

## Warning signs: sociologists talk about threats to society

### Also in this issue:

- Researcher denied permanent residency after time abroad
- Durham's Protest Singer in Residence hits a high note
- Brexit 'could make sociology's work more difficult'
- A sociology degree benefits women more than men

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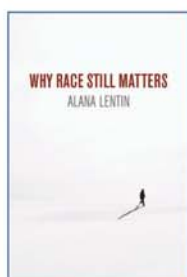
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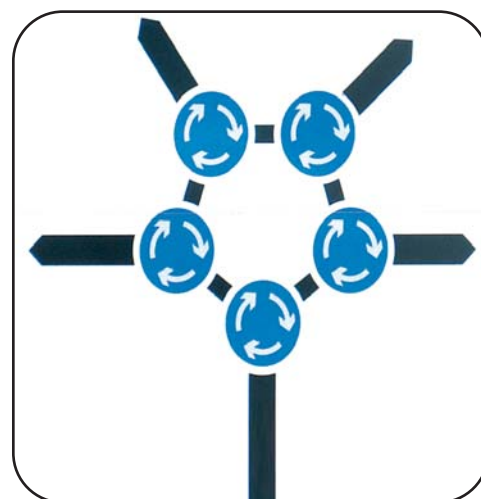
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## Spring 2020 ►

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# Key messages sung at Durham

**Durham University:** The normally quiet corridors of the Sociology Department rang to an unusual sound during the winter – that of protest songs, performed by an officially-appointed singer.

The department hired Nicky Rushton (pictured above right with her band), a stalwart of the regional music scene over the past 20 years, as Protest Singer in Residence, the first such post at a British university.

Professor Catherine Donovan, the Head of Department, had the idea of hiring a protest singer who would write four songs reflecting themes from the four research areas of the department: communities and social justice, health and social theory, higher education and social inequalities, and violence and abuse.

Nicky played the songs at the department's Sociology Sings Back event at Durham on 20 February, the first day of the latest round of UCU university strikes and also the United Nations Day of Social Justice.

As part of the project, department sociologists played a song of their choice during lectures and seminars before the event. Their choices have been put on a Spotify playlist, *Now That's What I Call ... Sociology Sings Back 2020*: <https://tinyurl.com/r2he2fy>

These include *Anarchy in the UK* by the Sex Pistols, *Strange Fruit* by Nina Simone,

*Police and Thieves* by Junior Murvin, and, in contrast, Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto.

Professor Donovan said she thought of the idea of a protest singer in residence after listening to the feminist singer Grace Petrie.

"I thought we should be doing something more with our research than just writing it up for academic, policy and practitioner audiences – we should be disseminating the key messages, many of which promote social change and social justice, in different ways.

"Protest songs became the way we explored this idea this year. If the project is successful then next year we might look at different ways, such as poetry or photography."

The department had 24 applicants for the post, with six interviewees who each gave a 20-minute presentation, which included playing some of their songs to the interview panel, Professor Donovan, Dr Lisa McKenzie, Rachael Barnwell and Dr Richard Bruce.

Professor Donovan said that deciding who to appoint had been difficult because the applicants were "extremely strong".

"All of those shortlisted could have done the job. What Nicky did differently was talk about how she had felt intimidated by academic work, but then realised that this feeling would be useful in order to get her to challenge academics to speak about their work to a non-academic audience."

**Nicky Rushton** was half of the duo *And All Because The Lady Loves* (named after the Milk Tray ad of the 1970s) which played their sets of bittersweet songs on the club circuit in the 1980s and '90s and toured with *Microdisney* and *Michelle Shocked*.

She is currently a member of several bands, including *Mush*, a Newcastle-based group which has released eight albums. Nicky also works for *Equal Arts*, a charity working with older people and people with dementia.

She was delighted to get the post of Protest Singer. "It was the first interview I've ever had and the first job I've ever applied for, so I was terrified.

"But for me I couldn't pass the words 'protest' and 'singer' by, they are such a good combination. I put a lot of preparation into the 20-minute presentation and at the interview I sang some songs that I had written – called *Flesh and Blood*, *You'll Never Keep us Down*, *Ladybird*, about dementia, and *Peggy Paterson*, who was arrested in 1901 for larceny, who was featured in a museum exhibition.

"Probably 98 per cent of my songs have been protest songs in one form or another. I've written about Thatcher and against inequality."

To write her four songs, she drew on protest singers such as Billy Bragg and Joni Mitchell for inspiration, but not on any formal sociology background. But as she says: "I haven't studied sociology – but I've studied life and it seems to be pretty similar."

# Coronavirus: the BSA cancels main events

The BSA has cancelled its three main conferences this year: the annual event in April, and the Medsoc and Work, Employment and Society conferences in September.

The annual conference was cancelled amid the lockdown as the coronavirus began to spread, and the other events were abandoned when fewer researchers booked amid the uncertainty caused by the outbreak.

The BSA's Chief Executive, Judith Mudd, said in a statement that the money it had lost by cancelling the events, and the reduction in journal income from the move to open access publishing meant that savings would need to be made.

"We have been taking steps to do this, focusing on areas where we might make savings while protecting our key functions, she said.

"For example, we may need to replace more face-to-face meetings with virtual ones (perhaps not be a bad thing, thinking about environmental issues), and we may not be able to provide as much financial support for as many activities as we would like over the short term. We might also need to move



Judith Mudd

more of our publications to online only, at least on a temporary basis, including our members' magazine, *Network*." (Note: this issue is published online only, for the first time in *Network*'s 45-year history.)

• *For a feature on the effects of the coronavirus on the discipline, see pages 20 and 21.*

## Sociologists play strike role

Sociologists once again played a prominent role in the strike over pay and conditions, which saw academics, technicians and librarians at 74 universities walk out and picket campuses on 14 days in February and March.

University and College Union members took strike action in two separate legal disputes, one on pensions and one on pay and working conditions. It affected around a million students.

The UCU is demanding that universities cover the costs of recent rises in pension contributions and wants bigger wage increases to offset what it says is a fall of 20 per cent over the past decade.

It also demands action to close the pay gap for women, ethnic minorities and the disabled, and reduce the number of jobs with short term or zero-hours contracts.

The University of Portsmouth's Sociology section tweeted: "Uni staff across the UK are

currently striking for better working conditions & equality. We are sure many of our students feel passionate re social inequalities & social justice & we will share some of the strike action here."

Dr Jana Bacevic, of the University of Cambridge, tweeted: "Hello from the picket line! Just thinking how most people I see out are early career/precariouly employed academics, so here's a call for our securely employed colleagues – come out, join us, it's your working conditions and pensions too!"

It wasn't just sociology staff who took action. Brighton UCU tweeted their appreciation of one sociology student's contribution of packets of biscuits for the picketers: "Thank you to Abbie who does sociology! Biscuits VERY appreciated. Student support fantastic today as always." *See photo below of Abbie*

The strike comes after the University and College Employers Association said that financial pressures on higher education made it difficult to increase salaries, with uncertainties about future levels of funding and student numbers.

• The BSA issued a statement saying it "supports our members and all sociologists who are affected by the UCU strike action. To honour the digital picket line, the BSA will not tweet, retweet or send promotional emails for the full strike period...with the exception of urgent emails."



## Residency denied due to time abroad

A sociologist has been refused permanent residency because she spent time abroad for her PhD 11 years ago.

Dr Nazia Hussein spent six months researching class and gender identity in Bangladesh for her doctorate in women and gender studies at the Department of Sociology at University of Warwick in 2009.

Dr Hussein, now a lecturer at the **University of Bristol**, was "absolutely shocked" when her application for indefinite leave to remain was rejected recently, on the grounds that she had spent too many days out of the country during the 10-year application period.

This was despite the fact she had submitted clear evidence that her PhD research constituted essential fieldwork and an unavoidable and legitimate absence.

"In their letter, the Home Office said I am very qualified and could easily settle back in Bangladesh. They are right that I am very qualified, but I have chosen to be in this country," she told *The Guardian*.

"My qualifications are from this country and I have spent the last 10 years teaching young people in this country."

She has now been granted a two-year dependent visa, which she applied for on the back of her husband's residency.

At the end of that she will be able to reapply for permanent residency. In the last year the family has spent more than £11,000 on immigration fees.

Dr Hussein's husband had been granted indefinite leave to remain, which has meant their three-year-old daughter could get a British passport.

Professor Therese O'Toole, Director of Research at the University of Bristol's School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, said: "This government says we are globally open and receptive.

"But for really great researchers like Nazia to build their lives here and then find all these obstacles thrown in their way sends out entirely the wrong message."



Dr Nazia Hussein



# Influential sociologist of law awarded prize

Robert Dingwall has been awarded the 2019 Prize for Contributions to the Socio-Legal Community.

Professor Dingwall has had a long career in socio-legal studies and the sociology of law, including positions at the universities of Oxford, Nottingham and Nottingham Trent.

The citation spoke of him as “an outstanding scholar whose range of theoretically driven insights over wide areas has been incredibly influential across our discipline.

“He has, both personally and through his methodological publications, been responsible for developing and maintaining training for interdisciplinary socio-legal doctoral students.

“In particular, his work on power relations in mediation...which catalysed heated debate in the mediation community, has weathered the storm caused by the findings and has since become a seminal text in the field.”

Professor Dingwall said later: “This is indeed a great honour, perhaps the most meaningful that has ever come my way because it is from a group where I have



Professor Robert Dingwall

found a true professional home.

“Being a sociologist of law in the UK is an increasingly lonely pursuit and I have always been grateful for the collegial welcome from the socio-legal community. It is invariably exciting to spend a few days where I don’t have to smuggle an interest in law into some other field of study.”

## Awards given

Two sociologists, Professor Jane Elliott and Professor Lucinda Platt, were among those receiving awards in the New Year’s Honours list.

Professor Elliott, of the **University of Exeter**, receives a CBE for services to the social sciences.

She was Chief Executive of the ESRC from 2014 -2017, and before that Head of Director of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at UCL.

Professor Elliott has managed and led analysis for major longitudinal surveys which follow the lives of thousands of people. Her book, *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, was published in 2005.

Lucinda Platt, Professor of Social Policy and Sociology at the **LSE**, receives an OBE for services to the social sciences. She is a quantitative sociologist whose work addresses inequalities relating to ethnicity, migration, gender and disability.

She also works on identity, child poverty and the methodology and history of social surveys.

Professor Platt previously worked at UCL Institute of Education, where she was Director of the Millennium Cohort Study.

## Prize revived

The Norbert Elias book prize has been revived, after being in abeyance for some years.

The prize of €1,000 will be awarded every two years to a book that is an original and well-written argument significantly inspired by Elias’s work. It need not have a strict Eliasian paradigm, however.

The Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation, which runs the prize, says that nominated books, which can include translations from other languages, must not be older than two years. So, for the 2020 prize, this will rule out books published before 2018.

Although priority will be given to less experienced scholars or newcomers, it will no longer be a strict requirement that only a first book by an author may be considered.

The jury for the 2020 Prize will be: Professor Stephen Mennell, University College Dublin, who is the Chair, Professor Annette Treibel, University of Education Karlsruhe, and Professor Stephen Vertigans, Robert Gordon University.

Nominations for the prize should be sent to Arjan Post, Secretary to the Norbert Elias Foundation, by 30 April, either by post to J.J. Viottastraat 13, 1071 JM Amsterdam, The Netherlands, or by email to [secretary@norbert-elias.com](mailto:secretary@norbert-elias.com)

# BSA trustees set out strategy for 2020-22

The BSA’s trustees have agreed their strategic priorities for the three years 2020-2022, setting out three main aims of promoting sociology, nurturing a strong and vibrant community of sociologists and sustaining the association.

Within each aim are a series of objectives, including enhancing the understanding of sociology through wider public and media engagement and promoting examples of where sociology is making a positive difference.

It also promises to develop partnerships with policymakers and non-governmental organisations and to build alliances with like-minded organisations.

The strategy will promote BSA membership as essential for UK sociologists, develop better ways for members to connect with each other, and foster positive interactions between the BSA and its members.

The strategy also promises to sustain the charity through the responsible use of resources, by protecting its current income streams and exploring new funding opportunities, as well as investing in the care and development of staff and volunteers and making operational savings where feasible.

The strategy was agreed before the coronavirus pandemic and may be constrained by its effects.



## Do you have news to share?

Network is looking for news, features, opinions and book reviews.

If you’re interested in having your say, please contact Tony Trueman, at [tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk) or on 07964 023392.

# Expert helps protect young people online

**University of Sheffield:** A researcher's work has led Instagram to restrict the access of under-18s to online content about diet products and cosmetic surgery.

Dr Ysabel Gerrard was part of a team of experts consulted by Instagram when it looked at the best way to protect young people.

From September the social media giant, used by a billion people each month, began rolling out a new policy that prohibits under-18s from viewing posts relating to detox pills, diet pills and other weight loss and cosmetic procedures.

Any content that makes a miraculous claim about diet or weight loss products will be banned from the site for violating the new community guidelines.

Dr Gerrard, lecturer in Digital Media and Society in the Department of Sociological Studies, is a former intern at Microsoft Research New England, and a member of Facebook's Suicide and Self-Injury Advisory Board.

She said of Instagram's change: "It will contribute to a bigger culture shift and be a positive force for the war on bodies – particularly female bodies."



**Dr Ysabel Gerrard**

"Young women have been targeted with products, creams and injectables and these policies will ease and lessen the exposure of these products for people who are still mentally developing."

"It's hard to blame social media solely for influencing eating disorders, but the content we see on social media is a contributing factor to how we feel about our bodies."

# £1m project launched to help migrants

**University of Edinburgh:** Dr Gil Viry has secured £1.1 million in funding for a project to find out how teachers can best help migrant students to avoid under-achieving at school or being excluded.

The 'Teaching that matters for migrant students: understanding levers of integration in Scotland, Finland and Sweden' employs social network analysis and ethnographic research in six schools in the three countries.

