IN THIS ISSUE

Unintended consequences (continued) ................................................................. 1
Letter from the editors ......................................................................................... 3
President’s letter .................................................................................................. 5
Good Migrations ................................................................................................... 6
‘Patrick White Australia Policy’ to pan-Aboriginal Apartheid? An Australian sociology of literature .......................................................................................................................... 8
Introduction: The growing contribution of the sociology of sport .................. 11
Expanding the influence of the sociology of sport ............................................. 12
Researching Sport for Development ................................................................. 14
A game for everyone? Exploring youth sport in a diverse society ....................... 16
Researching Female Sport Fans ........................................................................... 18
Keeping Score: The sociology of sport and media ............................................. 20
Transcultural sociology in action: reflections on returning to Singapore ........... 22
Perspectives on marital dissolution: Divorce biographies in Singapore ............. 24
TASA Disability Support Symposium ................................................................. 26
Postgraduate report .............................................................................................. 28
Postgraduate completions ................................................................................... 29
Queer Kinship Conference, Zalesi, Poland .......................................................... 30
Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities ......................... 31
Nexus Editorial Team ............................................................................................ 32-33

Unintended consequences
(continued from Nexus 26:3)

RAEWYN CONNELL

Teamwork

In the later 1970s I joined with Dean Ashenden, Sandra Kessler and Gary Dowsett in a research project about schools. There had been a huge expansion of high schools in Australia for thirty years, but with little impact on class inequalities. We thought looking at schools and families together might explain why. So we interviewed ruling-class and working-class students aged 14 and 15, their parents (usually at their homes), their teachers, and their principals – 424 in all. The reel-to-reel tape recordings (no digital recorders then!) took us years to analyse, working case by case.

I still remember the 40 minutes I spent in a leather chair, listening to the principal of an elite private school giving me a sophisticated sociology of the corporate hierarchy, housing preferences, cultural divisions, kinship networks and factions of an Australian city’s ruling class. But I also remember talks with working-class mothers in fibro cottages on the same city’s outskirts. They knew just as much, though about different things.

This project lasted about six years and turned into two books, more than a dozen articles, an acted-documentary video, endless conference presentations, and many workshops with teachers and parents. On frequent visits to Sandra’s weekender in the Blue Mountains, we drafted case studies and papers, cooked collective meals, tramped in the bush, watched sunsets lighting the cliffs, dodged the funnel-web spiders, and rewrote each others’ drafts. It was the most intense research collaboration I have known, and the four of us remain friends more than 30 years after the project.

What made the collective work? Hard to analyse, but I can name two things. One was politics: our shared belief that inequality in education really mattered, and that what we wrote could affect it. We had an audience who could use the knowledge – school teachers. That was reason to pour energy into the project, and to make the analysis as sharp and clear as possible.

The other was old-fashioned give-and-take. We had our disagreements of course, some serious, but we had respect for each other that allowed for argument without destructiveness. And of course we were all exceptionally nice people!

Still there were difficult times. The grant money ran out and Gary and Sandra, the research assistants, worked on the project on dribs and drabs of other money before it was finished. Precarious labour existed then, too.

Continued on p. 4
Two scholars. One remarkable book.

Victor Minichiello, PhD
Dr. Minichiello is Adjunct Professor in the School of Public Health & Human Biosciences at La Trobe University, Melbourne (Australia), and Section Editor of BMC Public Health. An internationally recognized sexual health and public health researcher, he has published over 170 books and highly cited journal articles. He has written and published extensively on the male sex industry.

John Scott, PhD
Dr. Scott is Professor, Faculty of Law, School of Justice, Queensland University of Technology (Australia), and an internationally recognized sexual health and public health researcher.

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Letter from the editors
SUE MALTA AND CHRISTOPHER BAKER

At the beginning of July the Australian community as a whole was shocked by the murder of Phil Walsh, coach of the AFL football team, the Adelaide Crows. In a society in which sport and its high profile sporting achievers are afforded such centrality, the death of Phil Walsh has given rise to reflections on a wide range of issues including mortality and the role of sport in many of lives.

In keeping with our editorial vision to highlight the diversity of sociological endeavour in Australia, for this edition of Nexus we had approached a number of TASA members to contribute to this edition under the theme of ‘Sport and Sociology’. The articles were already completed or considerably progressed by the end of June, so no individual article directly addresses the death of Phil Walsh, however Tim Majoribanks has indeed referenced Phil’s death and its impact in his overview of the five articles contributed:

- Ruth Jeans and Ramon Spiiaj - youth and sport
- Tim Majoribanks - sociology and sport
- David Rowe - sport and media
- Emma Sherry - sport and development
- Kim Toffoletti - female fans and sport.

We trust you will enjoy reading this diverse, informative and entertaining set of contributions as much as we have.

To open this issue however, it is our great pleasure to present the second of the two-part series Raewyn Connell generously agreed to contribute to Nexus recalling and reflecting upon her career as a sociologist. Just as in the first instalment of ‘Unintended Consequences’ (Issue 26:3), in this second piece Raewyn demonstrates that her characteristic generosity in sharing her experience and wisdom remains undiminished. Eileen Clark has also provided a contribution that is simultaneously insightful and entertaining, reflecting on her own sociological journey.

This issue again showcases a selection of contributions that reflect the variety and energy of Australian sociologists and sociological scholarship. The issue includes an analytical piece by Rock Chugg who brings a critical perspective to his analysis of Pan-Aboriginal Apartheid; a report by Luke Gahan on the recent Queer Relationships conference held in Zalesi, Poland; a report by the co-convenors of the Critical Disability Studies Thematic Group (Louisa Smith, Karen Soldatic and Gerard Goggin) on the recent TASA Disability Support Symposium; and a report by the co-convenors of the Sociology of Emotions and Affect Thematic Group on the recent workshop, Emotions at work: Identity, self and society.

Sharon Quah provides us with insights into sociological endeavour beyond our own shores as she reflects on her experience as an overseas trained sociologist returning to live and to work in Singapore. We also take the opportunity to present an overview of one piece of Sharon’s research by way of her newly published book on divorce biographies in Singapore.

In her postgraduate report Christina Malatzky highlights the offerings of Postgraduate Day to be held on the first day of the 2015 TASA Conference in Cairns this November. Susan Egan’s postgraduate completion is also included. In an act of nimbleness for which the Nexus production team is to be congratulated, the content of our fifth edition as editors was finalised following the July TASA Executive meeting and this has enabled us to include the very latest of news in the President’s Letter by Katie Hughes.

Some of you will have seen the call for expressions of interest in the editorship of Nexus for 2016 and 2017. None were received. We have agreed, with pleasure, to continue our editorship to cover 2016. During next year expressions of interest will again be called. It is a terrific opportunity, especially for those relatively new to TASA, to gain exposure to the diversity of Australian sociological scholarship,
and to liaise with some of the leading writers and thinkers in the discipline, both in Australia and beyond, as well as with young and emerging sociologists. The role is made easier and all the more enjoyable by the quality of the Nexus production team (Eileen Clark, Sally Daly, and Roger Wilkinson). We have included in this issue contributions by Eileen and by Sally on their respective roles and hope these provide you with just a glimpse into how Eileen and Sally contribute their skills, dedication and good will! If you might be interested and have any queries regarding the editorial role please do contact either or both of us:
Christopher chbaker@swin.edu.au or Sue s.malta@nari.unimelb.edu.au
The deadline for contributions to the pre-conference issue of Nexus for this year is 15 October 2015. Contributions can be sent to the editors.

Unintended Consequences, by Raewyn Connell, from p.1

Going global

The main report from that project, Making the Difference, to our surprise and pleasure became an academic best seller in Australia in the early 1980s. It was used in sociology and also as a textbook in teacher education.

I shouldn't have been surprised; I did think it was better than anything else in the sociology of education at the time. We used a distinctive empirical method, we said something new about curriculum, we had depth on family/school interactions, we generated a strategy for teachers, and we offered a serious alternative to the reproductionist theory of class (Bernstein, Althusser, the Birmingham school and Bourdieu) that dominated the field. Sadly, the book didn't cause the international revolution I hoped for.

Parts of it did become known in the metropole, especially about gender (the concepts of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'gender regime' came out of this project). But apart from Brazil, where our work was translated and used in the post-dictatorship school reform, most of the argument had little impact internationally.

Perhaps it wasn't as brilliant as I thought. Perhaps the timing was wrong: Foucault was the rising sun just then. But I suspected a geopolitical reason too. I had assumed that because the book was published by the Australian branch of Allen & Unwin, the United Kingdom parent company would be pleased to distribute it globally. Fat chance! I learnt later that the parent company had ordered 50 copies from the Australian printing – for the rest of the world.

A lesson, perhaps, in what was assumed about Australian research, and definitely a lesson about the global economy of knowledge. From then on, I tried to get my books published in the metropole at the same time as they were published at home. This started with Gender and Power. The difference in international visibility was immediate.

To see a world in a grain of sand

I'm now going to tell something I've never written down, perhaps not even told anyone before. It's my reason for pouring so much effort into the detail of particular lives, institutions or passages of history. Why, for instance, I've done so much of my research using a laborious life-history method.

At some time very early in my career of crime in sociology (although I couldn't now name the year) I had a vision of how I should work. If I could understand one small situation absolutely thoroughly, in all its detail and all its determinations, then it would be possible to work outwards from that to understand a whole social order. This was not the way a mathematician might build a system from a postulate, because society was not so simple. It was more the way a palaeontologist reconstructs a working animal from lumps of fossil bone, or an archaeologist maps a prehistoric economy from shards of pottery.

