine, but with income reducing, the level of funding available from the wider Association to cover administrative and technical staff costs will also reduce.

The redistribution of income in support of other activities needs to be transparent and fair and more visibility will help us plan for the future.

We have been trialling the introduction of small charges for administrative support, calculated on an individual event basis which is then accounted for by internal accounting adjustment*. Some groups seem happy with this, others are not.

We are also considering other ways in which new funding could be achieved for smaller events, e.g. by increasing the Annual Conference fee to include an element "To help support our smaller study groups and research networks" or adding a specific additional sum to study group event fees and saying "This fee helps to support the administrative support of our study group".

If internal accounting adjustments are not acceptable and we want to continue offering support, we will need to find other sources of income to cover our administrative support costs when our reserves run out.

*Accounting adjustments do not generate income: they provide clarity on where costs are actually incurred, move money from ring-fenced designated funds to free reserves, where they can be allocated in the accounts against staff costs, and demonstrate to auditors how these costs are paid for.

We are also asking ourselves how can we turn the dramatic growth in non-member online engagement into income that will help sustain the Association long-term?

A Youth Study Group online event held during the year



The meeting on 5 November, attended by 46 people and involving plenary discussions and smaller breakout rooms was an opportunity to begin to work through the challenges in a forum full of key representatives from the Association.

The trustees also want to hear from the wider membership. Please send your comments or suggestions to Judith.mudd@britsoc.org.uk

In the next issue of *Network*, we will report on further developments.

In the meantime, there are two things that members can do to help raise the profile of the Association:

- Highlight the fact that you are a member of the BSA on your institutional profile/email signature e.g. Proud to be a member of the British Sociological Association – helping to protect the future of sociology.
- Talk to your colleagues about BSA membership and encourage anyone who isn't a member to consider joining to help ensure a strong future for the BSA.

* Below are some of the reasons for joining that you could discuss with your colleagues.

Reasons to join: to support sociology

Sociologists understand the power of association.

The BSA needs people who care about sociology to become members to support its work on behalf of the discipline.

The BSA is a wholly independent educational charity which operates without support from government or funding bodies.

Much of what the Association does to support the discipline is hidden/not acknowledged but has great value to sociologists and the discipline.

The BSA promotes and defends sociology through its press and public engagement work, e.g. supporting school teachers, challenging proposed cutbacks to sociology staff in universities, and questioning public policy and statements which would have negative impacts on society.

The BSA's neutral status, independent of any university, is terribly important and needs to be preserved because it means that interested parties can be sure that the BSA speak without bias.

The BSA is internationally recognised as the pre-eminent learned professional society for sociological teaching, learning and research in Britain and is often asked for advice or to contribute to important consultations.

A recent example is the major part the BSA played in the British Academy's response to the government (Patrick Vallance) on the medium- and long-term impacts of Covid-19 on society (based on the responses we got through an open call to sociologists). <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3238/COVID-decade-understanding-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf> (see page 14 for BSA acknowledgement).

Organisations seeking to work with the BSA know that the Association has an inclusive understanding of sociology with special interest groups and study groups which speak to the breadth and complexity of sociology.

The BSA is the anchor for the discipline of sociology, unfettered by the push and pull of university policy and priority, vested only in one thing i.e. sociology.

If sociology loses the BSA, sociology loses its central point of contact and with that its national identity and that weakens sociology as a discipline, feeding directly into the hands of those who'd rather see sociology disappear.

Without the BSA, sociology GCSE would have ended (we successfully fought to save it), and there would be no neutral subject association to act as conduit for REF.

Sociology would miss the BSA if it disappeared!

Reasons to join: to support professional development

Professional development is the No.1 reason members give as their reason for joining the BSA.

Being a member of the Association is a signal of commitment to the discipline, but membership also opens doors, including access to profile-raising, career-enhancing, member-only prizes, such as the BSA Philip Abrams and member-only roles within the Association such as study group convenorship, journal editorship and trusteeship, which enhance professional development.

By joining the BSA, sociologists (at whatever stage of their career and wherever they are) can:

Influence the discipline

- Voting rights on the future of the Association
- Input into consultations about the Association and the discipline

Stay informed

- BSA publications publish leading edge research, *Sociology*, *WES*, *SRO*, *Cultural Sociology*
- BSA Everyday Society
- BSA websites
- BSA eNews



Remi Joseph-Salisbury, 2019 winner of the BSA Philip Abrams prize

Support the future

- Support for teachers and students through promotional materials, teaching resources, Young Sociologist of the Year competition
- Support for PG researchers and early career researchers

Develop professional networks

- Conferences and events
- Study groups and special interest groups

Access to information and support

- Full text journal articles (over 60 journals, over 45,900 articles)
- E-books (over 1,000 e-books in SAGE knowledge)
- *Network* Magazine
- Audio/podcasts
- Videos
- Jobs board

Be supported

- Funding opportunities – BSA Support Fund (grants of up to £1,000 to support postgraduates and early career researchers)
- Prizes (£1,000 for the best first sole-authored book on sociology by an early career author)
- Awards
- Discounted conference fees
- Mentoring web ■