The University of Edinburgh is working with three other universities, Stockholm, Jyväskylä and Turku, on the project, funded by the Joint Nordic-UK Research Programme on Migration and Integration.

The expected outputs include four articles and one special issue in academic journals, a project website, a short film and six school exhibitions that show migrant students' experiences through their own artefacts, such as photos and videos.

In other Edinburgh news, a set of resources for teaching the analysis of large volumes of secondary qualitative data has been made available.

The materials, which include podcasts, videos and handouts, are a follow-on from work by Dr Emma Davidson and Professor Lynn Jamieson with the National Centre for Research Methods.

They can be accessed at: <https://tinyurl.com/vovjst>

Professor Nasar Meer took part in an event at the Scottish Parliament to mark 20 years since the publication of the Macpherson Report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the Metropolitan Police's response.

He also gave evidence to the Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee on the progress of race equality in Scotland.

Professor Meer is Editor in Chief of the journal *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, which this year held its annual lecture at St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh on 'The subject of decolonisation'.

Dr Angus Bancroft recently spoke on the topic of artificial intelligence and creativity at the Beyond Conference, the annual research and development conference for the creative industries.

Four new lecturers are joining the Sociology Department. Dr Katucha Bento and Dr Shaira Vadasaria join as lecturers of race and decolonial studies, and Dr Kevin Ralston and Dr Roxanne Connelly join Edinburgh's Q-Step Centre and will play a role in the development of a new Research Training Centre in the School of Social and Political Science.

# Gay pardon Bill goes to Lords

**University of York:** Two Bills that would reform laws on pardons for homosexual acts and on inheritance tax will be voted on by parliament in the coming months. Both were drafted by Professor Paul Johnson, Head of the Department of Sociology, based on his research.

The Armed Forces (Posthumous Pardons) private members Bill passed its first reading, a procedural formality, in January. A second reading, the first opportunity for members of the Lords to debate the main principles of the Bill, is yet to be scheduled.

The aim of the Bill is to grant posthumous pardons to army and Royal Marines personnel convicted before 1881 of now-abolished homosexual offences. If passed, the Bill will address omissions in the Policing and Crime Act 2017, which gave posthumous pardons to many convicted of such offences, but omitted some categories of people.

The Bill is sponsored by Lord Cashman, the former EastEnders actor, founder of Stonewall and gay rights campaigner.

The second Bill, the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (Amendment) (Siblings) Bill, which also had its first reading in January, aims to make the transfer of assets between siblings who live together exempt from inheritance tax in some circumstances.



**Professor Paul Johnson**

In other York news, Professor Andrew Webster was one of the organisers of last year's AsSIST-UK conference, which focused on science, technology and innovation.

AsSIST-UK – the Association for Studies in Innovation, Science and Technology – held the conference at the University of Manchester, attended by 80 delegates.

The plenary addresses looked at how architecture contributes to the changing nature of scientific practice, and at the experiences of STS researchers in the field of synthetic biology.

A report is available on the AsSIST-UK website: <https://tinyurl.com/spggowy>



# Urban art helps win major award for youth justice partnership team

A partnership which has helped youth workers support young people in the criminal justice system has won a prestigious *Times Higher* award.

The Greater Manchester Youth Justice University Partnership linked academics from **Manchester Metropolitan University** with services in the city that help young people.

The initiative led to researchers working with young people to develop Participatory Youth Practice, a framework which includes young people in its design and delivery.

This is based on eight principles, including, 'let them participate', 'acknowledge limited life chances', 'avoid threats and sanctions', and 'develop their ambitions'. It has been embedded in practice across Greater Manchester.

Researchers used innovative methods such as lyric writing and urban art with young people to develop it.

More than 260 staff in the area have now



**Hannah Smithson, Deborah Jump, Paul Axon**

benefited from the training, which has been delivered by academics from the university's Manchester Centre for Youth Studies.

The initiative won the 'Knowledge Exchange Project of the Year', one of a number of prizes given by the *Times Higher* to university initiatives last year.

The judges said they were impressed by the partnership's "linking of effective practice, research capabilities and collaborative approaches."

"The framework has improved youth justice services across the Greater Manchester region and, by giving children and young people more of a voice, it helps to tackle reoffending rates and improve life chances."

Criminologist Professor Hannah Smithson, the academic lead on the initiative, was among those who received the award at the 15th annual *Times Higher* Awards gala dinner and ceremony.

She, her colleague Dr Deborah Jump, and Paul Axon, of Positive Steps Oldham, a charity for young people, adults and families, which took part in the project, received the award.

## £1m project helps young dads

**University of Lincoln:** Dr Anna Tarrant has won a fellowship worth £1.2 million to extend her research into ways of helping young fathers.

Since 2016, Dr Tarrant has led the project 'Responding to young fathers in a different way', set up to counteract the negative impression of young fathers.

This has now been extended for four years, with funding from Round 2 of the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme to carry out research on the needs of young fathers using qualitative longitudinal, participatory and comparative methods.

A part of the project, called the Young Dads Collective, trains fathers aged under 25 to become advocates on behalf of other young fathers when they deal with professionals. This has proven successful in London and was later introduced in Leeds.

The new funding will extend the Young Dads Collective to Grimsby and evaluate its impact on the lives of young fathers and their families in this new locality.

"In the current UK welfare and policy context, young parents are often constructed as a risk and a problem," said Dr Tarrant.

"Young fathers in particular are assumed to be feckless, irresponsible or absent. Despite compelling evidence that they desire to be positively involved in their children's lives, they continue to experience exclusion and stigmatisation, including in professional support contexts.

"There is therefore a pressing need to see



**Dr Anna Tarrant**

young fathers in a different way and to turn these commonsense, yet often unfounded ideas on their head.

"The scheme is a significant and exciting opportunity to implement a compassionate and truly participatory social policy and support environment in the UK, generating an extended evidence base and practice solutions of benefit for young fathers, their families and wider civil society."

Dr Laura Way and Linzi Ladlow joined the team as Research Fellows in January. More details of the project are at: <https://followingfathers.leeds.ac.uk/impact> and at <https://fyff.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk>

## Round-up of future events

A week-long residential symposium for doctoral candidates in disciplines including sociology, economics, anthropology, philosophy, and business subjects is planned.

The 2020 Economy + Society Summer School takes place from 11 to 15 May at Blackwater Castle, in County Cork, Ireland. It will provide masterclasses where students can present their work, and will foster a spirit of scholarship and conversation.

Speakers include Chris Rojek, Sharon Wright, Mitchell Dean, Azrini Wahidin, Bill Cooke, Michelle Millar, Stefan Schwarzkopf and Lucy McCarthy. More details can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/vygm826>

• Please check for updates about the coronavirus

An international interdisciplinary symposium is planned to look at the way that mobilities research can be used in today's society.

'Im[m]obile lives in turbulent times: methods and practices of mobilities research' is scheduled to take place on 9 and 10 July at Northumbria University's **Newcastle Business School**.

The keynote speakers are: Professor Sven Kesselring, Nuertingen-Geislingen University, Professor Stephen Graham, Newcastle University, and Professor Maggie O'Neill, University College Cork. More details: <https://tinyurl.com/yxx89ka6>



# Drug testing service at festivals wins award for outstanding work

**University of Liverpool:** Professor Fiona Measham has won an Outstanding Contribution to Festivals award for her work on drug testing services at events.

Professor Measham was given the honour by the UK Festival Awards in December for setting up The Loop, a non-profit organisation that provides drug safety testing and harm reduction services at nightclubs and festivals.

This was the first organisation to offer drug safety testing services at UK events. People submit a sample, without fear of legal sanction, to be tested by The Loop's team of graduate chemists, and the results are given to them by a healthcare professional.

UK Festival Awards said: "Throughout her 30-year academic career – beginning at King's College, Cambridge and most recently as Chair in Criminology at the University of Liverpool – Fiona's work has been shaped by her passion for music and dance culture.

"Amongst her achievements, she has served on the Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, and on



**Professor Fiona Measham**

David Nutt's Drugs Science Committee, as well as the Lib Dems' expert panel on cannabis regulation.

"The Loop is a service that addresses the

reality of drug use in a pragmatic, non-judgmental and compassionate way.

"It has the power to save lives and, at a time of record drug related deaths nationally, it could not be more urgently needed.

"All the more impressive is that Fiona and her team of over 200 Loop volunteers are all unpaid and yet were able to develop and implement the service with strong local stakeholder support in a profoundly hostile national political context, more often dominated by hysteria and scaremongering than the kind of measured evidenced based pragmatism that has characterised Fiona's work.

"Through this remarkable effort, Fiona and The Loop have not only helped keep young people safe but also changed the national discourse amongst festival promoters, police, public health officials, the media and in Westminster.

"Policy on drugs and health has evolved in a positive direction, away from the failed zero tolerance approaches of the past, towards a reality-based focus on health, leisure and harm reduction."

## Event held on coercive control

**LSBU:** The Crime and Justice Research Group organised a conference with the aim of changing the way coercive control and domestic abuse are considered.

'Coercive control: contextualising the invisible' was held at the university as part of an international campaign against gender-based violence which ran last year, beginning with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women in November.

The speakers at the LSBU event were: Lyndsey Dearlove, the Head of UK Says No More, the campaign committed to ending domestic violence and sexual assault; Rhian Lewis, of the law firm Hogan Lovells International LLP; Dr Tirion Havard, LSBU; and Sophie Linden, London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

The organisers say that although coercive and controlling behaviour is now a criminal offence, in reality this behaviour often goes unrecognised. By raising awareness it can be exposed as abusive.

The Crime and Justice Research Group also ran a seminar on 'Stop and risk in the US: a question of justice', with a presentation by Professor Alex Vitale, of Brooklyn College, and another event on 'Funding the elusive female gun-buyer: gender, rights and consequences in US gun politics', by Professor Peter Squires, of the University of Brighton.

Other events run at LSBU included a seminar by the Race, Gender and Sexualities Research Group on 'The paradox of the anti-colonial settler-citizen: can the settlers refuse?', given by Dr Elian Weizman, of SOAS.

Dr Clara Eroukhanoff, of LSBU, gave workshop presentations entitled 'Feminist policy making – add feminism and stir', and one entitled 'The West and the rest? Challenging the emotions research agenda' at events in London.

Dr Eroukhanoff's book, *The Securitisation of Islam: Covert Racism and Affect in the United States Post-9/11*, was published recently, as was *The Bonds of Family: Slavery, Commerce and Culture in the British Atlantic World*, by Dr Katie Donington.



**Dr Katie Donington**

## Grant to help Chinese students

**Keele University:** Dr Cora Xu has been awarded a grant for a project which helps Chinese students educated in Britain to share their untold experiences.

Her team will conduct a two-day digital storytelling workshop with six Chinese students using a creative research method that includes digital technology to explore their understanding of career and employment.

Participants will produce a digital story by combining pictures, video clips, music and recorded voices.

Dr Xu will develop a toolkit from the findings and present an online webinar for postgraduate students looking to use the research method.

She will work with Dr Yang Hu, of Lancaster University, and research students from Keele and Lancaster for the project, funded by an ESRC Collaborative Innovation Grant.

Dr Xu said: "The digital storytelling workshop can enable our research team to work closely with a group of Chinese international students to explore their understanding about career and employment, an area that has often been portrayed in a biased manner within the media."

# Five-year project on how data is remaking Europe concludes

**Goldsmiths:** A five-year project which investigated the work of statisticians responsible for surveys and data in European countries has been completed.

'Peopling Europe: how data make a people' (Arithmus) looked at how new digital technologies and sources of administrative and big data are changing national statistics.

The project, funded by the European Research Council, was led by Professor Evelyn Ruppert and involved a team of post-doctoral and doctoral researchers studying the work of international organisations such as Eurostat and national statistical institutes.

The main project outputs were two journal special issues, three books and various articles in peer-reviewed international journals. Details at: [www.arithmus.eu](http://www.arithmus.eu)

In other Goldsmiths news, Dr Sara Farris' work on Elena Ferrante was used in the programme that accompanies the National Theatre's new production of the Italian author's Neapolitan novel series, *My Brilliant Friend*. Dr Farris has written about the novels for the Viewpoint website.

Goldsmiths researchers have had three books published recently. Professor Dan Neyland's work, *Can Markets Solve Problems?*, was launched at an event introduced by colleague Professor Will Davies, with comments from Professor Noortje Marres.



**Professor Evelyn Ruppert**

The book, co-authored with Dr Véra Ehrenstein, of UCL, and Dr Sveta Milyaeva, University of Bristol, argues that while market-based systems have been used in education, healthcare and carbon emissions, and proved controversial, there is no single entity knowable as 'the market'.

Dr Jennifer Fleetwood co-edited *The Emerald Handbook of Narrative Criminology*.

This collection explores the methodological challenges of analysing offenders' stories and considers the narratives of victims, bystanders and criminal justice professionals:

<https://tinyurl.com/yx8pun3c>

Dr Beckie Coleman's book, *Glitterworlds: The Future Politics of a Ubiquitous Thing*, is published by Goldsmiths Press and examines the ubiquity of glitter, from bodily adornment to activist glitter bombing.

Goldsmiths researchers have been involved in various events. In her role as Distinguished Fellow at the University of New South Wales, Dr Marsha Rosengarten conducted a workshop on 'Time and infection' and gave a public lecture 'Responding to a biomedicalised epidemic: a proposition for activism in the current context of HIV'.

Dr Mariam Motamedi-Fraser gave a workshop on ritualistic relations with non-human animals at an event entitled 'Reassembling democracy: ritual as cultural resource' at the University of California, Berkeley.

Also, the Centre for Urban and Community Research hosted a series of seminars entitled 'Police, race, punishment: new directions in criminology', put together by Dr Fleetwood and visiting professor John Lea. These tackled topics including capital punishment and race, extrajudicial killings in Pakistan, and law and disorder in the global South.