I'm not sure where this vision came from; perhaps from a History School that emphasised pernickety work with documents, or a Psychology School that persuaded me to read Freud. Perhaps I'd read too much poetry swimming with symbols and microcosms, like Blake's: "To see a world in a grain of sand/ And a heaven in a wild flower..." Perhaps even before that: as a girl I wanted to be a fossil hunter, and did once discover a fossil leaf by searching a shale rock face at a holiday camp.

I can now see that the idea was crazy. No one could understand any social situation microscopically enough to make the vision come true, and its logic is refuted by all the fissures, contradictions and multiple realities in social life I've encountered since, but I don't think that vision did me any harm as a researcher. It pushed towards detail and exactness in describing social realities. It also pushed beyond the immediately given: it made me listen to resonances, follow links. In more conventional language, it encouraged me to build theory out of investigation and critique, rather than the other way round. And that's what I've tried to do.

The first part of this article appeared in Nexus (2014), 26(3), pp. 1, 4, 5.
President’s letter

Katie Hughes

Australian Catholic University

The TASA Executive held its July meeting at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne this year. We had a full two days which included some strategic planning for the next ten years. In this context, we explored the ways in which TASA might develop as an organisation and we focussed, in particular, on our financial security and on increasing our reach (into our geographical region, into public conversations) and on expanding our membership to Sociologists wherever they work.

In terms of our region, we have been working hard to network with all the Sociological Associations in the Asia Pacific region – as defined by the International Sociological Association (ISA) – in order to encourage Sociologists to attend the TASA conference in Cairns this year. We were fortunate to have received a small grant from the ISA which is available to national organisations seeking to enhance their relationships with their region. Some of these associations have advertised the TASA conference to their members. I’m hopeful that we will have at least some participation from our region as a result of this networking, and, of course, because the conference is being held in a very accessible part of Australia for the Asia Pacific region.

In addition, Dan Woodman and myself have met with staff from the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre to build a new bid for the hosting of the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Melbourne in 2022. Our brief to the Convention and Exhibition Centre is to build a bid with emphasis on Melbourne’s intellectual tradition, its wealth of cultural activities, its many universities, its multicultural life, its ties to Asia, its safety, its natural beauty and the rich resources of the city itself. With a seeding grant provided by the City of Melbourne and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, a video will be made and the bidding materials prepared. These will be submitted to the ISA by December 1st, 2015. The ISA Executive meets in Taipei, Taiwan 14-18 April 2016 to make the decision. Dan Woodman and myself will go to present the bid, koalas in hand!

The public presence of Sociologists was also considered, with the aim of both increasing the volume of commentary about social issues made by TASA members, and also building stronger links with the media in order that Sociologists become sought after experts on a wide range of topics pertinent to Sociology. To this end, we ask that TASA members identify themselves as such when writing online or elsewhere, and that they also name themselves as Sociologists when speaking to the media. In this way, we hope that the visibility and diversity of Sociology and Sociologists increases.

In terms of TASA’s ten year future, there is no doubt that we need to increase our membership base and we will soon begin a major membership drive. We’d be grateful if TASA members could strongly encourage their colleagues to join the organisation – pointing out of course the many benefits to their careers which membership provides. Our membership base is also heavily weighted towards postgraduate students and ECRs, and we’d like to recruit more senior colleagues.

Earlier this year a general survey of members was conducted in order to gauge the extent to which TASA is currently meeting members’ expectations and needs, and to seek advice about how better to engage with our members and provide them with the services they value. We had 271 responses – around a third of our members. A full report of the findings will be made available in the Annual Report, but here is a snapshot of some of the data:

- 65% of our respondents are female
- 15% work outside universities
- 30% of those in universities work in non-Sociology departments or faculties
- 71% of our responding TASA members believe the organisation is meeting the needs of its members either very well, or well
- Most joined TASA for networking purposes (64%), in order to participate in TASA’s thematic groups (50%) and out of a sense of obligation to the discipline (57%).

Whilst it is pleasing to see that TASA members feel the organisation adds value to their careers, and their networks, it is crucial that we successfully build our membership base and thus a secure future. Your help in doing this would be greatly appreciated.
Good Migrations

EILEEN CLARK

Clarks Clerks

It's the stuff of nightmares. A new arrival stands at the Immigration Desk at Sydney airport. Scott Morrison looks at her: young, female, no relatives in Australia, no money, no qualifications, little work experience.

'We don’t want you here' he says, 'go back to where you came from'.

Luckily for me, things were different in the mid-1960s when I arrived in Sydney. I also had two important ascribed statuses in addition to my deficits. I was White and English. Not only did the Australian government welcome me, they even paid part of my air fare. How different it is for immigrants today.

My arrival in Sydney was like a rebirth: the culmination of years of hope and careful planning. Many years later, when I studied sociology and could stand back and see my experiences in theoretical terms, I could start to explain what brought me here. My sociological imagination went into overdrive as I linked my personal experiences to the public events I had lived through.

I grew up in London, an early baby boomer in a family where there was never quite enough money. Dad was part of the petit bourgeois, working in a family business that was being driven bankrupt by technological change. Mum had been an office worker but she followed the norms of the day and stayed at home to care for me. My parents were staunchly right wing, always voting Conservative and denouncing the Labour Party and trade unions as communists. Yet the Labour Party brought in the Welfare State when I was a toddler. This gave me free health care, free education and even the much-despised hot lunches we had at school each day.

By the time I was about ten years old, I was starting to notice the contradictions between what my parents espoused and the reality of their lives. Was I developing class consciousness already? We lived in a social housing apartment block but there was no stigma attached to that after much of London's housing stock was destroyed by bombing in World War II. Our neighbours included an Army officer, bank manager, and the headmaster of a prestigious independent school, in addition to tradesmen and labourers. My parents struggled to maintain the status markers that matched the class position to which they aspired. I could play with some neighbours’ children, but not others. I had to dress ‘properly’ at all times, even if the clothes were hand-me-downs. Socks were always worn, even with sandals. Sunday church demanded hat and gloves. The worst thing I could do was to appear ‘common’.

My parents placed great value on education as a means of social mobility. They exposed us to what cultural capital they could, with visits to the library, museums and London’s cultural icons. I showed signs of ‘having brains’ at quite a young age, or at least I learned to do what teachers liked. This led to a good pass in the dreaded 11+ exam, which segregated children into different types of school for secondary education, and I won a scholarship to a selective fee-paying school.

The contradictions in my life now became stark. My classmates were solidly middle class. They lived in houses with gardens, and went horse riding or ice-skating at weekends. There was no money for treats like that in my home. Dad's business had collapsed and Mum had gone back to work, something I was ashamed of. Looking back, I realise how hard she worked to keep us in modest comfort. School was a paradox, emphasising both academic achievement and lady-like behaviour. We did elocution and deportment alongside maths and Latin. Girls who fell behind in their studies were told: 'You’ll end up working in a shop!' It was the worst job our teachers could think of, from the privileged position they occupied.

Adding to my childhood misery was the English weather. I hated it! The cold, rain and fog played havoc with my ‘weak chest’ (diagnosed as asthma many years later), giving me a permanent cough in winter and rendering me useless at school sport. I craved sunshine like an alcoholic craves a drink. During this time, the Australian government was trying hard to attract British migrants, and they knew how to tempt people. Every day on my way to school, I would see a big billboard showing a typical school scene, pupils sitting at wooden desks, teaching writing on a chalkboard, but instead of a dingy classroom they were on a sun-drenched beach. ‘Teach in a place in the sun’ the billboard beckoned. The seeds were sown.

Despite my total lack of ability, I loved tennis as a game. We lived near the famous Wimbledon tennis courts, at a time when the game was still an amateur sport. Local kids knew how to get into the grounds without paying, and we mingled with the players, begging for autographs as they moved between matches. These were the glory days of Australian tennis: Hoad, Rosewall, and particularly Rod Laver, the Rockhampton Rocket. He was reluctant to give autographs, so (I am embarrassed to recall) I wrote
to him asking for a signed photograph. Months later, it arrived, in an envelope post-marked 'Gladstone, Queensland'. I had to know more. I looked it up in the atlas (Google was still decades away) and started to read everything I could about Australia. Plans were starting to take shape in my head. This country, full of sunshine and tennis players, would pay British migrants to go there. I wrote to Australia House for more information, not telling them I was only 16. Australia became like the Promised Land, a place where individual effort counted more than your family name or the school you went to. The pull factors were becoming very strong.

I formulated a plan. I would wait until I turned 21 and was legally adult, in case my parents opposed my dream. They were hoping I would be the first person in the extended family go to university, so I decided to study and get a qualification that would make me more attractive as an immigrant. Meanwhile, I stalked Australians, eavesdropping conversations on Earls Court station just listening to their accents. At a Ranger Guide jamboree, I pounced on one Australian and begged her to be my penfriend. Meanwhile, I spent too much time watching tennis and failed my Year 12 exams spectacularly. Now I had to devise Plan B.

I needed a job. I'd work until I was 21 so at least I had work experience behind me. I was accepted to train as a hospital scientist in a pathology laboratory, not telling them I'd be gone well before the final exams. I was also becoming more political. To my parents' horror, I joined a trade union. I supported the CND anti-nuclear movement and longed to join the Aldermaston marches, as a young Ann Oakley did (Oakley, 1984). I was convinced that Europe, in the midst of the Cold War, was not the place to be.

I turned 20 and sent off my application to become an Assisted Migrant (known colloquially as Ten-Pound Poms). I would have to stay a minimum of two years, or repay my fare. My parents gave me their blessing, probably thinking I'd be back when I'd done my time. I persuaded them to give a suitcase rather than furniture for my 21st birthday, and a few days later, I was off.