## Staff appointed at Glasgow

**University of Glasgow:** The School of Social and Political Sciences has appointed two new members of staff in its sociology area.

Dr Thees Spreckelsen contributes to research methods for the Q-Step programme. Dr Spreckelsen worked at the universities of Oxford and Kent before moving to Glasgow. His research interests are on EU migration and employment, and quasi-experimental evaluation methods.

Dr Jennika Virhia is appointed as a research assistant in the 'Operationalising one health in Tanzania' project. She will help develop and evaluate community-led solutions to reducing zoonotic disease in pastoral communities in northern Tanzania. Before joining the school, Dr Virhia was based in the School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, where she researched her PhD on zoonotic illness in Tanzania.

In other Glasgow news, a book that details the pleasures and pains of learning a new language in order to carry out ethnographic research has been published.

*Learning and Using Languages in Ethnographic Research* has 15 case-study

accounts of ethnographers' language learning.

The book is edited by Dr Robert Gibb and Dr Julien Danero Iglesias, of the University of Glasgow, and Dr Annabel Tremlett, University of Portsmouth.

A key theme is how researchers' experiences of learning and using other languages in fieldwork contexts relate to wider structures of power, hierarchy and inequality.

More details can be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/rjupl3p>



**Dr Annabel Tremlett**

## Event tackles HE imposterism

Dr Michelle Addison, of **Northumbria University**, and Dr Maddie Breeze and Professor Yvette Taylor, of the **University of Strathclyde**, organised and spoke at an event on 'Imposterism in education: an individual problem or a public feeling'.

The free public event, held at the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle, was part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science and was at capacity with 70 attendees.

It also featured talks from school students from The Girls' Network mentoring scheme, and from Dr Vicky Mountford-Brown, of Newcastle University, and Tracey Herrington of Thrive Teesside, which supports low-income communities.

Samia Singh, a graphic designer and artist based in Punjab, India, designed the event's artwork and gave a video talk.

Dr Addison, Dr Breeze and Professor Taylor are editing the *Palgrave Handbook of Imposter Syndrome in Higher Education*, due for publication in 2021 and featuring over 30 contributions from international authors.



# Minority of LGBTQ+ students feel 'isolated and unwelcome' says report

A new study of the experiences of LGBTQ+ staff and students at the **University of Cambridge** has found that most feel supported and safe, although it also recorded a minority who found their time there "isolating".

Researchers from the Department of Sociology, who conducted the qualitative 'Out at Cambridge' study, say their findings confirm "significant progress" for LGBTQ+ people at the institution.

Researcher and PhD candidate Elisabeth Sandler conducted 55 interviews with LGBTQ+ people: 31 staff members and 24 students from 23 academic disciplines across all six Cambridge schools.

Professor Sarah Franklin, Head of Sociology, who led the research, said: "This research shows that, for many, Cambridge is one of the safest and most empowering communities they have ever experienced.

"However, a small group of LGBTQ+ staff and students experiences Cambridge as unwelcoming and isolating. While much progress has been made, more still needs to be done for a portion of the community – and we found that small changes can make



**Professor Sarah Franklin**

a big difference."

The report highlights "solidarity in numbers" as a major contributor to a sense of comfort. One academic, now retired, described how having a lot of gay students on one of the courses they taught gave them

the confidence to come out: "I knew the students would accept it."

Students and staff members described the positive impact of seeing rainbow flags on university and college buildings. One student spoke of attending a college service in which the chaplain was vocal in welcoming LGBTQ+ people: "[It] really helped me to feel more comfortable to disclose myself."

Some felt it "inappropriate" to disclose their identity as it was "irrelevant" to their scholarly work. One postgraduate was concerned that disclosing themselves might alter colleagues' perceptions: "The department is very competitive...I would not want them to see me as anything other than a professional person."

Others who are already out spoke of the emotional labour involved, including repeatedly outing themselves in different contexts, feeling obliged to explain terminology or being seen as the 'token queer'. "I don't know whether I want to do the work of educating people," explained one student.

## Migration website wins award

A website presenting the untold stories of the migrants who have shaped Britain has won a prestigious Guardian University Award.

Our Migration Story was set up to meet demand from pupils for more diverse histories.

The website is divided into four time periods, from the Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD to Polish migration after 2004. In each section, images, quotations, videos, Parliamentary reports, poems and extracts from novels and newspapers, as well as academic commentary, tell the stories of migrants to Britain.

The site, launched in 2016, supports new GCSEs on migration to Britain developed by the OCR and AQA exam boards and includes questions and classroom activities for teachers to use, as well as booklists and links to other websites and organisations.

It is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and was developed by academics from the universities of Manchester and Cambridge, together with the race equality think tank the Runnymede Trust, and draws on work from over 60 historians.

Teachers and teacher training organisations, including Teach First and the Institute of Education, have helped to refine the site.

Since its launch, it has had more than



**Professor Claire Alexander**

112,000 users – 53% from the UK and 47% from across the world.

Among the core team is Professor Claire Alexander, of the **University of Manchester**. She said: "It gave a real boost to the arguments that we have been making for some time about the importance of rethinking British history and identity, how that is taught in schools and how we imagine Britishness more generally. This is more important now than ever."

The site won the Research Impact category of the Guardian's annual university awards. It is at: [www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk](http://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk)

## Gender violence work gets funding

Dr Manali Desai, of the Sociology Department at Cambridge, is the principal investigator on a new project investigating violence against women in Delhi and Johannesburg.

The ESRC has given £1.76 million from 2020 to 2023 for the project, which will examine the transition from apartheid in South Africa, and from state-led development to neo-liberal economics in urban India.

It will explore how the shifts in security, ownership, rights and dispossession caused by these changes are manifested in gendered violence in the two cities.

The project will have an emphasis on qualitative methodologies to allow researchers to immerse themselves in the daily life of specific neighbourhoods, while also looking at how local and national state agencies and policies tackle violence against women. It will draw broader conclusions about the effects of globalisation and urban transformation on gender violence.

The other researchers on the project are: Professor Nandini Gooptu, University of Oxford; Professor Sanjay Srivastava, Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi; Professor Kammila Naidoo, University of Johannesburg; and Dr Lyn Ossome, Makerere Institute, Uganda.

# Rise in anti-vaccine sentiment includes pet owners, event hears

**Human-Animal studies group:** The rise in anti-vaccine sentiment among the public now includes pet owners, Dr Pru Hobson-West, of the University of Nottingham, told a recent event.

Dr Hobson-West, Associate Professor in the School of Sociology and Social Policy, gave a lecture to the British Veterinary Association Congress at the London Vet Show on reasons why some owners are questioning the merits of vaccination.

In the lecture, entitled 'The rise of the anti-vaxxers: how should vets respond?' Dr Hobson-West responded to a report showing an 18 per cent fall in the number of dogs, cats and rabbits being vaccinated.

In her talk, she said that it was important to look at pet owners' trust in veterinary advice, rather than just provide education about the risk of diseases.

"These people are questioning the success narrative of medicine and the same thing is now happening in companion animal work," she said. "Trust in vets is potentially undermined by perceived conflicts of interest.

"What if vaccine critique is the symptom of something else – a wider disease, a wider problem in society to do with risk, trust and science? The challenge is that we have to be very careful not to avoid misdiagnosing it,



**Dr Pru Hobson-West**

otherwise we will make it worse.

"Social media may now be spreading critical ideas related to human and animal vaccination and is undoubtedly speeding up the sharing of ideas between countries. However, critique of vaccines goes back to the 19th century.

"It is essential that vets appear willing to

discuss owners' concerns. I hope the veterinary profession will not rush to judgement but seek to learn lessons from the detailed sociological research on human vaccination debates."

Dr Hobson-West, a founder member of the Human-Animal Studies Group, is now working on a comparison of childhood and pet vaccine controversies.

In other study group news, Dr Corey Lee Wrenn has had a book published which argues that campaigning organisations can become monopolies that stifle progress towards their aims.

In *Animal Rights in the Age of Nonprofits*, Dr Wrenn, of the University of Kent, finds that modern social movements are dominated by bureaucratically oriented non-profits, which creates tension between activists and those in charge in the organisation.

Her analysis of archival literature and interviews with leaders finds that non-profits can monopolise the movement, disempower competitors and erode democratic access and decision-making. It considers how inequality within social movements can stifle social progress.

Dr Wrenn is Chair of the Animals and Society section of the American Sociological Association and the book is published by the University of Michigan Press.

## Postgraduate convenors join youth group

Two postgraduate convenors, Sophie Atherton and Wendy Gill, have been appointed by the **Youth Studies Group**.

Sophie is a second year PhD sociology student at the University of Manchester whose work focuses on the secondary school experiences of young people who are transgender and non-binary.

"Through my new role I hope to help create and develop a channel of communication for myself and other academics across various areas of sociology on the positioning and experiences of young people in society," she said.

Wendy is a second year PhD student at Durham University who is undertaking a participatory project on the longevity and sustainability of the Guide Association.

"As a youth work practitioner as well as a researcher, it is important that my work is collaborative and includes the voice of young people," she said.

The two were appointed by the group's co-convenors, Dr Benjamin Hanckel, of King's College London, Dr Caitlin Nunn, of Manchester Metropolitan University, and Dr Karenza Moore, of Salford University, after



**Sophie Atherton**

an appeal on its Twitter feed, @BSAYouthSG

The appointments help fulfil one of the group's key aims, to include, support and learn from postgraduate and early career researchers.

The expanding group plans to run further events on the ethical challenges of



**Wendy Gill**

contemporary sociological research with young people, and the relationship between youth studies research and the youth work field. It held a well-attended workshop on youth intersections in September. For more on the group, see: [www.britisoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/youth-study-group](http://www.britisoc.co.uk/groups/study-groups/youth-study-group)



# Event tackles death and relationships

The **Social Aspects of Death, Dying and Bereavement study group** held its annual symposium at the University of Sheffield.

The event, held in December, focused on the theme of death and relationships and brought together a range of speakers studying the topic.

The symposium opened with a plenary talk by Jane Harris and Jimmy Edmonds, of The Good Grief Project, which supports families after the death of a child or young person.

They played clips of their recent film 'A love that never dies', which explores how parents experience the loss of their child. They spoke of the ways in which grief and loss become embedded in everyday experience, raising important questions about the lack of day-to-day dialogue about child bereavement.

The day was organised into three sessions, with eight presentations considering some of the different relationships at the end of life and after death.

Each one highlighted the ways in which the everyday is experienced at the end of life and after loss. The symposium gave frequent opportunities for debate.

The talks tackled subjects including relationships between professionals and patients, familial relationships, pet owners and deceased pets, and the absence of relationships at the end of life.



Jane Harris and Jimmy Edmonds

The event was organised by co-convenors Laura Towers, University of Sheffield, and Dr Julie Ellis, University of Huddersfield, and marked the end of Dr Ellis' time in post. A new co-convenor, Dr Sharon Mallon, of the Open University, was welcomed and Dr Ellis was thanked for her work over the years.

See the group webpage for details of events: <https://tinyurl.com/t237mlq>  
From information supplied by Natalie Richardson, University of Sheffield, [richardson1@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:richardson1@sheffield.ac.uk)

## New convenors for education group

The **Education study group** has two new convenors, Dr Tamsin Bowers-Brown and Dr Jon Rainford. Dr Bowers-Brown is Head of Pedagogic Practice at the University of Derby. Her research examines how the structures of secondary and higher education can serve to perpetuate or mitigate social inequality.

Dr Rainford, of Staffordshire University, has recently completed doctoral research exploring the gaps between policy and practice in relation to widening participation in higher education. They join Professor Nicola Ingram, of Sheffield Hallam, and Dr Michael Ward, of Swansea University.



Dr Tamsin Bowers-Brown

## Food group holds book launch event

The **Food studies group** held a launch event for a new book, *What is Food? Researching a Topic with Many Meanings*.

The collection is edited by Ulla Gustafsson, Dr Rebecca O'Connell, Dr Alizon Draper and Dr Andrea Tonner, and addresses topics such as dietary health, sustainability, food safety

and food poverty. The book, which includes empirical evidence from the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and Taiwan, analyses data reuse and the use of social media as data.

The launch was held at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education, in London. Details at: <https://tinyurl.com/rdg8eu2>

## Group looks at 'making the visual'

The **Visual Sociology study group** held an event entitled 'Making the visual: creating, thinking, distributing'. Twenty-four researchers from across the UK attended the event at the Bluecoat Museum in Liverpool.

The keynote lecture was given by Professor Maggie O'Neil, of University College Cork, entitled 'Walking, thinking, making: ways of seeing and knowing'. This discussed walking as a biographical method for conducting research, using examples from funded projects.

Dr Terence Heng, of the University of Liverpool, took a workshop entitled 'How to write a visual essay', to which participants were encouraged to bring five of their own photographs. Participants considered how they might go about 'writing' a visual essay, by selecting images in a visual dataset and sequencing them in a narrative.

The final workshop was by Professor Helen Lomax, of the University of Huddersfield, entitled 'Letting go: ethics and analytics in visual research', which explored the different ways of analysing visual material and the ethical challenges in its dissemination. Using images brought by participants, the workshop interpreted them in different ways in order to consider what these offer sociological understandings.

Participants highlighted the event on Twitter. Dr Clare Butler, of Newcastle University, tweeted that the keynote was "fantastic" and Dr Gary Bratchford, University of Central Lancashire, said it was a "great day of presentations & workshoping".

The study group are planning to run a longer event this year, which will include shorter presentations and discussions to allow more PhD research projects to be represented.

Members can follow the study group on Twitter @bsavissoc or visit its webpage at <https://tinyurl.com/vd8qkos>



Professor Maggie O'Neil

# SRO journal editors will create new current issues section

A new team of editors of the BSA journal *Sociological Research Online* has begun its three-year term.