We flew in over the Sydney Harbour Bridge on a brilliant July morning. The light was stunning, reflecting off the sails of the half-finished Opera House. It took just a few minutes to pass through Immigration. My penfriend's parents met me and welcomed me into their home. Next day, they took me on a tour of the city's hospitals, gave me the jobs pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and lent me a street directory. Their welcome and kindness were beyond measure, and I was but one of many people they helped. Within a week, I had a job and a place to live, and I had enrolled at TAFE to finish the course I started in England.

I was welcomed everywhere, a thousand individual kindnesses that helped me settle in. No matter what government policies are in place, I believe successful migration depends on what happens at the individual level.

Many years and a few career changes later, I had achieved the financial security and status that my parents had craved, and I knew they were proud of me. I didn't trouble them with tales of my political activity. I was working as a lecturer and two events stick in my mind that said much about status in England and Australia. Communism was still strong in Europe when the campus had a visit from the East German Cultural Attaché. A lunch was organised with the Heads of Departments and as the most junior member of staff, I was surprised when I was told to join them. It became clear when I was introduced, ahead of all the others:

'This is Ms Clark. Our Union Secretary'.

A couple of years later, at a different campus, we were entertaining Professors visiting from another university. One who was clearly English noticed my accent and immediately said:

'Which school did you go to?'

He needed to 'place' me in the way that was so common in England in my youth.

Many, many years later, I discovered that several of my forebears had come to Australia in the 1850s. One hundred years later, perhaps they were calling to me. Whatever it was that brought me here, it all felt so right. I had come home.

Reference:
Vital issues deserve careful attention, like the itinerary of my paper on Aboriginal literature, before I presented to the 2014 TASA Conference in Adelaide. I was initially invited to the Hong Kong Sociological Association Conference in 2103. The largely street-wise youthful audience (of committed students hoping to end discrimination against their new mainland fellows) provided feedback with a focus on the canonical status of Aboriginal literature. From there, the paper took a sharp conservative turn at the 2014 World Congress of Sociology in Yokohama, where international colleagues posed questions of methodology policing. (The conference centre rather than campus venue missed the warmth of university fellowship). Together they parallel the Australian ‘Tale of Two Cities’ of Sydney [the flashy Asian ‘global capital’ of Hong Kong] / Melbourne [the discreet style and politic intellectual hub of Tokyo] rivalry. Improved by this informed opinion, it was fitting to deliver the final draft on neutral ground in Adelaide: noted by local punks both for its fondness of Sydney sounds and Melbourne lifestyles. For TASA delegates, if the world’s highest suicide rate in the Kimberley region made Aboriginal literature signally sociological, its three contextualising sociological texts covered inductive and deductive method, crowned by a synthesis of the two.

Supporters of struggles for Indigenous equality with European settler society argue that Australians live in an age of reconciliation and pan-Aboriginality. The Mabo case granting middle class property rights, feudalist Stolen Generation apology, and regressive radio and TV segregation supposedly confirm change for the better. While this insinuation, if true, is welcome after centuries of oppression and exclusion, ‘white’ fantasies of constitutional recognition by superseding violent rule seem unrealistic. Yet Indigenous people, comprising some 500 tribes and 200 different dialects are known to have lived in Australia for an estimated 75,000 years. This depth of civilisation is superior to all rival human communities, prompting classic sociologist, Emile Durkheim to base his key ideas of sacred and profane on current colonial Aboriginal data. In recent years, a veritable flurry of research, canonised albeit as an ‘essentialist’ Aboriginal literature, circumscribed by history and criticism, innocuously fetishises the cultural turn. In this paper, I’d like to skirt around academic vested interests in culture and/or inadequacy to social fact, and focus on the social facts. Aided by three non-essentialist novels of Indigenous life-writing and cumulative literary sociology, controls initially tested on Aboriginals, and then increasingly on undemocratic so-called White society are explored, such as ‘work’, ‘housing and health’ and ‘education, art and culture’. In sync with the evolving methodologies, firstly Pritchard’s Coonardoo is linked to Goldmann’s realism, next Gere’s Fringe Dwellers meet Green’s deconstruction, and lastly Mudrooroo’s Wild Cat Falling illuminates Bourdieu’s cultural capital.

1. Coonardoo: Desert Storm
In his well-known study of André Malraux, with its panoramic treatment of popular struggle in China and Spain against exceptional capitalist states of the 1930s, Lucien Goldmann traces parallel progress between the novel and society. For Marxist Goldmann, social reality and the text exist in a reflective relationship that philosophers have dubbed ‘correspondence theory’, language representing reality. Citing the commodity fetish theories of Karl Marx, Goldmann argues that the dissolution of character in modern fiction reflects the recent historical transition from ‘liberal individualist’ to ‘monopoly’ capitalism.

First published in 1929, communist Katherine Susannah Pritchard’s Coonardoo, a novel of romance between an Aboriginal tribal woman and Anglo-Saxon cattleman, appeared at the height of this transitional phase in the economy. Hugh and Coonardoo are childhood friends growing up together on a vast outback cattle station. Their unconventional relationship produces an illegitimate son called...
Winni. Wages and conditions on the station are very meagre, resembling accounts by Australian novelist Frank Hardy, in his record of real events that led to the Indigenous Land Rights movement, *The Unlucky Australians*. In a tragic ending, Coonardoo and Hugh are separated and the station is abandoned to a bank takeover and sell-off to fellow station owners, also exploiting tribal members. Like Hugh and the bank, in *The Sociology of the Novel* Goldmann refers to the new ‘relatively small group of individuals who, in contemporary society, have access to decision making in the economic, social and political spheres’. Australian limitations on such oligarchic executive powers reside in a three-tiered system of Council, State and Federal government. Also a middle class Communist, Frank Hardy’s role in urging the hijack of legitimate wages equity with so-called ‘white’ stockmen, culminating in the Mabo Native Title case, also facilitates the capitulation of worker control to corporatist elders. The function of this precedent in reducing voter resistance to amalgamation of local Councils (ironically with Aboriginal names), dissolving Separate Powers in Victoria (now spreading to other states) might well be fateful. Council resistance to the State East–West Link and/or Federal deindustrialization of motor vehicles may thus be easily thwarted.

2. *The Fringe Dwellers: Shock and Awe*

In contrast to Lucien Goldmann or more traditional sociology, for Bryan S. Green’s *Literary Methods and Sociological Theory* the focus is on deconstructive ‘ontological emptiness’ in the textuality of sociology. This method ‘helps us to analyze the composition of theory texts, to detect nonobvious compositional structures in the literary dimension’. It is an approach more akin to ‘coherence theory’ in philosophy: language analysing language. Sociologists have criticized such developments as the ‘linguistic turn’. Construed by Green as a ‘multifaceted’ Georg Simmel and ‘casuistic’ Max Weber, he conducts a close reading of their sociologies, seen by many as its most ‘classic’: *The Philosophy of Money* and *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Protestant Ethic*. Both cohere with the theory of financialisation initiated in a postmodern 1980s when Green’s text was published.

Originally appearing in 1961, ‘Native Welfare Department’ wife Nene Gare’s *The Fringe Dwellers* plots the prototype of this brave new world of unequal finance or ‘dual labour’ in Australia. The novel follows Trilby Comeaway and family, moving from the outlying shanty town into a housing estate (and then out again) with government aid. Like Coonardoo, Trilby and her *de facto* Phillix parent an illegitimate child with tragic results. In this historical period, movements of Aboriginal people were strictly supervised by ‘department men’ until citizenship was granted following the 1967 national referendum. Unemployed income and housing were very insecure, like Kylie Tennant’s *The Battlers* set in the Great Depression. The dole was awarded in 1945 after much protest. Yet 50 years later, this was withdrawn with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) closure and reinstatement of ‘Work for the Dole’ (similar to ‘Work for Sustenance’ in the 1930s). Documented by Green in his earlier book *Knowing the Poor*, recent Australian policy resembles poverty management in the 1800s, when the unemployed were ‘punished’ for being poor. Replacing the CES, new privatised Job Networks are now ballooning business organisations, like the Salvos or Mission Australia: both ordered to repay millions of dollars for over-claims on falsified jobseeker reports. As Green might say of corrupt ‘ontological emptiness’, in coherence theory terms of the ‘multifaceted’ Simmel or ‘casuistic’ Weber: a very linguistic if likely story!

3. *Wild Cat Falling: Kill Team*

For Pierre Bourdieu, unequal economic and cultural capital determines literary position in the artistic hierarchy. Published in 1992, Bourdieu’s sociological study of *The Rules of Art* charts incipient literature as a semi-autonomous art form in the three-tiered cultural field of mid-19th century bohemia. It falls somewhere between the small audiences of poetic autonomy and larger public of more popular theatrical heteronomy. A time of ‘art for art’s sake’, complex rules of entry into the literary field were set in distinction to rival performing or written media. Spanning free trade Louis Napoleon’s Second Empire of failed military ventures in Asia, Mexico, the Confederate States and Africa, this social context is seen by historians as a model for exceptional capitalist state regimes in the 1930s.

According to Aboriginal literature academic Stephen Muecke, ‘the novel was about the furthest one could move away from traditional Aboriginal genres. Drama was closer to the “corroboree”, poetry was closer to song, and oral narrative closer to the short story than the novel was to anything Aboriginal’. Unlike our two earlier fictional works, Muecke was referring to *Wild Cat Falling* by Mudrooroo: the first novel published by an Aboriginal person in 1965. Narrated in the first person, like the beats, existentialism and gonzo journalism, the unnamed character passes from jail to freedom and back to jail. A dynamic creative work, with subcultural capital appeal for younger readers, *Wild Cat Falling* was packaged in a modernist dust-jacket, like Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*. Between the rock’n’roll and milk bar culture of bodgies and widgies, mingling underworld youth with white collar university jazz...
So much of what we do as sociologists involves paying lip service to the imperatives of the neoliberal university, whilst deploring quietly the way things are going. Such an institutional situation breeds a wholly destructive cynicism, which then can seep into the very pores of one’s being.