The team comprises: from the University of Leeds, Dr Angharad Beckett, Dr Greg Hollin, Dr Kahryn Hughes, Dr Lucie Middlemiss and Dr Katy Wright; and Professor Jason Hughes, University of Leicester, and Dr Anna Tarrant, University of Lincoln.

The new team will promote the journal's accessibility by using open access and by providing lay summaries of papers and alternative accessible formats.

It also plans to explore the use of enhanced technology, multimedia and creative outputs.

The editors will include multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives on pressing contemporary issues, while maintaining SRO's sociological roots.

The journal will continue to respond to emerging issues, including the commissioning of rapid response articles and the development of a current issues section.

The team are keen to increase the involvement of academics at different career stages, particularly early career academics, and will make the journal's reach even more international.

The BSA has thanked the journal's outgoing editorial team for their work over



**Photos, clockwise from top left:**

Dr Katy Wright  
Dr Kahryn Hughes  
Dr Anna Tarrant  
Professor Jason Hughes  
Dr Angharad Beckett  
Dr Greg Hollin  
Dr Lucie Middlemiss

the past four years, which has increased its impact factor from 0.519 to 1.181.

The team are: Dr Steven Roberts, Monash University, Dr Sanna Aaltonen, University of

Eastern Finland, and Dr Charlie Walker, University of Southampton.

The journal can be read at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/sro>

## News site marks first year

BSA Digital Content Officer, Donna Willis, writes: BSA's online news platform, Everyday Society ([es.britsoc.co.uk](http://es.britsoc.co.uk)), was launched at the annual conference in Glasgow last year. Since then, it has published regular editorial pieces covering the latest in sociological research as well as news from the BSA President and the sociological community at large. Have you visited recently?

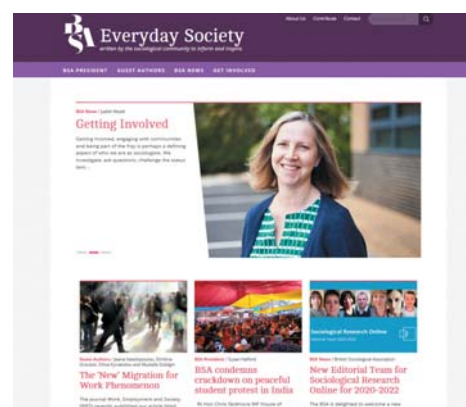
As part of the BSA's mission to represent the intellectual and sociological interests of its members, Everyday Society serves to extend the reach of sociological research – to the public, government bodies and beyond. The sociological landscape is fluid and in a constant state of evolution and, as such, we try to address the ever changing nature of the discipline by encouraging contributors to respond to real-life events from a sociological perspective.

We think it's vitally important that the BSA President has a voice too, which is why you'll find regular posts from Professor Susan Halford engaging with sociologists, the public and government departments.

Everyday Society serves to bring together

anyone with an interest in the discipline through online dialogue, discussion and collaboration.

Would you like to write about your sociological research or forthcoming publication? Are you working on a research project that is particularly relevant to real-life events taking place right now? If the answer is yes to either of these questions, we'd love to hear from you. Contact me at: [donna.willis@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:donna.willis@britsoc.org.uk)



## BSA condemns India crackdown

The BSA has condemned the crackdown by India's police on people protesting against the passing of the Citizen Amendment Act.

The Act gives citizenship for immigrant Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, but it does not do the same for Muslim immigrants, violating the secularism enshrined in India's constitution.

Widespread street protests have led to the arrest of thousands of people and the shutting down of the internet in parts of the country.

Professor Susan Halford, the BSA's President, wrote to Chris Skidmore, the then UK Universities and Science Minister, asking the UK government to call on the Indian government to stop these actions.

"Peaceful protest is a central element of the democratic right to free speech and public debate, and to repress this with violent force is unacceptable. As a professional association representing sociology researchers and students, we are deeply concerned that this crackdown has targeted universities, leaving protestors with serious injuries."



# Will the Irish continue to be the UK's reserve army of labour?

**Continuing our Brexit theme, Professor Louise Ryan looks at the history of Irish immigration to the UK and how Brexit could mean that migrants from Ireland may once again fill low-paid vacancies in British firms**

While many who voted for Brexit may have wished to see an end to all immigration, the new points-based system, announced by Priti Patel in February, is all about attracting the 'right kind' of immigrants. While ending EU freedom of movement and treating "EU and non-EU equally", the system will ensure: "that the UK continues to attract the brightest and the best from around the world".<sup>1</sup>

Many employers have voiced their concerns.<sup>2</sup> Sectors, reliant on migrant workers who would not meet the minimum salary threshold of £25,600, such as social care, food processing and horticulture, are likely to be adversely affected.<sup>3</sup> Given these immigration restrictions and employers' concerns about recruiting workers to fill specific vacancies, it is interesting to consider whether the old 'reserve army of labour' – the Irish – may prove to be an important source of migrant workers in the British economy.

As noted in a recent parliamentary briefing: "Irish nationals have a special status in UK law which is separate to and pre-dates the rights they have as EU citizens."<sup>4</sup> Irish citizens' immigration status is derived from the Common Travel Area agreement "founded upon administrative agreements (in 1922 and 1952)".<sup>5</sup> Because of the international border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland/UK it was considered practical to share immigration policies between the two states. As a result British and Irish citizens can "move freely between, and reside in, these islands" as well as having "the right to work, study and vote in certain elections, as well as to access social welfare benefits and health services".<sup>6</sup>

Hence, the status of Irish citizens needs to be contextualised as part of the enduring legacies of colonialism and capitalism. It was Friedrich Engels who identified the Irish as a "reserve army of labour" for the British economy at the height of the industrial revolution.<sup>7</sup>



**Professor Louise Ryan**

Although Irish migration may be associated with the 19th century, for most of the 20th century the Irish remained the largest migrant group entering Britain. During the 1950s, for example, approximately 50,000 migrants were arriving annually from Ireland.<sup>8</sup> By the 1970s close to one million Irish-born people were living in Britain.<sup>9</sup>

The Irish were recruited to fill specific vacancies. For example, young women across Ireland were recruited directly into nurse-training in British hospitals.<sup>10</sup> But that is not to suggest that Irish migrants were universally welcomed. In the 1930s, for instance, such was the hostility to the "Irish immigration menace"<sup>11</sup> that the British government debated imposing restrictions on the numbers entering the country. However, an Inter-Departmental Committee concluded that Irish workers were necessary to the economy so it would be unwise to restrict their numbers.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, anti-Irish hostility persisted through the 20th century fuelled, in part, by the Northern Irish Troubles in the 1970s-90s.<sup>13</sup>

As noted by Paddy Hillyard,<sup>14</sup> the Irish in Britain were significantly impacted by the Troubles and the related security measures, especially the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974. However, this topic has been almost completely neglected by British sociologists (for a rare exception see the work of Hickman and colleagues at London Metropolitan University). Thus, the Irish have occupied an anomalous position enjoying free movement but facing deep-rooted hostility and resentment.<sup>15</sup>

So, what does all this mean for Britain in an era of points-based immigration? Will the Irish continue to be the reserve army of labour?

The Irish economy is predicted to grow by 3.4% in 2020.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, outward migration persists and Britain remains the primary destination slightly ahead of Australia, Canada and the USA.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Irish people are more highly educated than in the past: 56.2 per cent of adults under the age of 40 possess a third-level qualification.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the extent to which Irish migrants will obligingly fill low paid vacancies cannot be assumed. Nonetheless, without restrictions on their mobility, Irish migrants may offer some flexibility to British employers. However, there may be new pressures on the CTA if UK (non-EU) and Irish (EU) immigration policies begin to diverge. The future of the reserve army of labour remains in the balance.

• Louise Ryan is Professor of Sociology at the University of Sheffield. Her recent publication is: 'The "Irish question": marginalizations at the nexus of sociology of migration and ethnic and racial studies in Britain' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 43 Issue 16, Hickman and Ryan (2020).

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# All around the world

## Network takes a look at sociology beyond our shores

### Odds of police killing are high

About 1 in 1,000 black men and boys in America can expect to be killed by the police, a rate 2.5 times higher than white males, new research shows.

The analysis also showed that Latino males, black females and native American men and women are killed by police at higher rates than their white peers.

The study was led by Dr Frank Edwards, a sociologist at Rutgers University, and published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

"That 1-in-1,000 number struck us as quite high," said Dr Edwards. "That's better odds of being killed by police than you have of winning a lot of scratch-off lottery games."

"We believe these numbers, if anything, are a little bit conservative, maybe a bit too low. But we think that these are the best that can be done in terms of just getting a baseline risk estimate out there."

Living in constant fear of being killed could lead to chronic stress, Dr Edwards said. He referred to 'the talk', a conversation that many African American parents have with their children about how to avoid being harmed when interacting with police.

"They know that young black men are singled out as being inherently suspect," he said. "It can have these toxic effects on communities, in terms of both their physical and mental health."

The findings add hard numbers to a pattern personified by victims of police violence including Eric Garner, Tamir Rice and Freddie Gray, he told the *Los Angeles Times*.

For Latino men and boys, the risk was up to 1.4 times higher than it was for whites. For Native American men, the risk was 1.2 to 1.7 times higher.

Overall, women's risk of being killed by police was roughly 20 times lower than the risk to men, but there were also clear differences by ethnicity and race. For instance, black women were about 1.4 times as likely to be killed by police as white women. Native American women were between 1.1 and 2.1 times as likely to be killed as their white peers.

In all groups, younger adults were most at risk: the chances of being killed by police peaked between the ages of 20 and 35.

### Transgender first for Mumbai

The University of Mumbai's first officially recognised transgender student, Sridevi Londhe, has graduated in sociology and psychology.

Four years ago Sridevi was the first to enrol at the university after it had introduced a "third column for gender," says the *Times of India*.

Today, Sridevi, who changed her name from Santosh, works with an electronics firm during the day and teaches underprivileged children in the evening. But finding work has been a struggle for her. As she says, "Graduation is only one battle won. People are still apprehensive of giving a job to a trans woman."

"When I was living with my family, they were embarrassed by me. They kept me locked in the house. I have a brain. I have every right to live a life, have aspirations. Once I left home, I didn't look back."

"Minorities have thrived on the fringes forever. Now it is upon people like us, who are moving forward, educating ourselves, to drive the message forward that everyone is equal. To my trans sisters I say, it is not your own fight, it is a fight for the sisterhood."



### No monopoly on Kapital

Today's unequal society may often bring to mind the board game Monopoly, where the player who develops an advantage almost always goes on to win everything and bankrupt rivals in the process.

So a new game, Kapital!, in which players rise up in rebellion to overthrow their capitalist oppressor, may be more to the taste of *Network* readers. The fact that it sold out its first run of 10,000 copies within three weeks suggests it has a wider appeal, too.

Kapital! is designed by the sociologists Monique and Michel Pinçon-Charlot, both former directors of Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in France. Monique is also a former election candidate for the Communist Party.

Kapital!, presented in a suitably blood-red box, has as its stated objective: "Attempt to put down the mechanisms of social domination to win the class war!". One player begins with five times the capital of the others, at least until they revolt.

As this is a French board game, players win not just by violent revolution but also by a suitably Bourdieusian accumulation of cultural, social and symbolic capital, and ready cash, reports 20minutes.fr

### Apology for murder given

The Colombian State has apologised to the family of the sociology professor Alfredo Correa de Andréis, who was killed in 2004 as a result of suspected collusion between the security forces and paramilitaries.

Professor de Andréis was arrested by agents of the Department of Security on the incorrect suspicion that he was involved with the guerrilla movement, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

In fact, Professor de Andréis, Rector of the University of Magdalena, was investigating displaced persons in Bolívar and Atlántico.

Shortly after his release from a brief detention he was shot dead on the street by right-wing paramilitaries, acting in collusion with the security forces.

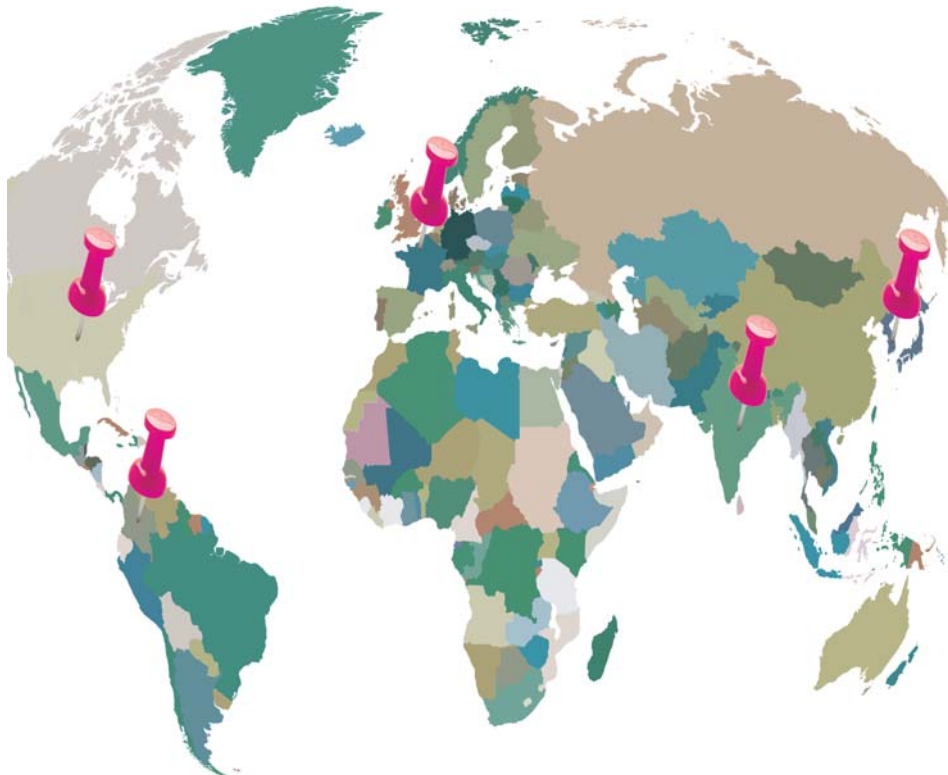
"On behalf of the State, I offer the most sincere apologies and express my deepest condolences for the damage caused to the life, freedom and good name of the teacher and his family," said Camilo Gómez Alzate, Director of the National Agency for Legal Defense of State.

The then Director of the Security Department, Jorge Noguera, has since been sentenced to 25 years in prison for colluding with illegal far-right militias.



# d...

Links to online articles about these topics can be found at  
[www.britsoc.co.uk/members-area/network](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/members-area/network)



## Wallerstein dies, aged 88

**Immanuel Wallerstein, the sociologist of world systems, has died, aged 88.**

He argued that no system lasts forever and that the current one, based on capitalism, is slowly disintegrating.

On his web page he said: "I have indicated in the past that I thought the crucial struggle was a class struggle, using class in a very broadly defined sense. What those who will be alive in the future can do is to struggle with themselves so this change may be a real one."

"I still think that, and therefore I think there is a 50-50 chance that we'll make it to transformatory change, but only 50-50."

Professor Wallerstein earned a bachelor's degree at Columbia in 1951, served in the US army from 1951 to 1953, then received a master's degree at Columbia in 1954 with a thesis on McCarthyism.

In 1971 he moved to McGill University in Montreal, and in 1976 he became Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton. He had been a senior research fellow at Yale University since 2000.

*The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, was published in 1974, the first of four volumes of what he called world-system analysis.

Other books he has published include *After Liberalism* (1995), *The End of the World as We Know It: Social Science for the 21st Century* (1999), *The Decline of American Power* (2003), and *The Uncertainties of Knowledge* (2004).

## Iran frees jailed Professor

**Iran has released the French academic Roland Marchal as part of a prisoner swap agreement.**

Professor Marchal, a sociologist and senior researcher at Sciences Po University, was imprisoned last June after he was charged with "acting against national security".

As part of the agreement, France released an Iranian engineer who was accused of violating US sanctions against Tehran.

The French government has also urged Iran to release a second academic, Professor Marchal's colleague Fariba Adelkhah, who holds both French and Iranian passports.

Iran Revolutionary Guards have arrested dozens of dual nationals in recent years, mostly on espionage charges.

## No fingerprint of suspicion

**A judge has found a University of Nebraska-Lincoln sociology professor not guilty of vandalism after she was accused of taping a sign reading 'Deb loves rapists' to Nebraska Republican senator Deb Fischer's office door.**

The judge declared Patricia Wonch Hill not guilty after a police analyst said she could not say beyond a reasonable doubt that fingerprints lifted from the tape holding the sign were hers.

The acquittal marks the second time this year that Professor Wonch Hill has been cleared in cases in which she was charged with political vandalism.

As *Network* reported in the summer, she was also accused of attaching goggle-eyed stickers to a campaign sign for another Republican candidate, but the city dropped that count in September.

Professor Wonch Hill said she had been targeted by Republican lawmakers because she is politically active and a frequent critic of the party, says AP News.

She has form, however: she was fined \$500 in 2018 after spraying fake blood on the steps of a lobbyist for the National Rifle Association.

## Remarks led to suspension

**A sociology professor at Yonsei University in South Korea has been suspended from teaching after his remarks on the wartime sexual enslavement of Korean women sparked controversy.**

Ryu Seok-chun, said that "Japan is not the direct assailant [of enslaved 'comfort' women], and that the women were involved in "some a sort of prostitution".

To a student who questioned whether he was implying the women went voluntarily into brothels for Japanese soldiers, Ryu answered, "the prostitutes these days also start partly voluntarily – if you are curious, why don't you try?"

Professor Ryu later issued a statement explaining he did not intend to suggest prostitution to the student.

"I was explaining that prostitution has always existed due to poverty, regardless of what period, in all parts of the world," he said. "I asked the question with the intention to suggest the students, who kept on challenging me, do the research themselves."

The university said that a gender equality committee had launched an internal investigation.

**Dennis Smith, who is working on a book about Brexit, gives us some ideas about how sociologists might tackle research into its consequences**

# 'Sociology may become harder to carry out after Brexit'

**'H**ow can sociologists usefully go about theorising Brexit and working out its consequences?" *Network* gave me this challenge when I mentioned I was writing a book about Brexit in its European and global context. I appreciate the invitation. In response, I will try to put something interesting into an already bubbling pot, without prescribing anyone else's recipe or menu.

Let me start with a narrative of self-deception followed by disillusionment. My own. In 1963 I was the UK winner in an international Council of Europe essay competition for school kids. About 15 winners from across Western Europe came to London where we met Edward Heath, Prince Philip and other high-ups. Then we went on a bus tour around the Common Market (through vineyards, down mines, along sea fronts and to Brussels, Strasbourg, Cologne, Bonn, etc). It was fantastic. I, at least, was hooked. Approval of the EU became my steady state.

However, I was unhooked from my illusion about the EU's commitment to benign egalitarianism by the European Commission's harsh, even cruel, response to member states driven towards bankruptcy by the Eurozone crisis in the early 2010s. This imposed forced restructuring of the public sector, undermining welfare provision. These measures actually worsened unemployment and social devastation, especially across southern Europe. The sequel was riot and repression, most dramatically in Greece. This time I made my own European tour including Glasgow, Brussels, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Paris, Prague, Graz, Madrid, Valencia, Milan, Turin and, most memorably, Athens.

Counter-intuitively, the experience of disillusionment may be enriching in moderate doses. It prompts us to rethink, enabling us to become more sensitive and open minded, perhaps arriving at a research orientation somewhere between 'detached engagement' and 'engaged detachment' (See 'Advocacy and Inquiry' in <http://lboro.academia.edu/DennisSmith> – an access point for all references here).

Every day for a couple of years I have been downloading reports of speeches and

manoeuvres inside and outside Westminster, in the UK and abroad. I have also accumulated, at some domestic peril, a vast Brexit-related library (on book avalanches see my inaugural lecture entitled 'What are intellectuals for?'). Mining this wealth to decode Brexit is a complex task. But navigating complexity has always been my thing, moving from individual lives towards global geo-politics and back again.

Delve into my work and you will find books, chapters and papers on, for example: the lives, thoughts and careers of intellectuals and politicians, past and present; the dynamics of not just urban neighbourhoods, but also cities such as Chicago, Birmingham and Sheffield, and national societies across the globe; the transformations of medieval and modern Europe; plus the complexities of imperialism, globalisation and world-formation. Understanding Brexit is the latest iteration leading to questions about populism and democracy, which sadly cannot be done justice here.

I try to hold together the immediate, ground level discourse of makers and shakers and relevant wider patterns of macro-societal change across time and space. My own core methodology for analysing Brexit emerged during my doctoral research, published as *Conflict and Compromise* (2018, 2nd ed). Olive Banks, my supervisor and departmental colleague, was writing *Faces of Feminism* (1981) at that time. We met regularly to discuss everything under the sun. But basically she allowed me to get

on with my own research my own way.

Only now do I realise how closely we converged in our approaches, and no doubt her influence was powerful, though gently applied. We both operated by the following rules of thumb:

- i) try to be a meticulous, thoughtful and imaginative empirical investigator, building up a body of evidence;
- ii) do not get 'captured' by a specific theory, vision or ideology, although these phenomena are themselves relevant objects of investigation and a useful source of multiple potential explanations;
- iii) be sensitive to transformations over time in institutions, people and social relationships, and consider a range of possible partial explanations for those changes (i.e. be 'historical');
- iv) at every societal level explore contrasts between cases that are similar to each other in some respects and differ in others (i.e. be 'comparative');
- v) recognise that this approach poses the challenge of explaining why and how the cases compared converge or diverge, testing potential explanations against both verifying and falsifying instances. It is from this process that theoretical contributions emerge. For example, the typology of alleviative and remedial responses to attempted humiliation in *Civilized Rebels* (2018), 163-71.

The last paragraph draws on my 2018 Phil Salmon Memorial lecture at Wolfson College, Oxford entitled 'Family fortunes and misfortunes: families and power in 19th



century Birmingham and Sheffield'. For the full lecture see *Auto/Biography Yearbook* 2018, 1-20.

What is the larger, turbulent, long term 'flow' of which the political drama of recent years is a small part? I would argue that Brexit, the project of withdrawing from the EU, was shaped within a much longer macro-process. This was the struggle for advantage between the British Empire and continental European powers, especially Germany and France.

Between the 1950s and 2000s the British Empire was clearly dwindling while the EU expanded to cover most of the European mainland. This helps explain the consistently unfavourable treatment of the EU in the British press.

In fact, since 1914 two Brexits, both disputed and divisive, have been prominent on Britain's political agenda. These both posed 'in or out' questions. First, most obviously, is the UK in or out of the 'Europe game'? Both Conservatives and Labour remain deeply divided on this. Second, less obviously, is the UK in or out of the 'empire game'? In 1945 the Labour government said 'out'; in 1956 Suez adventurers said 'in'. In both cases the state of play in 2020 is 'out'. But is the game over in either case? One guide to a possible future is evidence from the past. And here we find some similarities between the two Brexits.

A three-phase sequence can be discerned in the first Brexit: Britain's exit from being a major colonial power, globally deploying its military strength, diplomatic muscle and business clout. The first intense 'moment' was between 1916 and the early 1920s. On the one hand, the British Empire lost most of the Irish mainland, conquered by the Normans a thousand years before; on the other hand, it gained new British 'mandates' in North Africa and the Middle East.

A second lurch of activity occurred between 1926 and 1931. It stretched from the Balfour Declaration of 1926, which ended the UK parliament's right to legislate for the 'white dominions' (Australia, Canada, etc) to the Statute of Westminster in 1931, which enabled those dominions to become self-governing sovereign nations. Bigger news in the dominions, perhaps, than in the UK.

The third phase, more shattering, was between 1939 and 1947. World War Two and its aftermath bankrupted the British and comprehensively undermined the UK's capacity to enforce its rule over its remaining colonies. An early consequence was the defection of the Raj, specifically India, Pakistan and Burma. The inhabitants forced out their enfeebled overlords. Despite the rearguard action over Suez, the 1950s and 1960s saw a long tail of independence ceremonies, especially in Africa, shearing off the last remnants of colonial majesty.

Turning to the other Brexit issue, Britain's



## Dennis Smith

Professor Dennis Smith is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Loughborough University.

He is researching globalisation and world-formation processes, the shaping of cities, the workings of capitalism and democracy, and the development of Europe as a new kind of polity. He plans a book about Brexit as part of this.

His books include *Civilized Rebels. An Inside Story of the West's Retreat from Global Power* (Routledge, 2018), *Globalization: The Hidden Agenda* (Polity 2006), and *Conflict and Compromise: Class Formation in English Society 1830-1914* (Routledge, 1982).

economic and political relationship with the European Union has been a prominent political issue three times since World War Two. The first was in the early 1970s over the UK's highly contested entry to the Common Market. The second in the early 1990s brought controversy over the Maastricht treaty, the Euro currency, EU citizenship and socio-economic coordination across member states.

The third political surge was between 2014 and 2020. In other words, between the European Parliamentary elections of 2014, in which Nigel Farage and the United Kingdom Independence Party won most UK MEPs, and January 2020 when the UK

parliament finally passed the Withdrawal Agreement Bill enacting the UK's exit from the EU at the end of that month.

Common to both sequences are those intermittent phases of political intensification (1916-, 1926-, 1939-, 1945-, 1971-, 1991-, 2014-) when public opinion for a brief while became more alert than normal to the tensions generated by imperial and European affairs. On these occasions the politicians typically used two tactics. One was to frame the times as 'moments' requiring 'action': e.g Boris Johnson urging 'Get Brexit done'. The other was to mobilise emotional responses to shape the choices made by the public, the citizens at large: e.g. Michael Gove telling voters do not listen to experts but trust yourself. In effect, be driven by your fears, resentments and desires.

Apart from the shocking rattle of closing gates, echoing for years, Brexit may intensify and institutionalise the emotion-ridden, short-term, jump-start politics just illustrated. Cross-border sociological research in Europe, even solo and self-financed, may become more difficult to carry out. A further danger is the spread of populism, thriving on growing disrespect for parliament. However, as the ghost of Christmas Yet to Come let Scrooge know, these are the forward-thrown shadows of what may be, not necessarily shadows of what will be.

**‘Cross-border sociological research in Europe, even solo and self-financed, may become more difficult to carry out’**

# The pandemic: taking so

## BSA and higher education

What the worlds of sociology and higher education will look like when the virus finally abates is not something anyone cares to predict at present – more immediate concerns are taking precedence.

But we know of a few changes already, of course: universities have switched to teaching and working online, for instance.

We know also that the REF 2021 is to be postponed until further notice in order to allow universities to divert staff into other areas, including those working in clinical and health-related fields. The original submission deadline on 27 November will no longer apply. At least eight months' notice will be given of the new deadline.

Kim Hackett, REF Director at Research England, said that the next REF would "be as light touch as possible, in view of these challenging times."

Staff on the payroll of the submitting university on 31 July 2020 will still form part of that institution's REF submission, even if they worked at other universities before or after that date. This 'census date' remains unchanged.

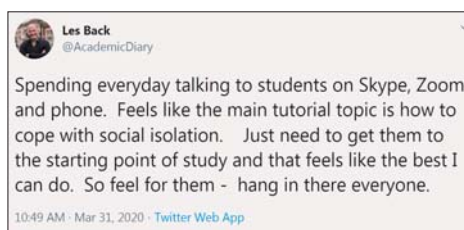
For the BSA, the virus has meant the cancellation of its three main conferences: the annual event at Easter, and the Medsoc and the Work, Employment and Society conferences in September. Various smaller events, including the Sociology of Religion study group conference in July, have also been cancelled.