Concluding remarks: Pan-Aboriginal Apartheid?
In this new world order, Australian Federal, State and Local privatisations are juxtaposed to Aboriginal literary classics and an evolving sociological canon. Local representation in political decision-making has dried up like the well in Coonardoo, following Council amalgamations with untranslated Aboriginal names. Privatisation of Federal Job Networks generate the dual labour market seen in Fringe Dwellers. Understaffed State transport sell-offs foist Northern Irish style paramilitary policing on anonymous suburban populations, like Wild Cat Falling. If Australian literary sociology also points to commodity fetishism (Goldmann), deconstruction (Green), and cultural capital (Bourdieu), the new ‘Patrick White Australia Policy’ (Frank Hardy’s term) diverts us – as unjustly as its 20th Century model – ‘from the real themes and issues confronting the Australian people and their literature’ in a re-institutionalised racism. Aboriginal people were the test case for:

1) Desert Storm Apartheid wages and conditions, like Coonardoo.
2) Shock and Awe housing for privatized Fringe Dwellers, and
3) Kill Team policing of Wild Cat Falling style social exclusion.

Before Hardy’s Land Rights, Humphrey McQueen warned of ‘immaturity of the labouring classes in two ways: first, in their belief that the land offered an escape from capitalism; second, in their political obedience to middle class radicalism.’

Notes
1. While recent HK student protests reflect this commitment, like the Tiananmen tragedy there should be concern for behind-the-scenes manipulation of genuine student and police efforts by dubious Western interest.
2. See Michael Fine’s excellent piece on the 2014 World Congress in Nexus, 26(3): 11–12,
3. To illustrate the occasion, I passed around copies of the novels [pictured] with Chairperson’s Sarah’s help.
Introduction: The growing contribution of the sociology of sport

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Sport is central to the experience of everyday life. Indeed, the presence of sport is so all-pervasive that it can appear to be simply part of the way things are. As the contributions to this issue of Nexus reveal, however, as in other domains of life, applying a sociological analysis to sport reveals the broader social significance of sport. We thank the Nexus editors Sue Malta and Christopher Baker for the idea to focus on sport in this issue. The pieces that follow provide fascinating insights into the diverse theoretical, empirical and practice based contributions that sociology can make to our understanding of sport, while also suggesting how sport provides a space for the creation of a vibrant public voice for sociology. David Rowe shows how media and sport have become increasingly interconnected over time, resulting in a media sports cultural complex. As David argues, while sociology took a long time to engage with sport, mediasport is now so central to contemporary life that it is impossible to ignore. Emma Sherry’s analysis of researching sport for development provides insights into how research in this area can contribute to a diverse range of theoretical debates and to the creation of a public sociology, while also raising critical questions for a reflexive sociology around power in the research process. In a similar way, Ruth Jeanes, Ramon Spaaij and Jonathan Magee show how sociological analysis of diversity in junior sport contributes to theoretical innovation, for example by furthering understandings of intersectionality, while also providing new ways of thinking about sport and its role in the community that can be translated into practice. Kim Toffoletti provides an important analysis of what it means to be a feminist sport fan. From this starting point, she shows how, even as sport is a site of exclusion of women, it is also a source of pleasure and of identity and of meaning making for many women. Finally, Tim Marjoribanks suggests that sociological analyses of sport can provide a means for considering broader questions around power, the need for multidisciplinary research, and the public role of sociology. We hope you enjoy these contributions to Nexus that highlight the vibrant and growing contribution that sociology is making to our understanding of, and practice in, a defining area of contemporary social life.
Expanding the influence of the sociology of sport

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In recent years, there has been considerable debate about the public role and impact of sociology as a discipline and as a way of thinking. While this debate has raised critical questions about what sociology stands for, one area in which sociology can and does have a public impact, but in which it has the potential to have a bigger impact, is sport. There is little doubt that sport is a central feature of contemporary Australian and global society. Whether or not we enjoy or participate in sport, sport is a constant presence in everyday life. Major media corporations spend millions of dollars on sporting television rights; social media is filled with commentary and opinion on sport; Monday mornings at work frequently involve discussions of sport; and weekends and week nights in many cities and towns are filled with people participating in organised and recreational sport.

There are clear opportunities for sociology to further our understanding of sport, and to contribute to public debate on sport. Even while some question the relevance of sport as an appropriate site of research, in sociology and other disciplines including management, marketing, finance, economics, accounting, history, political science, psychology and the health and medical sciences, research on sport is flourishing. While some researchers focus on sport as an activity in its own right, others engage with sport to ask questions about a range of broad societal issues including social inclusion and exclusion, participation, power and control. Although research on sport has often been located within specialist journals, more recently generalist sociology journals such as the *Journal of Sociology* and the *British Journal of Sociology* have published articles on sport. Sport is also a staple of media and of popular writing. In universities, sociology of sport subjects are increasingly evident in undergraduate and master’s programs, while a steady stream of PhD theses on sport is emerging. The domain of sport is expanding.

Given these trends, important questions emerge around how the sociology of sport can contribute to the traditional academic research concerns of theoretical and empirical development while also having a public impact. There are many ways in which this may be possible. Here I identify three areas where sport sociologists are already making a contribution to public debate, but also where there are opportunities for further influence. Underpinning this are two further points. First, while sport can be a site for social change, it can also be a means through which pre-existing social relations of inequality are reproduced. For sociologists, engaging with this tension is critical. Second, while there are pressures on sociologists working in higher education to publish in particular outlets, it is also important to think about other ways in which we can effectively contribute to public debate. While social media is one avenue for such communication, there are others including seeking to engage directly with the sport industry.

In terms of making a contribution, first, a critical aspect of the sociology of sport concerns power. With its capacity to engage with various dimensions and expressions of power, sociology is well placed to highlight how sport is a critical site for power contests in areas including on-field performance, media representations of social relations in sport, and sport as a site of social inclusion and exclusion. While such topics are frequently the source of debate in various media and in industry, too often questions of power are not addressed. Sociology can contribute to public understandings of sport by bringing the question of power centrally into the discussion, highlighting not only overt power but also hegemonic forms of power.

Second, sociologists should look for opportunities to conduct cross-disciplinary research. In Australia and internationally, there is excellent research on sport conducted in disciplines including history and sport management, but there are opportunities for collaborations beyond the areas of humanities and social sciences. Health and medical sciences invest considerable resources in sport related research, yet there is a need for an awareness of the social context for health and medical outcomes of sport. Sociologists can play an important role in this regard. As such collaborations emerge, there may be opportunities for sociology to challenge, or at least to open for discussion, the dominance of the medical sciences in seeking to explain human behaviour. Just as sociologists have the potential to work with colleagues in these disciplines, so too there is an opportunity to enrich and in some cases challenge...
these dominant models, reminding us of the need to focus on the social and cultural aspects of sport and of human behaviour more generally.

Third, there is an important role for sociology to provide a public voice and to have an impact on public debate around sport. Much discussion of sport is dominated by media and increasingly by sport organisations themselves. While there are important voices located within these domains, too much of the content is pure description or the restatement of public relations output. As a number of sociologists of sport are already doing, we should seek opportunities to engage in these conversations, for example, by being available to speak with media and sports organisations or by making direct contributions to the media. As is frequently noted, one of the most significant outcomes of the information revolution is that the range of outlets available is increasing. At the same time, we should not downplay the continuing significance of mainstream commercial media, and we need to think carefully about how to engage in this space.

Sociology provides a range of tools for engaging with sport as a social phenomenon. Through a mobilisation of the sociological imagination, in particular by questioning everyday assumptions about sport, and through using diverse means for communicating its insights, sociology can have an impact on public debate in this vital area of social and cultural life.
What is Sport for Development?

Over the past decade, the field of sport-for-development (SFD) has received significant attention from non-government organisations, government agencies, sport practitioners, and sport academics around the world. SFD has been defined as ‘the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution’ (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311). Because of growing political and institutional support, the number of sport-based projects aimed at contributing to positive development in these areas has increased consistently (Coalter, 2007, 2013; Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). The popularity of SFD stems from its ability to capture or ‘hook’ a large number of people – particularly those interested in sport and physical activity – and use the momentum in and around sport as a strategic vehicle to communicate, implement, and achieve non-sport development goals. For those interested in learning more about the breadth of projects and organisations in this field, I would direct readers to the International Sport for Development platform at sportanddev.org.

Sport for Development Research Context

In the academic domain, the continued growth of SFD projects has led to an influx of theoretical and empirical studies across numerous disciplines of sport, including management (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Parent & Harvey, 2008), sociology (Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2012), health (Crabbe, 2000; Eime, Payne, & Harvey, 2008), public policy (Giulianotti, 2011), gender studies (Meier & Saavedra, 2009; Pedersen & Seidman, 2004), education (Burnett, 2013; Jeanes, 2013), marketing (Vail, 2007), media (Coleby & Giles, 2013), and conflict and peace studies (Rookwood & Palmer, 2011; Sugden, 2006).

Recently my colleagues and I (Schulenkorf, Sherry and Rowe) published an integrated literature review of the SFD discipline, currently in press with the Journal of Sport Management, to provide evidence of the status quo of current SFD research foci, authorship, geographical contexts, theoretical frameworks, sport activity, level of development, methodologies, methods, and key research findings. Our study found an increasing trend of research journal publications since 2000, with a strong focus on social and educational outcomes related to youth sport, and with football (soccer) as the most common activity. Most SFD research has been conducted at the community level, with qualitative approaches dominant. The geographical contexts of authorship and study location present an interesting paradox: although the majority of SFD projects occur in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 90% of SFD authors are based in North America, Europe, and Australia. We conclude our study by providing new perspectives on key issues in SFD, and by outlining current research and theoretical gaps that provide the basis for future scholarly enquiry.