The cancellation of the main conference, the biggest gathering of sociologists in the UK, was particularly difficult for the BSA, not least because it had already paid for the venue and accommodation.

BSA chair Dr John Bone (pictured below) said in a statement: "It is with a heavy heart



**As the coronavirus rips through the world's population, we take a look at its immediate effects on sociology – the deaths of two academics, the postponement of the 2021 REF, and the blow to the BSA's finances. We also look at how sociologists are responding to the media and starting research on the effects of the virus**



that the BSA must announce the cancellation of our annual conference in Birmingham and our postgraduate conference.

"The BSA fully appreciates what this decision means for delegates hoping to participate in the annual conference and present their research.

"The BSA is obliged to honour the contracts for the event venues and other suppliers, but without registration money, this will unfortunately lead to a significant financial shortfall in our 2020 budget."

Judith Mudd, the BSA's Chief Executive, said that the effects of the virus came at a time when the move to open access publication would hit the association's journal income.

"We now also have greater clarity emerging on the expected impact of the transition of our journals to open access, and this will have a longer term impact that will also need to be carefully managed.

"These unprecedented external impacts are affecting all of our sister organisations to varying degrees. They, like us, are now having to revisit strategies and budgets.

"The BSA must also make savings and explore new ways to generate income to support the work that we do and, not least, our key mission to promote the wider project that is sociology.

"We have been taking steps to do this, focusing on areas where we might make

savings while protecting our key functions.

"For example, we may need to replace more face-to-face meetings with virtual ones and we may not be able to provide as much financial support for as many activities as we would like over the short term. We might also need to move more of our publications to online only."

• The BSA's President, Professor Susan Halford, has said the virus would reveal some basic truths about society.

"As the everyday practices of living in an unprecedented public health crisis evolve, we have the opportunity to learn more about social divisions, social cohesion and social change.

"We will learn the resilience, or otherwise, of existing forms of capitalism, about consumption practices under pressure – panic buying but also perhaps new forms of self-provisioning and collaborative consumption – about working practice, work-life balance and communities both in place and online.

"As universities and colleges move towards online provision, we have the opportunity to see if and how a swift transition towards digital education works.

"It could be the step-change that some have been working towards for a long time, but without additional funding and training the burden on teaching colleagues will be great, even with the best will in the world that is clearly present."





# Sociology's temperature

## Research

One response from sociologists is to research the effects of the virus on society.

Dr Michael Ward (pictured right) has begun a project to collate the records of people's lives during the pandemic.

He has appealed for participants to keep a 'coronadiary' of their experiences over the coming months, in the form of handwritten notebooks, word-processed files, video diaries, blogs, social media posts, artworks and other forms of expression.

This project is based in part on the Mass Observations studies conducted before, during and after the second world war.

"At present, governments are imposing ever stricter conditions upon the behaviours of those within their territories," said Dr Ward, of Swansea University.

"Yet at the same time, new modes of sociality are being created in and through the different social situations constantly coming into existence. People are responding in multiple ways – involving both panic and despair, as well as creatively and imaginatively – to life in this time of pandemic. New interests, new interactions, a different social life is taking shape.

"In these changing and challenging times, I am looking for participants to document and keep a record of life experiences over the coming months."

Those interested should contact him at:



m.r.m.ward@swansea.ac.uk or on 07890 874188.

In Canada, Dr Cary Wu has won \$176,000 to study how levels of trust affect disease prevention and control measures, part of more than \$1.1 million given to York University, as part of rapid research funding into the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus.

Dr Wu's research will bring frontline researchers from China together with experts in trust and public health in Canada and Sweden to explore people's trust in government, health agencies and other people during a time of crisis.

He will look at how their level of trust shapes public responses to the virus, such as compliance with control policies and methods of prevention, and how the virus affects levels of xenophobia.

and not for those living alone or without the internet as guidance. She said the government's response might change over time. She can be heard at 38 minutes at:

[www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000gcmc](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000gcmc)

Sociologists also wrote on online fora, including Discover Society, which ran rapid response articles, including one on how the pandemic has put neo-liberalism under threat and another calling for closure of Europe's refugee camps. The articles can be read at: <https://tinyurl.com/th7kmb>

Social scientists were also advising the government in France on its response to the virus. A scientific council set up at the request of President Emmanuel Macron includes the sociologist Daniel Benamouzig, Associate Professor at Sciences Po, and the anthropologist Laëtitia Atlani-Duault.

They sit with eight colleagues from the hard sciences, including a general practitioner, a resuscitator and five specialists.

## Appreciations

The sociologist **William Helmreich**, 74, died of the coronavirus in March.

Professor Helmreich, of the City College of the City University of New York, was the author of more than a dozen books, including *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* and *What Was I Thinking: The Dumb Things We Do and How to Avoid Them*.

For his book, *The New York Nobody Knows: Walking 6,000 Miles in New York City*, he walked the streets of the city for four years, passing through almost all its blocks.

He was born in Switzerland in 1945 to parents who were Holocaust survivors, and came to New York as an infant.

"Willie was in precisely the wrong profession for the coronavirus – he was a sociologist and he loved interacting with people," Brandeis University Professor Jonathan Sarna told the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. "Social distancing was not in his nature."

Professor Helmreich is survived by his wife and three children.

**Princess Maria Teresa** of Spain, King Felipe's distant cousin, who has died in Paris aged 86, was the first royal to die of the coronavirus.

She obtained a doctorate in Hispanic studies from Paris-Sorbonne University and another in political sociology from the Complutense University of Madrid. She also studied Islam and how it relates to women's rights.

Maria Teresa (pictured below) became a professor at both of her alma maters. She was also a socialist activist and fought for women's rights, earning her the nickname of the 'Red Princess'.



## Media coverage

Sociologists have aired their expertise and their opinions about the coronavirus in the social and news media.

Dr Elisa Pieri, of the University of Manchester, appeared on BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio Manchester, and other stations to talk about her expertise in pandemics.

"I am concerned about the lack of testing of people who report symptoms," she told 5 Live on 17 March.

"It's very important that we follow WHO advice and test and isolate those who have the disease and the contact.

"Instead it seems we are focusing on social distancing, which can provide some temporary results, but we are losing track of who is infected if we stop tracing people who have symptoms who might have the coronavirus."

She said the government's policy seemed designed for nuclear families who can benefit from the support of others in the household,

# Sign of the times: sociologists reveal their hopes and fears about trends in society today

The coronavirus is no doubt much on the minds of sociologists. But what other societal issues are on the horizon? The BSA asked its members last year to name emerging patterns in society, and whether these are challenges or opportunities for sociology. Network looks at some of the responses...

## Sociology

● **Universities were once a core part of an independent, civil society. Now they are thoroughly debased by the forces of marketisation and customerisation ●**

In the survey last year, run before the coronavirus outbreak, sociologists were asked about the important issues that society was facing. Not surprisingly, many looked to their own profession and saw the precariousness of the neo-liberal academic career as a threat, using the survey to express their concerns about sociology's future.

One respondent thought that the dilution of the discipline, in particular its splitting up into sub-disciplines, meant that sociology itself was losing its identity, seeing a "need to strengthen ties and lessen sub-disciplines".

Another writer saw a threat in the "democratisation" of the research process, notably through the development of participatory methods. This brought "greater potential for input into all stages of the research process, but not without risks, including the politicisation of research and the risk of unrealistic expectations of what research might achieve in terms of effecting social change.

"The changing nature of the research relationship opens up access to hard-to-reach groups but can result in researchers being pressed to choose a side in contested situations. The status of sociologists as experts whose impartial judgement can be trusted may be compromised if sociologists are seen as partisan. Funders will take a view on this, including the ESRC with its commitment to 'independence'."

Another respondent worried about the sociology of work. "The gap between the sociology of identity (sex, race, youth, hairstyle etc.) and the sociology of work and organisation is still extremely problematic.

"The sociology of work has moved almost completely into business schools and this trend shows no sign of reversing. Some of the latest generation of scholars in organisation studies (in business schools) call themselves sociologists of work, despite having never formally studied sociology. I predict that the discipline of sociology within sociology



## ● The sociology of work has moved almost completely into business schools and this trend shows no sign of reversing ●

departments will continue to reject the sociology of work and organisation and will stagnate as a result.

“Some business schools have more sociologists in them than do sociology departments! We need to make some attempt at bringing together the two sides of sociology which have been drifting further apart for 30 years.”

The situation was not all gloomy. One respondent noted the “increasing numbers of students taking A-level sociology and GCSE sociology.

“Only four other A-level subjects (biology, chemistry, psychology and geography) had more candidates doing those subjects compared to last year than sociology – an extra 2,875 students (around 8%) and this was in the context of a declining number of A-level students – a 2% decline.”

Another wanted more focus on a sociology of mental health, seeing the “need for a real focus on the social shaping of subjectivity, which takes seriously the bodily and cerebral impact of social adversity and the ways in which this shapes mental distress and can be combated by transforming the social environment and social practices”.

One noted the “increase in prevalence of everyday objects and procedures driven by algorithms, which in turn are designed by mathematicians and engineers, that modify individual and social behaviour,” noting that “sociologists are trailing behind in terms of necessary tools (maths, programming languages, technology in general) in order to deal with modern social phenomena”.

### Higher Education

What threats and opportunities did sociologists answering the survey see in today's higher education?

As we might expect, the precariousness of employment in universities is cited by several: “The dearth of secure, long term academic employment for junior colleagues and deteriorating working conditions (e.g. in relation to pensions) for the profession as a whole poses challenges for the capacity of the profession to sustain itself. The profession relies on voluntary labour for peer review, mentoring, etc. The time it takes to continually apply for new contracts means a



significant portion of junior colleagues can't engage in these forms of collective activity.”

Another writes: “Academic careers become even more precarious and stressful. Since humanities/social science academics have almost nothing to offer the corporate state and are sometimes critical of it, these areas in particular are the subject of successive attacks which effectively complement the slower erosion of academic working conditions and the rise of the university as an ‘anxiety factory’. Afraid for their jobs or afraid of negative feedback, academics retreat from active participation in the public sphere.”

Another wrote about the “Destruction of universities via neo-liberal assault. Universities were once a core part of an independent, civil society. Now they are thoroughly debased by the forces of marketisation and

customerisation. Higher education has become a racket. Managerialism and neoliberalism have ripped apart all classical notions of education. Academics are now precarious labour. The very notions of expertise, knowledge and facts are also drastically under threat.

“Students are being enslaved into a rigged system of debt in return for empty slogans on ‘employability’ rather than learning and questioning society.”

One wanted to see “greater awareness of the internationalisation of higher education and how this relates to decolonisation as the need for global equality remains very much important”.

**Feature continues overleaf**

# ‘We should increase the focus

## Rise of the Right

Other concerns of sociologists included the rise of the Right, in the form of Trump, populism and fascism. One worried about the “normalisation of hard right wing politics and a range of hostile environments – we need to consider how best to defend/support sociology and sociologists in a climate where their legitimacy is under question, and engage with the social threats being created by these political movements”.

Another noted the “Rise of populism and ‘strong-man’ political leadership fed by identity polarisation in many societies across the globe, most clearly in the US, UK, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Brazil. This undermines trust in the state, trust in intergovernmental bodies in a time of rising power for large international companies who take control of technology that invades and controls our everyday lives”.

To counter this, sociologists should “Resist the urge to be political only – increase the focus on solid empirical research and scholarly analysis as the basis for activism”.

Others noted threats in the form of “the rise of far-right populism transforming into fascism” and a “Brexit/Trump/societal move to the right”, while one was concerned more generally with “illiberalism/intolerance” and the “narrowing of political thinking, hardening of social attitudes, lack of tolerance towards others”.

## Neo-liberalism

Perhaps inevitably, neo-liberalism was cited as a worry.

One wrote: “Neoliberalism continues to wreak havoc on society. Inequality, greed and criminality are rampant and there is no democratic accountability for powerful individuals and organisations.

“Senior ‘leaders’ in politics, government, military, lobbying and business are venal and corrupt, using new technologies such as machine learning and digital performance measurement to rig the system, control the media, enrich themselves and suppress democracy.

“Civil society mechanisms such as the rule of law, the role of professions and trade unions are totally outmanoeuvred.”

There was “increased vulnerability, precarity, fear, social apathy and depression” and “people are living without hope”, the respondent wrote.



“We need to consider how best to defend sociologists in a climate where their legitimacy is under question

“Neoliberalism continues to wreak havoc on society. Inequality, greed and criminality are rampant



# s on solid empirical research'

## Big Data

Several responses saw big tech and big data as both a threat and an opportunity.

One noted that "the power of Big Tech" was "probably the most significant contemporary trend in terms of its implications for society and for social scientists".

In the general public it created "anxiety, depression [and] a significant erosion of civil and democrats rights", and "professional sociologists potentially face a threat of displacement by industry-based 'data scientists', whilst there is a significant challenge to sociology in terms of engaging critically with these emerging social trends".

One worried about "'consented surveillance' – in which people allow their personal data to be collected, scraped, mined, used for purposes which they (and even the original data collector) might not have envisaged.

"Unless it can be controlled/regulated the dangers yet to come may not now be envisaged. People seem much less concerned – more valuing the 'discounts' offered by the surveillance to which they have consented."

Another worried about the development of real-time audio translation with accuracy increasing to near-native levels through machine learning, which could cause a "collapse of minority languages, and a potential for serious consequences of mistranslation."



## Climate change

Climate change and environmental destruction also featured in the fears of some.

One wrote that we "can't ignore this huge trend. The need to change our lifestyles and the inequality in effects of climate change affect everything".

Another wrote: "There is scope to augment existing work on climate change within the work of the BSA (such as the Climate Change study group) to include a focus on work, employment and welfare transitions that will be required to deliver real action on low/net-zero carbon targets."



## Other issues

There was a range of other issues too, including fears about an "increase in scope, significance, economic and political penetration of corruption and organised crime".

This meant that the general public would "encounter businesses with links to organised crime on a more frequent basis but will be largely unaware that they are doing so. Organised crime figures increasingly merge with the world of 'legitimate' business. As public services collapse, bribery re-enters the cultural lexicon for many people. Services are increasingly colonised by corporations with corrupt links to politicians. Instances of corporate crime and malfeasance increase".

Images: modified stock imagery

This meant that sociologists "will need a way to capture the significance of organised crime in a way which does not endanger them or their careers".

Another wrote about the development of human polygenomics, leading to "more identification of genetic markers of various traits and abilities.

"The application of genetics to a whole range of traits and behaviours is advancing very rapidly, and is likely to continue to do so. While the results are complex, scientists are getting closer to identifying the contribution of clusters of genes on cognitive ability, physical traits,

risk of certain behaviours etc.

"This is likely to lead to a challenge to the contribution of the social sciences to understanding humanity, as well as an over-interpretation of the contribution of biology in political views and action.

"Sociologists need to better understand the science of genetics in order to continue to defend the contribution of the social without appearing to be the equivalent of climate change deniers in the face of scientific evidence."

Another issue highlighted was the growth of Africa, which was "likely to dominate the coming century demographically – Africa needs to feature more prominently than hitherto in many fields of sociology" ■

## Got a point of view about sociology and the future?



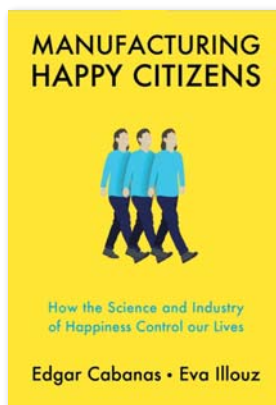
Let us know – write a letter to *Network* or an article. We welcome contributions.

For more details email Tony Trueman at: [tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk)

“Sociologists potentially face a threat of displacement by industry-based data scientists

“The need to change our lifestyles and the inequality in effects of climate change affect everything

“Sociologists need to better understand genetics in order to continue to defend the contribution of the social



## Manufacturing Happy Citizens:

How the Science and Industry of Happiness Control our Lives

Edgar Cabanas and Eva Illouz

Polity Press

2019

260 pages

£14.99 pbk

ISBN: 9781509537891 pbk

This book posits a critical sociological approach towards positive psychology and the science of happiness which, it says, are based on oversimplification, commodification and a culturally biased imposition of happiness, as well as a tool used to control individuals (as citizens and workers).

In Chapter 1, Cabanas and Illouz highlight the politically and ideologically motivated nature of happiness research, and its implications. They emphasise that data collected on happiness in turn influence and shape behavioural patterns at the macro level, and they criticise the measurement of happiness (mainly concerning its quantification) in relation to its methodological ambiguities and lack of cultural relativism.

Chapter 2 focuses on happiness as a prominent means in neo-liberal societies of being a useful and non-ideological instrument to legitimise individualism, which subsequently results in isolation and loneliness in these very societies. This section shows the way that positive psychology reduces the accountability of political and social institutions in citizens' happiness and removes the influence of circumstances from the happiness 'equation' to a large extent. The introduction of happiness to the educational sphere is also discussed as a questionable initiative, particularly due to lack of evidence regarding its impact – especially a causal one.

Chapter 3 explores the labour market through the lens of happiness and how it has been adopted as a mechanism to manage workers' behaviour. The authors point out

that happiness and being positive have been considered as a prerequisite in the job market. The authors show how the interests of corporations and their workers began to be regarded as identical rather than complementary, and how, as the responsibility of being happy was passed on to the workers themselves, collective responsibility and solidarity started to be compromised.

Chapter 4 addresses the commodification of happiness and how it has been acknowledged as the benchmark for a healthy and fulfilled life and has been designed as a generically standardised device for a better self (and citizen). This chapter proposes that happiness became a product that is accompanied by the target of continually achieving more of it, particularly via the prototypical features of a happy individual: emotional self-management, authenticity and flourishing. On a related note, the concomitant rise in the pressure leading young individuals to feel the need to appear constantly happy is also emphasised, for which social networks have developed into a valid outlet.

Chapter 5 examines the illustration of being happy as the 'normal' state of mind in the context of an emotional stratification, and how happiness is identified with goodness and health, hence unhappiness (even not being happy enough) is associated with malfunctioning. The polarisation of positive and negative emotions are marked by underlining the failure of positive psychologists to recognise the idea that negative emotions could be functional as well,



# Book

e.g. as triggers of social movements in times of crises.

While extended scientific counter-evidence against the inputs and outputs of happiness research would have provided further robustness to the arguments, the pertinent account of the shortcomings in happiness research is grasped well in the book. It is worthwhile to state that focusing on (individual) happiness and being concerned with greater social problems are not always mutually exclusive, and matters such as being a medium for increasing individualism or methodological issues linked to quantification are not specific to the science of happiness, while the latter is also not necessarily problematic at all times. However, the book certainly offers a strong and well-delivered criticism of the obsession with happiness as a reductionist, over-generalised and commercialised element that is the only way to have a meaningful life and be a fully functioning, good citizen.

■ DrAslı E. Mert  
Koç University, Turkey

## Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality

Jennifer C. Nash

Duke University Press

2019

184 pages

£69.40 hbk, £17.99 pbk

ISBN: 9781478000433 hbk

Drawing attention to black feminist articulation of the interconnectedness of structures of domination through the term intersectionality, Jennifer C. Nash sets herself two tasks. In tracking the intersectionality debates, firstly she points to the fault lines in black feminist articulations. Secondly, she suggests reanimating the connections between transnationalism and intersectionality on the one hand and affective engagement with the oppressive state on the other, through which black feminism could be reimagined. Although the book claims to be set in the context of US universities, the scope of the book has a larger relevance in terms of black feminist politics.

The narrations of the book revolve around three main arguments. Firstly, while tracking the intellectual history of intersectionality, Nash emphasises that any endeavour of historicising intersectionality needs to be made with caution, since such a move often results in tracing intersectionality's origin to a singular narrative, depicting its emergence as a product of black women's intellectual labour. The failure of such origin stories in tracking multiple genealogies of the term in both black feminist and women of colour feminist traditions makes black feminists the sole claimants of intersectionality. The critic of intersectionality is often depicted by black feminists as an outsider, a threat who could harm the intellectual and political terrain



# Reviews of recent books in social science and sociology

## ends

When the world is creating a space to spread ultra-nationalist ideologies, when the social fabric of communities is becoming ruptured and when there is a deep ecological crisis, it becomes a paramount moral responsibility to understand the motifs of these extremities and to identify solutions. Of all the disciplines in social sciences and hard sciences that can understand and interpret such things, the onus is more on sociology.

As *Discovering Sociology* points out, the historical genesis of the discipline originated in an attempt to understand the chaos that emerged in the aftermath of the French revolution. In 1838, Auguste Comte, known as the father of sociology, first used the term sociology and defined it as the scientific study of social behaviour (p.29).

It was first used in a Weberian sense (verteshen) to analyse the events that unfolded in the 19th and 20th centuries across the world. The discipline also evolved from being protectionist to the existing social order to questioning the very order itself and, importantly, cultivating

that the black feminists have laboured to carve out. In a defensive move, black feminists have advocated a politics of reading which propagates care as a method of reading, a political commitment, a display of respect towards intersectionality as well as a strategy of guarding intersectionality from misuse. However, in Nash's narration, care as a strategy of black feminists is not only limited to the method of reading practice but, in her view, black feminists writings of late have also become emphatically preoccupied with advocacy for self-care as an agenda for survival.

Secondly, in historicising the "institutional life" of intersectionality, Nash first tracks black feminism's relationship to women's studies. She argues that in women's studies,

### Discovering Sociology

Mark McCormack, Eric Anderson,  
Kimberly Jamie, Matthew David

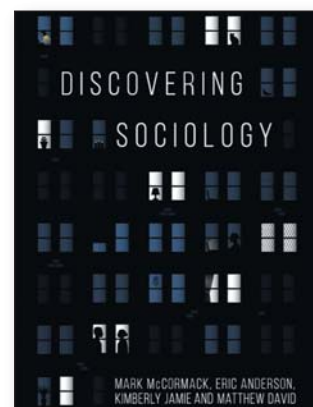
Red Globe Press

2018

328 pages

£25.99 pbk

ISBN: 9781137609724 pbk



sociological thinking (Zygmunt Bauman) and creating a space to imagine socio-logically (C.W. Mills).

*Discovering Sociology* has 10 chapters and is divided into two parts; the first provides the history of the discipline, while the second part engages with issues such as gender, race, class, migration, religion, crime and many others.

The book also has separate chapters on ethics and personal life. The personal was, for a long time, considered under the heading of micro sociological theory or understood from an 'agency' point of view, but having a chapter under the title 'personal' connects well with the world outside academia.

In the chapter on theory, the authors dissect theory and define it as a "set of connected hypotheses" (p.49) and demonstrate the importance and relevance of types of theories such as the philosophical, grand theory (Parsons) and middle range theory (the MRT-Robert K Merton and micro theory-interpretative tradition). In doing so, they incorporate relevant contemporary examples.

If the purpose of sociology is to understand the actions of an actor, the authors say that they are determined by two factors: actors' own thinking (agency) and the structures (family, education, health services, religion) of their world.

The sociological theories are broadly grouped into three: functionalism, conflict theories and interactionism. The tables

given in each chapter are enriching and there are very useful summaries.

While there are many introductory books on sociology by Osborne and Nimkoff, Ritzer, Inkels, Max Weber, and the classic textbook by Anthony Giddens, one must ask what a new work can add to the already existing material.

The main attraction of the book is the inclusion of margin notes, box items, vox pops and also 'pause for reflection' sections. The book establishes connections between broad social structures to personal life, from social divisions to future societies (p. xvi) and importantly established connections between theory, method and substance, invoking the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1988) statement following Kant that "theory without empirical research is empty, empirical research without theory is empty".

As a suggestion, the book could have incorporated themes such as region, cinema, caste and health, but otherwise the book has all the necessary capacity to be for undergraduate students. In its totality, the book 'invokes cognitive dissonance in the process', i.e. that feeling of recognising that an intellectual argument is right, but emotionally feeling it to be wrong, which is necessary at any moment of life, more importantly in contemporary times.

■ **Shilpa Krishna**  
University of Hyderabad, India

intersectionality and transnationalism are posed as mutually exclusive categories even though in both of the analytics racially marked embodied subjects become the signs of feminist promise of inclusivity. Nash suggests that in a move of reimagining the black feminist theoretical and political project, black feminists could surrender its territorial hold to intersectionality and permit the analytic to move towards unleashing connections between black feminism and women of colour feminism.

Thirdly, Nash argues that at the university level, intersectionality has turned into a diversity project. In the name of intersectionality, the universities tend to insert diversity into existing structures in

apolitical ways, which in turn dilutes the transformative and anti-subordination spirit of intersectionality. The continued statist subordination of the black population has led black feminists to view the state as anti-black. In this context Nash emphasises the strategic move of black feminist affective engagement with the state, which would give a chance to black women to demand that the state feel differently towards them. In this direction Nash proposes letting go as a way forward and love as a political practice for black feminists through which university space in particular and the state in general could be reformed and reimagined.

■ **Dr Madhumita Biswal**  
Central University of Gujarat, India

## Abby Day

**Abby Day is Professor of Race, Faith and Culture in the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths. Her books and articles include *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World* (OUP, 2013) and *The Religious Lives of Older Laywomen: the Last Active Anglican Generation* (OUP, 2017). She is a former Chair of the BSA Sociology of Religion study group.**



**Your first choice is *The Making of a Moonie. Choice or Brainwashing?*, by Eileen Barker – why did you choose that?**

I always wonder why people assume that a scholar studying religion must be religious. I also study and teach about criminology, but I don't think people would assume I'm a criminal. (Spoiler alert! I'm neither). The main problem here is the academy's assumption that religion left the building sometime around the Enlightenment and yet, as most people in the world are religious and religion is an important social force (consider why Evangelical Christians elected Donald Trump or why the Shah of Iran was deposed by a theocracy, or why the BSA has had a sociology of religion study group since the 1970s) the sociology of religion should be a standard offer in any self-respecting sociology department. The books I choose here reflect that sociological imagination.

A dominant narrative about people who convert to new and often closed religious movements was that they were brainwashed and vulnerable. Worried parents would sometimes hire professional 'cult-busters' to kidnap their young, adult children and bring them back home for 'de-programming'. No one seemed to ask whether those young people had wilfully chosen their new groups or whether their new spiritual homes were in many ways similar to traditional religious organisations – apart from LSE sociologist Eileen Barker, who changed that narrative in 1984 and, with her charity Inform, continues to do so.

Eileen Barker moved the popular, yet derogatory, term of 'cults' to one reflecting nuance and difference, 'New religious movements', through her study of the Unification church founded by South Korean Sun Myung Moon. Through detailed observations, interviews, questionnaires and wider data analysis, she found that characteristics like age, class or gender didn't help explain why people joined the movement. Rather, the 'Moonies' shared complex experiences, attitudes and desires, came mainly from conventionally religious families, held the same values as their religious upbringing, and often simply

wanted to return to and recreate a sense of a warm family. Moonies, it transpired, were pretty much like anyone else.

**What made you choose your next selection – *Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics*, by Jay Demerath?**

University of Massachusetts (Amherst) sociologist Jay Demerath is one of the foremost sociologists of religion whose arguments and theories have persuaded scholars to take religion seriously as a contemporary social force. Demerath criss-crossed the world over a decade, visiting 14 countries to explore religions in their national and international contexts. His questions focused on the ways in which religious actors experience their religions and often collaborate and compete with secular interests.