Of particular interest to Nexus readers, three of the ten most popular outlets for SFD research were sport sociology journals, particularly Sociology of Sport Journal, International Review for the Sociology of Sport, and Sport in Society.

Why research sport-for-development? (Or case study n=1)

My personal journey as a researcher in SFD began in 2006 with a group of Australian youth who were part of The Big Issue’s Homeless World Cup team. As a PhD student, I had just submitted my thesis for examination, and I was looking for something to keep me busy. This small study became the launching pad for a now 8-year career investigating SFD in a wide range of contexts. In Australia, I have worked with The Big Issue’s Community Street Soccer Program (CSSP), investigating SFD program outcomes with individuals and communities who are at-risk or marginalised, including people experiencing homelessness, substance abuse, mental illness and recently arrived refugees. The CSSP also provides...
a soccer program in prisons across Australia, and I was privileged to work with the team in the Port Phillip Prison to investigate how the soccer program is used to provide opportunities for the inmates and assist on their release into the community.

In addition to my work in Australia, more recently I have been engaged by Netball Australia and the National Rugby League (NRL) to provide monitoring and evaluation expertise for their SFD programs across the Pacific, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade via Australian Aid. Netball Australia works in Tonga, Samoa and Vanuatu with programs aimed at improving non-communicable disease health outcomes and develop female leadership capacity in these countries. Across Papua New Guinea, the NRL League Bilong Laif program partners with elementary and primary schools to encourage engagement with education and encourage respect (for self, others, their community and the environment) to address anti-social behaviour and violence against women and children. Papua New Guinea is a nation that achieved independence from Australia in 1975. It has over 800 languages and ongoing tribal conflict but its people share a single uniting love of the sport of rugby league, and as such, this provides an ideal platform for engagement.

Although much of this work is contracted as program evaluations by the sport organisations, the SFD field provides a multitude of opportunities for research academics to investigate and discuss how the sport context can contribute to development goals. Different projects, different contexts and different development aims rely on the integration of a wide variety of research approaches and paradigms, and encourage critical engagement with local cultures. As much of the work in SFD is delivered in at-risk and disadvantaged communities, researchers need to be cognisant of power imbalances and decide how best to design and collect the data from/with the participants in ways that are respectful of their experience and their stories. For those with a more theoretical bent, investigating programs in developing nations provides opportunities to engage directly with frameworks such as post-colonialism, gender and race and ethnicity. Sport is a social construct that readily engages both researchers and the researched; sport-for-development takes this engagement and aims to address social and individual outcomes.
A first glance, studying sport may seem a rather trivial and peripheral academic pursuit. Yet, such a conclusion would be premature. Sport has assumed immense social, cultural and economic importance in the modern world, and it is at the centre of popular culture in countries such as Australia. Illustrious sociologists such as Erving Goffman, Pierre Bourdieu, Norbert Elias, Randall Collins and Raewyn Connell have all taken sport seriously as a lens through which to examine and understand key sociological problems. Serious sociological attention for sport appears to be in vogue, indicative of which is, for example, the recent establishment of the TASA Sport Thematic Group.

Diversity in junior sport
Our own research and teaching aspires to stand on the shoulders of these sociological giants. The authors of this article (with colleagues Dr Dean Lusher and Associate Professor Karen Farquharson of Swinburne University and Dr Sean Gorman, Curtin University) are currently working on an ARC Linkage Project exploring how socio-cultural diversity is understood, experienced and managed within junior sport in Australia. The project was prompted by wider debates on how Australia responds to growing levels of diversity within its society. In partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), the Australian Football League and the Centre for Multicultural Youth, the purpose of the project is to understand how and to what extent junior sports clubs welcome and support the inclusion of people of all backgrounds and abilities. This understanding is important not only because it can help foster positive sports experiences that encourage lifelong involvement, but because junior sport is an important setting where young people are socialised into norms around race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality and ability, with significant consequences for how they engage with people with diverse backgrounds and abilities throughout their lives. Junior sport provides the entry to a lifelong involvement in sport, as well as a major site for socialisation and community building for many children, parents, volunteers, coaches and spectators. Yet, we also know that competitive sport often falls short of its stated objective of inclusivity and a ‘level playing field’. In short, competitive sport tends to differentiate, marginalise and exclude in a myriad of ways (Burgess et al., 2003; Spaaij et al., 2014). The project is unusual in that we are examining diversity across multiple axes. Particularly within sport studies, the concept of intersectionality has yet to be fully embraced. While there are extensive studies examining the relationship of sport and particular aspects of diversity, for example cultural diversity within sport or the relationship between sexuality and sport, few studies have explored the capacity of community sport to manage and facilitate participation across multiple facets of diversity. This project is exploring how gender, culture and dis/ability are understood, experienced and responded to in junior sports clubs. The study draws on cutting-edge theory and research such as that of Sara Ahmed (2012), whose work considers how diversity is ‘done’ in institutional settings such as higher education. This framework enables us to situate community sports clubs within the broader institution (or ‘field’, to use Bourdieu’s term) of sport to consider critically the language and practices of diversity, including what ‘cases’ (business, social justice) are presented for diversity practices to be embraced and implemented at the community sport level (Spaaij et al. 2014).

The study uses a mixed-methods approach that combines in-depth interviews, participant observation, surveys and social network analysis in an integrated way. We are currently working with eight case study clubs across metropolitan and regional Australia and across five sports: Australian rules football, soccer, netball, cricket and basketball. Club committee members, coaches, volunteers and young people
are all contributing to the research process. The social network analysis will provide unique insights into how people connect within the junior sport environment. Interviews and participant observations allow us to identify how individuals understand and experience diversity within their club context, as well as how junior sport participants are socialised into ways of managing diversity as it unfolds on the ground.

The study is currently in its second year of three. Preliminary findings indicate that the case study clubs are all responding to diversity issues by adopting particular practices from a ‘bottom up’ perspective that deals with specific issues that are local to the club and the community it is situated within. This is especially the case when it comes to demographic changes emanating from migration flows. All clubs recognise the importance of diversity and the need to be diverse, especially in terms of how the business case of diversity can attract new (paying) members. But while diversity becomes part of routine description, what is actually meant by the term often remains under-defined and ubiquitous (Ahmed, 2012). In general, club members do not necessarily view diversity as having multiple axes. For example, a club in an area that has experienced significant immigration may be providing sporting opportunities in relation to cultural diversity yet make limited provision for individuals with a disability who also wish to participate in the club. The same goes for all-abilities clubs that provide sporting opportunities for individuals with a range of disabilities but these individuals are almost exclusively White males. In both cases, the club might present itself as being diverse and inclusive, and in so doing essentialise difference and reduce socio-cultural diversity to but one of its axes.

Champions
We have witnessed many examples of positive practice during our research that can usually be traced back to a ‘champion’ who took on a particular diversity ‘cause’, whether that was gender equality, disability provision or extending sporting opportunities to newly arrived migrants. Whilst deeply committed to the diversity cause, the ‘champion’ can encounter resistance to change within the club, especially in relation to access to facilities and funding. Some regard their efforts to change the ‘old club’ mentality by introducing diversity practices as ‘banging your head against a brick wall’, in ways that closely reflect Ahmed’s (2012) account of diversity practitioners in university settings.

There is little doubt that the research so far indicates that community sport clubs are changing in terms of diversity representation and this is to be welcomed because community sport clubs lie at the heart of what is a rapidly changing Australia. Sport will remain a part of the social fabric of the community but there is greater work still to be done to ensure that community sports clubs are genuinely inclusive. In terms of diversity, the community sport sector is work in progress.

Knowledge translation
A major focus for the research team is to ensure that the research findings are translated into valuable and relevant resources for those involved in the development of community and youth sport, especially the Australian Sports Commission and the national and state sports associations that administer the five sports included in the research. Working with our partners, we are exploring different mechanisms to share findings and their implications. On 3 September 2015 we will be running an open symposium as part of Monash University’s Diversity and Inclusion week, focusing on ‘Inclusion: What works?’. We will be convening an expert panel of sport development staff and club representatives to share their experiences of managing diversity and promoting inclusion. To attend or for further details please contact Ruth Jeanes at ruth.jeanes@monash.edu.

References
I am a feminist sport fan. I’ll concede that this identity position could be construed by some as conflicted. I’ll admit that I find it complicated at times. I teach my sociology students about all the ways that sport operates as a site of social inequality in Australia. Particularly when it comes to gender, we know that women’s sport receives less coverage than men’s, that women athletes continue to be represented in gender-stereotypical ways that diminish their achievements, that most major sporting organisations are run by men and promote masculinist values of aggression, power and domination, that women’s participation in physical activity lags behind men’s. If I were being trite, I would go as far as to say that sport is a patriarchal institution that oppresses and excludes women. Funny thing is that, despite all of this, many women enjoy sport as both players and spectators.

At this point, I could elaborate on gender inequity in sport by discussing the corporatisation of organised sport, the rise of the fitness industry, or how sport operates as a mechanism in the regulation of gendered bodies. But I won’t, because all of these ideas have been well documented and articulated comprehensively by others. What I do want to talk about, however, is how this conflicted position led me to researching women fans of the Australian Football League (AFL) and the possibilities that arise when approaching women’s sport fandom, not as a practice of exclusion or marginalisation, but as a source of pleasure.

About 10 years ago, rape allegations were made against players from the St Kilda AFL club (Melbourne) and the Canterbury Bulldogs rugby league club (Sydney). These events exploded in the media and generated widespread public debate about gender relations in football, leading to calls for the codes to take greater responsibility in addressing player behaviour and attitudes towards women. At the time, I was teaching Women’s Studies (yes, back in the days when it was a discipline) at Deakin University’s Waurn Ponds campus in Geelong, where I met the now retired sport sociologist, Peter Mewett. Over many coffees, Peter listened with interest as I tried to reconcile my life-long love of Australian rules – I’m a Hawks supporter – with how the AFL, clubs and players publically responded to the issue in ways that were defensive and often victim-blaming. A petition going around at the time showed that many women and men who followed AFL were angered and disgusted at the allegations and the League's handling of them. As a woman, I wondered how other female football followers reconciled their love of the game with supporting an institution that, on many levels, marginalised, excluded and devalued women.

So Peter and I decided to talk to female fans of Australian rules football. Embarking on the project, we were surprised that very little qualitative work had been undertaken with female supporters of any Australian sport, which remains the case. While our initial interest in women footy fans was spurred by a curiosity about their response to sexual assault allegations against players, we soon realised that a basic understanding of why and how women follow AFL football was lacking. This led us to a much wider consideration of the meanings of being a football fan and its significance for our respondents. What we found, among other things, is that being a sport fan played a substantial part in dynamics of daily life for the women we spoke to. They scheduled major family events around the football fixture, football spectating was an important social outlet, and all identified strongly with their teams and its players. Their football allegiances also shaped how they related to others at work and at home.

Many of the women we interviewed, like me, acknowledged that football was essentially a man’s game. Yet they never considered themselves to be excluded or less committed in their support than their male counterparts. This is despite recognising the various stereotypes about women football supporters (the groupie, the girlfriend, the mother) that suggest women’s motives for supporting are not genuine and the authenticity of their support questionable.
What really strikes me about women football fans is how much pleasure they derive from the practice, even if it is for a sport that many concede has not always embraced women across the board. Our focus groups were full of women sharing meaningful stories and laughing often. It was clear from the interviews and the findings that these women deeply enjoyed being football supporters. As a feminist researcher for whom sport fandom is an important aspect of my own identity, I am drawn to thinking about women’s relationship to sport spectatorship in more expansive terms. That is, to approach fandom in ways that, while acknowledging its discriminatory dimensions, tries to make sense of the tensions, contradictions and pleasures of being a female sport fan. Part of this more expansive approach also requires that attention be paid to a wider range of women fans. What tends to be missing from sport fan research, in Australia and elsewhere, is an analysis of the practices, experiences and meaning of sport spectatorship for women from diverse cultural backgrounds. Indigenous women, lesbian, queer and trans supporters. So, too, are female fans of women’s sport neglected in critical studies of sport.

Texas-based sociologist Ben Carrington has expressed concern about the sidelining of sport sociology in mainstream sociological textbooks, journals and conferences. With the inauguration of the TASA Sport Thematic Group in 2014, and subsequent sport panels at the annual conference, I’m encouraged that sport will remain an important part of the sociological teaching and research agendas at Australian universities. As is the case with female sport fan research, sport sociology has the capacity to enliven innovative debates about gender identification, performance, expression and pleasure in cross-disciplinary ways to influence gender, cultural and media studies thinking about the nature of social relations.

The next thematic group funding round submission deadline is **September 1st 2015 for activities in the first half of 2016**.

The Thematic Group Support Scheme allows for groups to apply for up to $2,000 for activities that support their thematic area. Grants may be used to fund costs such as postgraduate student attendance, fees for venue hire, advertising, and speaker travel and accommodation. Funding approval is dependent upon the merit of the application, the number of applications received and TASA's financial position at the time of the application round.

Applicants are advised to refer to the new TG Conveners eManual, for the funding guidelines, which can be accessed on the **TG overview TASAweb page**.

TASA Members are welcome & encouraged to share their published works, such as new books and articles in *The Conversation*, newspapers and blogs, for example, for promotion via TASA's Members' Newsletter, Twitter handle, website and *Nexus*. Please help support TASA and sociology by forwarding details of your published works to Sally in the **TASA Office**.
For many years, sociologists mostly shied away from analysing sport in much the same way as they avoided any deep engagement with other forms of popular culture such as television. Everyday pleasures, it seemed, were too light and epiphenomenal to contend with the big structural themes of the discipline. Gradually, the sheer cultural weight and existential presence of popular texts and practices made this intellectual position untenable. The influence of interdisciplinary fields, especially of cultural studies and media studies – and, it must be said, the siren cry of relevance and meeting students where they stood – also made a mark on a discipline that, after the radical moment of the ‘sixties and early ‘seventies, had become a little fusty.

The convergence of sport and the world’s most popular domestic leisure practice, television viewing, was especially important. The sociology of media’s focus on television had found in sport an integral element of its content, while the sociology of sport could not ignore television’s highly efficient conveyance of sport straight to the domestic hearth. Indeed, the eminent cultural theorist and TV critic Raymond Williams (1989) observed that sport provided one of the few good reasons to watch television.

When the entire ‘media sports cultural complex’ (as I call it)—also encompassing newspapers, magazines, radio, film, internet and games—is taken into account, sport can be said to have colonised many corners of contemporary culture. Sports metaphors in advertising, business and politics abound, surreptitiously suggesting that all life can be reduced to contests, rules, wins, losses, and heroic/demonic performances. Multiple media platforms carry sport constantly, and sometimes to spectacular global effect, as in the case of the Olympic Games and the Summer World Cup. Without it, the television industry would be in freefall.

It is not surprising, therefore, that media has been a key focus area in the sociology of sport. When Jon Dart (2014) did a content analysis spanning 25 years of the main journals publishing sociology of sport (International Review for the Sociology of Sport, Journal of Sport and Social Issues and Sociology of Sport Journal), he found that media featured heavily among its themes and topics:

There is a broad consensus in the main themes with a very similar ‘top 10’ across the three journals. What is noticeable is that all the core sociological concepts (‘usual suspects’) feature prominently: that is, gender [coded here separately as sex/sexuality, feminism and masculinity], race/ethnicity, education, media, politics and economy and globalisation. Class also features but less frequently. There is limited identification of other core sociological concepts, including religion, the family, the environment, and work/employment. (Dart, 2014: 652)

When the International Review for the Sociology of Sport (2015) produced a 50th anniversary special issue ‘assessing the trajectory and challenges’ of the sub-discipline, the subject of the media was prominent. This is hardly a surprise, because without the media sport would be largely confined to aficionados performing or watching a cultural practice in a limited range of spaces at set times. The media—especially electronic—have made sport everybody’s business, willingly or otherwise. For example,
how many people who’d never heard of Sepp Blatter and have no idea what the acronym FIFA stands for, now know more than they could have imagined about the political economy and governance of association football (soccer)? The reason is that the news media forcibly educated them on the subject during a period of saturation coverage in mid-2015.

Media and sport are two institutional products of modernity that have progressively intertwined—to the extent that Lawrence Wenner (1998) has offered us the neologism ‘mediasport’. By the same token, changes in one part of this ‘zone’ resonate across all of it, through a series of feedback loops. For example, if sport associations, clubs and athletes change their modes of presentation through attention-grabbing behaviour and commercially-oriented display, the media both carry and reinforce the change. Similarly, if the media environment shifts towards ‘social’ as opposed to institutional media, sports are required to accommodate the change, both in terms of ‘citizen journalists’ recording player transgressions and by exploiting new possibilities for connecting with sport fans.

But, as noted above, these are not matters of exclusive interest for a self-enclosed mediasport world. They have important consequences across all of society and culture, offering powerful ‘instruction’ on class relations (not least through an abiding love of individualistic ‘rags to riches’ narratives); the gender order (with its persistent constructions of sporting masculinity in opposition to femininity); racial and ethnic power (the common ascription of biologistic and culturally essentialist characteristics); sexual identity (through its largely unexamined heteronormativity); nation-state boundary maintenance (sporting celebration of a nation); globalisation and transnationalism (sporting transcendence of nation); humanity and technology (the genetically and pharmacologically enhanced cyborg-athlete), and so on. Close attention to mediasport reveals abundant ways in which the popular–political can be mobilised and contested.

Sociologists do not have a responsibility to savour sport and its mediated manifestations any more than they should be required to embrace the aesthetics of ‘reality’ television and Hollywood film or the speculative art of gambling. Sport fandom is optional. But it is difficult to negotiate quotidian life and to understand the socio-cultural power of popular culture without at least a working knowledge of the discourses of power and pleasure that find in sport a readymade vehicle for their taken-for-granted, apparently innocuous and naturalised ‘truths’. It took sociology a while to grasp the opportunity fully, but there are rich analytical pickings in every sport news bulletin, live broadcast and online forum.

References


After graduating with a PhD in sociology at The University of Sydney in April 2013, I returned to Singapore to take up a postdoctoral fellowship with National University of Singapore (NUS), Asia Research Institute (ARI). I was grateful that the NUS ARI postdoctoral fellowship allowed me to focus on publishing from my doctoral thesis (family and divorce in Australia and Singapore) and pursue my post-PhD research trajectories. The physical and intellectual space, resources and networks facilitated the completion of a book manuscript, which led to my first sole-authored monograph (*Perspectives on marital dissolution: Divorce biographies in Singapore*, 2015) published by Springer. During my postdoctoral fellowship (June 2013–December 2014), I applied for and was awarded a competitive research grant by the Singaporean government, Ministry of Social and Family Development. This grant success led to second research fellowship (January 2015–December 2016) at NUS ARI where I am currently the Principal Investigator on a project studying transnational divorce in Singapore.

As an overseas trained sociologist returning to live and work in Singapore, my sociological antenna for my home country took on a renewed sensitivity. I began to observe the rapid changes that have taken place during my absence and pay special attention to contemporary concerns mostly arising from these transformations. Since I left in 2008 for the PhD, Singapore has undergone massive developments. Land has been reclaimed, the megastructure, Marina Bay Sands, built, new expressways constructed, and large number of foreign workers had arrived to make these constructions possible. One specific area that caught my attention was the ways in which relationships are changing and new intimacies forming as a result of the large and rapid movement of people and interaction between the local and foreign population.