He notes that such interaction had been largely ignored by scholars in the 1970s, who thought religions, and those who studied them, were anachronistic and irrelevant. But then, in the 1970s and 80s, came the rise of the hard-right religious conservatism, the visits and blessings of a Pope to Latin America and Poland, with their strong, anti-government political agendas, and crises in the Middle East fuelled by religious sentiments and identities.

Demerath shows how the interests of politicians and religious leaders often merge, distinguishing between religious actors becoming involved in politics, and such actors becoming involved in the state. The first, particularly for religions committed to changing people's behaviour, may be inevitable, while the second, usually related to power, is contentious, both for religious and secular publics.

He was also adamant about the need for complex methods for a complex subject, arguing that (2001, 221): "Mark Twain once observed that 'faith is believing what you know ain't so'. The very phrase 'religious belief' is subject to misinterpretation because it is so often confused with cognitive certainty as opposed to cultural identity. What we actually believe – and with what level of intensity – is fraught with ambiguity and

inconsistency, depending upon the social circumstances. It is hardly surprising that questionnaire responses are manipulatable."

His case studies are sharp and layered with the sort of insights and observations that will keep my imagination alive and running.

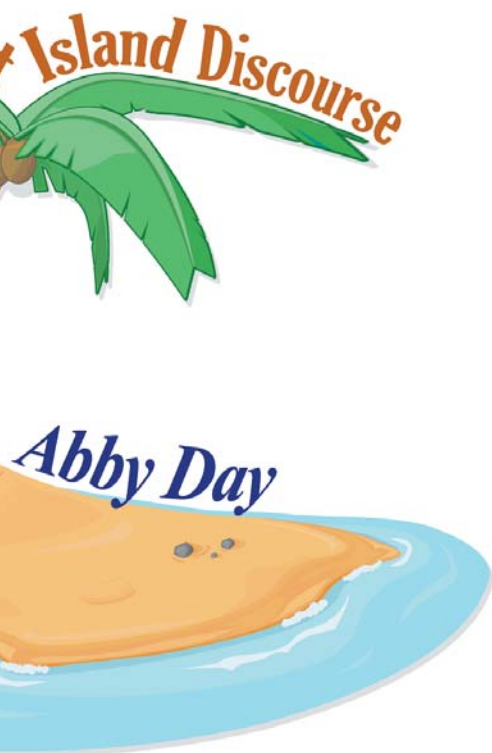
**Why did you select for your third book, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead?**

A cliché perhaps, but there was one sociological book that changed my life: *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*. The change occurred for two reasons. The first was personal and professional: as a Lancaster University PhD student I was generously allowed to participate in small ways during its research stage. This was my first taste of empirical research and it was thrilling to find my way through church archives, county records offices and libraries of census data, like a detective following clues, only to realise that much of what is presented as 'clean' data is, in fact, often messy and full of human errors.

Second, the theories the authors developed were sound and field-changing. Using a single site as a base (Kendal, in the Lake District) the research team during two years conducted surveys, interviews, observations and archival research to find and map 'contemporary patterns of the sacred' – the often hidden, nuanced stories within and amongst religious and spiritual lives. The researchers categorised the population they studied into two broad areas they described as the 'congregational domain' composed of churches, chapels and other Christian institutions in the predominantly white town, and the 'holistic milieu', a diverse and often hard-to-find population whose activities had, in their own terms, a spiritual dimension –







such as groups meeting in private homes, circle dancers, yoga and Tai Chi groups, and complementary therapy practitioners.

They found that the two types were distinct, with little or no overlap. Those in the congregational domain believed in a higher, external power, such as God, while those in the holistic milieu focused on their own bodies and emotions, or 'subjective lives'. The book's title was arresting and misinterpreted by some. It was not the authors' thesis that religion would die out and be replaced by spirituality, but rather that some kinds of religion are losing their appeal and credibility as some forms of spirituality gain the same. They found that 7.9% of the Kendal population belonged to the congregational domain, while 1.6% were in the holistic milieu. They argued that if the current rate of respective decline and growth continued in Kendal, within 40 years the holistic milieu would outgrow the congregational domain. The text stands as a fine example of the generalisability of a single case study with theories and methods that continue to inform contemporary research.

Linda Woodhead went on to lead the largest research programme ever conducted into contemporary religion, the AHRC-ESRC Religion and Society programme, which has revitalised and transformed the study of religion in the UK and internationally.

#### **Your fourth choice is *Religion in Britain since 1945*, by Grace Davie – why this book?**

Another path-breaking work that formed my career was Exeter University sociologist Grace Davie's 'believing without belonging' thesis, first written as a journal paper and then as a book (1994). My first book, based on my doctoral research, was somewhat unoriginally titled to present a variation on her theme, *Believing in Belonging* (Day 2011) as I wrote in conversation with, and sometimes against, her theories. For the nearly three decades following the publication of her book, I and others working in the field knew it was her thesis for which we would need to account, whether we agreed (and most did) with it or not.

Davie drew mainly on surveys to create her compelling argument that the majority of British people believe in God, hell, sin and heaven but just do not attend church regularly. Her book was written to try to explain that and to reveal more about a taken-for-granted phenomena which is rarely studied or otherwise explored – the large, and apparently unremarkable, middle ground in British religious affiliation.

She wrote that there were several good but small studies of religion in Britain, but "the picture in the middle remains alarmingly blurred", with very little known about "the beliefs of ordinary British people in everyday life" (Davie 1994, 6). Her work anticipated and influenced future research in the sociology of religion by people such as Nancy Ammerman who developed the concept of 'everyday religion' by researching the "nonexperts, the people who do not make a living being religious or thinking and writing about religious issues" (Ammerman 2007, 5) and Meredith McGuire's (2008) exploration of 'lived religion'.

While Grace Davie made more than a dozen strong and deftly argued claims, several became central to my future study and thinking: the majority of British people persist in believing in God but "see no need to participate with even minimal regularity in their religious institutions" (ibid., 2). It is more accurate to describe them as 'unchurched' rather than secular (ibid., 12, 13); the churches attract an audience which is disproportionately elderly, female and conservative (ibid., 2).

Fortunately for me, she left the term 'belief' relatively unexplained, something I was to pick up and, often with the collaboration of anthropologist Simon Coleman and sociologist Gordon Lynch, research its meaning and practice over the next decade.

#### **Your last book is *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, by Saba Mahmood – what led you to this?**

Opinions about conservative religious women often rest on ideas that they are oppressed, mistaken or suffer from a false consciousness. The late Saba Mahmood's study of Egyptian women's involvement in a conservative, strict form of Islam known as the 'mosque' or 'piety' movement challenged such narrow assumptions.

A Pakistani-born American woman who introduces herself as someone strongly influenced by Critical Marxism and feminist theory, she suggests that many feminists believe that "women Islamist supporters are pawns in a grand patriarchal plan" (Mahmood 2005, 1). She asks why women across the Muslim world actively support a movement that seems inimical to their "own interests and agendas", especially at a historical moment when these women appear to have more emancipatory possibilities available to them (Mahmood 2005, 2). The concept of 'duty' describes one of the goals of the mosque movement according to principles of 'da'wa', meaning a call or summons. Mahmood's analysis of the movement moves beyond the role of women and contested versions of feminism to concerns about the construction of personhood, negotiations between politics and piety, and the permeable borders between public and private.

One reason I would want this book with me is for the fine detailed descriptions and voices that create a vivid, moving text, folded into a deeply engaging, thoughtful, theoretical work.

Another is that re-reading it would take me back to stories and places I remember from my own research and others', where the messy work of good research into religion is carried out, revealing surprising phenomena – atheists who pray, religious people who don't believe in God, non-religious people who do, feminists who adopt conservative practices, Sunday Christians, Evangelicals for Trump, Friday Muslims, Jedi Knights and Cultural Jews, to name a few. Some may describe such findings as puzzling or contradictory; I prefer to think they are patterns and processes we have not yet discerned. Further research is necessary.

#### **And for your luxury?**

I'd say a photo album of my family, because they're what I'd miss most.

*For references given in this article, please see: [www.britisoc.co.uk/members-area/network](http://www.britisoc.co.uk/members-area/network)*

### **Professor Day's choices:**

- 1. *The Making of a Moonie, Choice or Brainwashing?*, by Eileen Barker (1984) Blackwell**
- 2. *Crossing The Gods: World Religions And Worldly Politics*, by Jay Demerath (2001) Rutgers University Press**
- 3. *The Spiritual Revolution*, by Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead main authors (2005) Blackwell**
- 4. *Religion in Britain since 1945*, by Grace Davie (1994) Blackwell**
- 5. *The Politics of Piety*, by Saba Mahmood (2005) Princeton University Press**

# Sociology degree brings larger financial benefits for women

A sociology degree makes people better off financially over the course of their lifetime, new research shows.

A study from the Institute for Fiscal Studies says that women with sociology degrees will gain around £66,000 over their lifetime and men £34,000. This takes into account their net earnings and any costs they incur for tuition and maintenance.

This compares with an average net lifetime return of an undergraduate degree of £130,000 for men and £100,000 for women, a gain of about 20 per cent, and with a gain of around £500,000 on average for the 10 per cent of graduates with the highest returns, mainly those in economics, law and medicine.

The £66,000 figure for the lifetime net gain for women taking sociology is higher than the equivalent for psychology (£55,000) but lower than for politics (£157,000). For men, the sociology figure of £34,000 is higher than that for psychology (£27,000) but lower than politics (£174,000).

The report also found that overall, one in five graduates in England would have been better off financially had they not gone to university. This figure was less than 10% for women sociology graduates, but 40% for men.

Men generally gain larger returns if they attended a Russell Group university, but women see little difference in average returns across institution types.

The study drew on the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset and controlled for students' prior attainment and family background when comparing those who undertook undergraduate degrees with those who did not.

Previous IFS research studied the impact of undergraduate degrees on earnings at age 29, but the new research uses additional LEO data on earlier cohorts to estimate the impact of earnings over an individual's whole working life.

The estimates are based on the earnings of individuals who were born in the mid-

1980s and went to university in the mid-2000s, with the analysis simulating earnings and employment trajectories to retirement age.

The report, 'The impact of undergraduate degrees on lifetime earnings', was commissioned by the Department for Education.

It also estimated the benefit of degrees to the taxpayer, taking into account the government cost of providing student loans and changes in tax payments.

It found that the expected gain to the exchequer of an individual enrolling in an undergraduate course is about £110,000 per student for men and £30,000 per student for women – but these rewards are driven mainly by the highest-earning graduates.

The government makes a loss on financing the degrees of around 40 per cent of male graduates and half of female graduates, according to the study.

The report can be read at: <https://tinyurl.com/vn8r8fe>



## Meet the PhD: Sarah Handyside

'Whilst you have to really want to do it in order to cope with the challenges, I also think it is very important to have a life outside of your PhD'

My thesis is a qualitative project exploring how teenagers use and experience social media, specifically Snapchat and Instagram, and how those experiences are gendered, and gendering. I'm particularly interested in the temporal and spatial aspects of social media: how they make the past present, and how they make permanent content which was originally intended to be ephemeral.

My fieldwork was based in youth clubs – three inner city and one rural. I ran semi-structured group interviews with around 40 teenagers and also took observational field notes from watching how young people used the spaces and engaged with their phones.

I think social media are integral to understanding multiple aspects of modern life, from interpersonal relationships to political participation. Given the influence of social media on modern politics and activism, I think research in these areas is vital.

I have always been interested in digital culture and emerging technologies and how they are affecting everyday life – I began my career in communications for technology firms. I also love working with teenagers and, as a passionate feminist, am very interested in issues related to gender. My research project brings together all these areas.

I've found the process pleasantly manageable so far. My supervisors are fantastic and there is also a lovely community of social science PhDs at the University of Warwick, who have really helped. Obviously it's a marathon rather than a sprint, and there have been times when the long-term nature of it feels overwhelming. But broadly speaking it's been a great experience.

The best part is having the luxury of spending your time exploring something you are genuinely interested in and which is indelibly linked to the 'real world'. There's a great deal of freedom and flexibility, which is wonderful.

The hardest part has been organising my fieldwork. It took far longer and was a much more convoluted process than I imagined. But there have been personal challenges as well – a breakup and a family illness – which made maintaining focus very difficult at times. A PhD really bleeds into your personal life and vice versa, and this can be very challenging.

Whilst you have to really, really want to do it in order to cope with the challenges, I also think it is very important to have a life outside of your PhD, and to not see it as something larger than it is. Treat it as a job – albeit an unusual one. I make time for reading – subjects and stories that have nothing to do with my PhD. I love going for long walks around London and having wine-fuelled discussions with my partner – again, on subjects that have nothing to do with my PhD.

**Centre for the Study of Women and Gender, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, 2016-2020**



# Events update, April 2020

Because of the coronavirus a number of BSA events have been cancelled. To see the current situation, please visit the BSA's website: [www.britsoc.co.uk](http://www.britsoc.co.uk)

## Would you like to contribute to Network?

We are looking for letters, opinions pieces and news articles from sociologists

For more information please contact Tony Trueman at: [tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk) or on 07964 023392, or BSA Chief Executive Judith Mudd at: [judith.mudd@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:judith.mudd@britsoc.org.uk)

Copy deadlines are around two months before publication (please check with Tony or Judith).

We try to print all material received, but pressure of space may lead to articles being edited and publication being delayed; some articles may be carried online only.

Books for review can be seen at: <http://bit.ly/2gM3tDt>



# NETWORK

Spring 2020

“Since humanities and social science academics have almost nothing to offer the corporate state and are sometimes critical of it, these areas in particular are the subject of successive attacks”

“It is upon people like us, who are moving forward and educating ourselves, to drive the message forward that everyone is equal. To my trans sisters I say, it is not your own fight, it is a fight for the sisterhood”

“The best part of a PhD is having the luxury of spending your time exploring something you are genuinely interested in, and which is indelibly linked to the ‘real world’”

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