With the influx of migrants, there has been a steady rise in the number of transnational marriages during the past few decades. Singapore has a large proportion of transnational marriages, with 38.7% of marriages in 2008 comprising marriages between a Singaporean citizen and a non-citizen. Having researched marital dissolution for the past seven years, I became particularly interested in understanding a growing social phenomenon – transnational divorce. After receiving the research grant from the Singaporean Government, Ministry of Social and Family Development, I embarked on a new project examining marital dissolution among transnational couples. Applying the theoretical innovation I developed from my doctoral research, this study takes a sociological approach to investigate the divorce biographies of transnational couples involving a Singaporean citizen. I am interested to explore how their divorce trajectories differ from local divorcees and the kinds of cross-border challenges they may encounter in dissolving their marriage and working out different aspects of their post-divorce lives. In the case of transnational couples with children, what might happen to those children? Are current policies involving different countries ready to cope with changing demographics and cross-border divorce issues involving child custody, child support maintenance, access and visitation, and property settlement? In Singapore, foreign spouses may lose their visa rights to remain in the country after divorce. In such a situation, what might be the consequences confronting their children? The findings of this project will inform our understanding of the experiences of transnational divorcees in the local context and contribute to global understandings of the social phenomenon of transnational divorce, which is becoming a more pressing concern in the global context. It will contribute to conceptualising transnational intimacy, personal and family life beyond conventional familial forms. It is also hoped that the project will provide sociological reasons for policy review so that transnational divorcees and their families can be more appropriately supported. Since the project started in January 2015, I have been immersed in conducting in-depth interviews with transnational divorcees in Singapore. Separate-
ly, I have also been carrying out fieldwork research in Australia as a Visiting Fellow at The University of Sydney, Department of Sociology and Social Policy for different periods of time over the past two years, with the aim of doing comparative work and gaining greater insights into this global issue.

At NUS ARI, there are seven research clusters, namely Asian Migration, Asian Urbanisms, Cultural Studies in Asia, Religion and Globalisation in the Asian context, Science, Technology and Society, Asian Connections and finally, Changing Family in Asia, which I belong to. The Changing Family in Asia cluster examines changes in family trends and practices in the region. Being surrounded by international family scholars across various disciplines and not confined to the discipline of sociology meant that my research and learning experiences have been enriching and exciting. I benefited greatly from the research cluster’s monthly reading groups, regular seminar series and international conferences on a wide range of family-related topics such as changing gender roles within families, spousal violence, ageing population, employment aspirations and trajectories of youths, one-person households, marital dissolution and cross-border marriages. The constant traffic of scholars arriving at NUS ARI to present their research and share ideas provides a robust and intellectually stimulating environment, where I am able to learn from and create important networks with renowned visiting and full-time academics from all over the world.

One of the highlights during my fellowship at NUS ARI was inviting Associate Professor Kristin Natalier, Flinders University, to visit Singapore in November 2014 to conduct a public lecture and academic seminar on child support in Australia. I have known Kristin since I was a PhD student in Sydney and we became acquainted at the annual TASA conferences. Kristin and I work on similar topics and we were often assigned to the same conference panel sessions, even at a British Sociological Association conference in London. Kristin’s visit was significant because it reinforced research connections between Australia and southeast Asia, particularly Singapore. Her presentations were well attended by family scholars, policy makers, workers in non-government organisations, social work practitioners and the general public.

Thus far, since returning to Singapore my research journey has been amazing and meaningful, as I look at contemporary social changes and issues critically from a sociological perspective. To be able to use my research findings to effect policy change has been the most gratifying aspect of my academic pursuits since the PhD. To me, that is what research is all about and for now, it is still my favourite thing.

New Thematic Group
Urban Sociology

The Urban Sociology thematic group was formed recently and is intended to provide an opportunity for debate, sharing and collaboration for scholars interested in issues related to cities including urban culture and community, governance, housing, transport and inequality in Australia and internationally. For more details, please go to the Urban Sociology Thematic Group TASA web page.

2015 TASA Jerzy Zubrzycki Postgraduate Scholarship

An annual prize awarded as one of the TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarships for the best paper in the research areas of migration or cultural pluralism, or with the potential for contribution to public policy.

Applications for the 2015 conference scholarships close on September 7th, 2015

Apply here
In this article, I discuss some key research findings discussed in my newly published book on divorce biographies in Singapore. The book presents a sociological account of marital dissolution that engages and extends theorisations on individualisation and the contemporary organisation of personal relationships to discuss how the experience of divorce might not be all-debilitating but on the contrary, could provide opportunities for productivity, self-responsibility and relationship formation. Using Singaporean divorcees’ narrative accounts, my study explores how divorcees shape and construct what I refer to as a divorce biography to end their unsatisfying marriages, cope with the crisis, negotiate associated risks, organise post-divorce personal communities and make future plans. It uncovers how divorcees navigate their divorce biographies within the economic, policy and social contexts they are located in and examines the conditions that facilitate or hinder the pursuit of productivity in different facets of their post-divorce lives.

This research study primarily presents an analytical framework of divorce biography, underscoring the importance of a biographical approach in understanding divorce and uses empirical data collected from in-depth interviews with Singaporean divorcees to examine a series of questions that include the following: How do divorcees work out their post-divorce lives? Do divorcees organise their post-divorce lives simply based on personal choice and preferences? What roles do their personal communities play in their divorce biography? How does the social and policy context they are situated influence their navigation of post-divorce trajectories? How do we understand the experience of divorce as a biographical process comprising both challenges and successes beyond the immediate crisis of the event? How can we appreciate the diversity and complexity of divorce biographies?

**Designing a divorce biography: Assertion of individuality**

In this book, I unpack the theoretical concept of divorce biography. By engaging with theories of individualisation, I concur with the position that individuals exercise subjective agency in designing their biographies and managing personal relationships. Divorce happens when expectations and needs are not met and individuals make the decision to leave an unfulfilling, sometimes destructive, marriage. My findings show that the Singaporean divorced respondents each had a different story to tell about why they decided to terminate their marriage, but their stories also converge around themes concerning the pursuit of authenticity and assertion of individuality.

**Designing a divorce biography: Continuing salience of personal communities**

I also support the claims advanced by community scholars that individuals are not completely autonomous: they make decisions in consultation with members of their personal communities. This is the case of my Singaporean divorced respondents who turned to their significant others for advice, discussion of solutions and validation of decisions. It is almost a truism to say that divorce creates breaks in personal relations between spouses, relatives, friends and even neighbours. Yet, my findings have demonstrated that divorce also helps to build new forms of kin, solidarity and personal community, and that personal relationships remain salient in individual lives despite individualisation. Family values did not get eroded and family relationships did not decrease in importance. In fact, in some instances, the respondents’ pre-divorce relationships with kin and friends were enhanced, following the renegotiation of familial relationships and friendships that was part of the divorce biography. Even when this did not happen and older personal ties were broken, the significant decisions in my respondents’ divorce biographies reflected the key contributions of their personal communities. The recognition and affirmation the Singaporean divorced respondents received from their personal communities was especially important.
and much needed in a social environment where divorce, although becoming commonplace, is still not widely accepted and supported.

**Designing a divorce biography: Pursuit of productivity**
The recurring theme that emerged from the analysis of my respondents’ divorce biographies was their unwillingness to stay divorced – they were eager to get that second chance in life, to get their lives back and feel good about themselves again. Their narratives revealed that they conscientiously worked through obstacles and re-orientated themselves to their new, post-divorce lifestyles, living arrangements, social identities and personal relationships. This is not to say that there was no pain, sorrow, regret, disappointment or despondence from time to time as they worked out their divorce biographies. However, at the same time, the desire to pick themselves up, start over again, move on to pursue a productive life was pronounced.

**Designing a divorce biography: Not a single story**
My findings on the beneficial outcomes of divorce encourage a shift in perspectives about post-divorce lives. The divorce biography is not just a single story of destruction, debilitation and woes as commonly assumed. Family research has typically focused on the painful aftermath of divorce, thereby promoting the poor perception of divorce and its supposedly destructive impact on community and social order. Indeed, it could even be argued that such research has helped to legitimise the lack of support for divorced families so that society is not seen as encouraging divorce. My findings challenge negative discourses associated with divorce and offer a more nuanced perspective by discussing both the precarious and productive aspects of the experience. This book has revealed that there is not just one divorce biography but many divorce biographies. What the study has done is to explore the diversity and complexity of Singaporean divorce biographies and examine the interplay of individualisation, relationality and context in their post-divorce trajectories.

**Possibilities for policy review**
By interrogating qualitative data from an Asian society with sociological theories of individualisation, personal communities, kinship and friendship primarily developed in Western contexts, I have contributed new insights to the scholarly debate and explanation about divorce and family. Moreover, my book indicates some very good sociological reasons why existing family policies in Singapore might be reviewed so that divorcees and their families could better reduce and manage divorce-related risks and attain productivity more swiftly and effectively.

The narrative accounts of my Singaporean divorced respondents have shown post-divorce support must first come in the form of removing the social stigma attached to unconventional family forms. For as long as non-mainstream family arrangements remain unacceptable and disapproved by various authorities in Singaporean society, individuals, both adults and children, in such family settings will continue to face systemic alienation and exclusion in different aspects of their everyday life. In some instances, structural conditions have in fact produced more complications and obstacles for divorcees and their families in the midst of the crisis and in their post-divorce lives. Post-divorce support in different areas rendered by the community could also be more effective and comprehensive, especially when divorcees and their children fail to receive crucial help from their personal network of kin and friends. Existing policies and public programmes could reflect greater sensitivity to their unique and challenging circumstances.

For more information and book purchase, please visit [this site](#).
On 19 June 2015, the Centre for Social Impact at the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney hosted a one-day symposium titled *Critical Social Futures: Querying Systems of Disability Support*. The symposium was supported by a Thematic Group grant from TASA to the Critical Disability Studies Thematic Group. The co-convenors of the group designed the symposium to encourage critical and imaginative engagement with the significant changes occurring in Australian disability policy. The sociological tenor of the discussion was facilitated by a keynote address by Dr Martin Sullivan, Massey University, New Zealand, and the discussant, Prof. Eileen Baldry.

**Background: New paradigms of disability support in Australia**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) marks a significant change to the way disability support is funded and delivered in Australia. The NDIS emerged from disability advocacy and the Productivity Commission report, *Disability Care and Support* (2011). However, it is occurring at a time when there have been funding cuts internationally to disability, along with changing ideas around the role of governments and markets. Governments globally are pushing for the marketisation of disability support at the same time as the emergence of international frameworks that place an emphasis on disability as a human rights issue, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. There has been considerable debate about these wide-ranging changes, with urgent attention being paid to the policy, services, and practical implications of the NDIS for individuals and their families as the rollout occurs.

Yet, as these debates reveal, the NDIS raises many fundamental issues for how we conceive of social futures and how we can adequately, imaginatively, and concretely do justice to the profound issues that disability raises, as new systems of disability support and care emerge. These issues are being tackled from a range of locations, perspectives, approaches, and disciplines. The symposium offered a space for critical research, reflection, and discussion, and a space for the forming of intersectorial relationships.

**Debates and discussions**

We invited fourteen speakers to take part in the symposium, from early career scholars to experienced researchers, advocates and people from the disability sector. TASA provided travel scholarships for two postgraduate scholars, Monika Dryburgh and Jae Eun Noh, to present their research.

Martin Sullivan’s keynote address described New Zealand’s history and experience of an insurance model of funding. Sullivan argued that despite some impressive policy moments in New Zealand, such as the *Disability Strategy* and the *Disability Action Plan*, impressive policy means nothing without implementation. A new model of disability support was introduced in New Zealand in 2010, largely to help people navigate through an individualised funding system. This change has allowed for some innovative programs, such as *Enabling Good Lives*, where people with disabilities are exercising more choice and control, partly due to different sectors pooling their funds. But ultimately, Martin illustrated, there remain key impediments to an insurance approach in New Zealand, particularly for those with complex needs. First, no extra funding was provided in this new model, and indeed, the funds are capped. Second, there is an implicit and necessary reliance on ‘natural’ rather than paid supports, that is, largely informal care networks of mothers, parents and close family networks to fill the gaps.

Sullivan’s reflections provided a crucial starting point to the day. In her response to the keynote, Eileen Baldry pointed out the issue of meeting the complex support needs of people with disabilities throughout Australia’s eight states and territories is pivotal to the success of the NDIS.

The first session of the day, *Supporting and sharing: Individuals, consumers, communities*, began with advocate Amanda Roe reflecting on advocacy as crucial to realising disability support, particularly because of the complexities of navigating more than one sector. Karen Fisher and colleagues investigated models of housing and the potential for shared housing to be both an empowering choice and an imposed necessity. Sam Arnold entertained us with a riveting presentation around paradigms of disability support, with a particular focus on the assessment tool i-Can.
After lunch, Monika Dryburgh argued that care work, the unaccounted for and unpaid work and time people with chronic illness and other disabilities must spend on themselves, needs to be better conceptualized and included in research and disability support models. Jessica Cadwallader similarly examined the unacknowledged work of the care labour force, through an incisive feminist theory analysis.

In the third session, Power, participation and rights, Louise St Guillaume and Cate Thill examined the potential for two-tiered systems of governance that people with disability on both the NDIS and the income support system in Australia must navigate. Jae Eun Noh explored the absence of disability studies in development studies, looking particularly at her case study work with disabilities in Bangladesh. Dinesh Wadiwel gave a riveting presentation at the end of a very long session with his analysis of restrictive practices and institutions as ‘Black Sites’ of unacknowledged torture.

The fourth and final session, Reimagining support, began with Lou Iaguino examining meanings of participation for people working with people with disabilities. Louisa Smith continued by examining how complexity theory can help broaden understandings of support and eligibility. Gerard Goggin concluded the day by examining how technology can be conceptualized as a form of disability support in the NDIS.

The symposium stimulated some excellent questions and discussion, to the point where we reluctantly had to ask everyone to leave the room at the end of the day (and adjourn to the pub) to continue the dialogue. This symposium is the beginning of an edited collection. It would not have been possible without the organization and assistance of Sally Daly from TASA and Will Balfour from UNSW, Australia.
Postgraduate report

Christina Malatzky, Melbourne University
Postgraduate Portfolio Leader

It is with great pleasure that I announce (if you haven't already seen it!) that the new postgraduate site, attached to the main TASA site, is up and running. We are currently in the process of uploading various materials. I would love it if as many postgraduate members as possible could register on the new site (1 minute) and upload their working thesis abstracts as well as email me with any journal article abstracts or works you would like to share on the site. Additionally, please get in contact if you find any resources or would like to see something in particular. It is our hope that the postgraduate site will help to connect postgraduates throughout the year.

The program for the Postgraduate Day, held on 23 November, the first day of the annual TASA conference in Cairns, is now confirmed and available for viewing on TASAweb. This year’s PG Day will focus on the broader skills all graduates need to develop to execute their PhD research, produce a thesis they can be proud of, and demonstrate their research capacities going forward. We have JCU’s very own Thesis Whisperer, Liz Tynan, and the ubiquitous Eileen Clark speaking to this theme, amongst others.

In recognising that academia is likely to be the intended career path for many of our members, we have recruited two highly successful early career academics, Theresa Petray and Nick Osbaldiston, to share their experiences of entering academia today. Keeping with this theme, we also have Stewart Lockie and Rebecca Olson sharing their experiences of negotiating the academic interview; Anna Halafoff, who has an extensive track record of successfully disseminating her research, discussing the art of publication; and Kristen McLean, one of sociology’s most talented tertiary educators, sharing her experiences of teaching in the social sciences.

But academia is by no means the only employment option! This is why on PG Day our members will be exposed to alternative possibilities in the not-for-profit, and government sectors. We have a representative from government, and two different not-for-profit organisations, represented by Kim Stace and Nexus’s own Sue Malta, giving accounts of working as sociologists outside of academia.

We hope that all members enjoy the program we have put together. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all committee members who contributed to the design of this program, giving careful consideration to the needs of our members and recruiting a line-up of high calibre speakers. Thank you, team. It goes without saying that if you haven’t already registered for the day, please do so! The PG Day is offered free of charge to our members.

Goodbye for now!
Christina

Christina can be contacted on (03) 5823 4526 or via email.

NEW

Postgraduate website

To visit the site, please click here or scan the QR code on the right.
Abstract

This thesis examines the ways in which feminist knowledge/s of sexual violence have been produced and reproduced in the local field of sexual assault, in New South Wales, Australia. Internationally, specialist sexual assault services are a relatively recent phenomenon. While their appearance is consistently linked to feminist activism and theorising, the precise contours of this relationship in specific local contexts has not been systematically explored. Informed by a Foucauldian epistemological approach, the thesis used Foucault's theoretical concepts of knowledge and power as methodological tools to guide the design, conduct and analysis of the study. The library of documents assembled included practitioner interview texts, service documents and governance documents such as policy manuals.

The picture that emerges is one in which an almost naturalised link between sexual assault and feminist knowledge-practices is being refracted through the lens of ‘trauma’. Sexual assault is represented as about gendered power and violence: as an act that, although experienced by individuals, is located within a structural system of gender inequality. Simultaneously, sexual assault is represented as an ontological assault, as an assault on ‘the self’, which is made visible through the concept of psychological trauma. I examine how this concept is deployed, the types of subjects produced and the ways in which it operates in the field. This thesis contributes to international feminist scholarship on the uptake of trauma discourses in the field of sexual violence, by demonstrating how sexual assault practitioners have produced new knowledge/practices and how these are shaped by being situated in specific institutional sites. In addition, it appears that trauma and feminist discourses are being made compatible in this local field. The thesis also underlines the importance of interrogating knowledge practices and the significance of Foucauldian derived analytic strategies for de-familiarising fields of feminist concern.
The inaugural *Queer Kinship and Relationships* conference was held in June in the remote northern Polish town of Zalesie. The conference was organised as a part of the research project ‘Families of Choice in Poland’, led by Professor Joanna Mizielińska at the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The conference organisers deliberately chose to host the event away from big cities and instead to hold it in a relaxed and intimate atmosphere to inspire a more personal and individual exchange of opinions between participants. Their choice was perfect, and despite some participants having a bit of separation anxiety from civilisation, the location fostered a truly family-like milieu and certainly made me feel like I was on a big family camping trip – quite appropriate for a conference on kinships!

For four days, participants from all over the world discussed a diverse range of queer kinship and relationship topics including non-normative kinship practices, same-sex parenting, polyamory, queer families, intimacy, trans* parenting, sex, sexuality, and gender. These conversations were taking place less than ninety minutes' drive from the border with Russia, where the 'promoting of non-traditional lifestyles' was made illegal in 2013 and where trans* were recently banned from driving. The significance of our location did not escape me and certainly helped make this conference even more empowering than it already was.

The conference, and the Polish project it emerged from, were inspired by the classical text *Families We Choose* (1991) by Kath Weston and the more recent work, *Same-Sex Intimacies: Families of Choice and other Life Experiments* (2001) by Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan. The families of choice in Weston's study emerged as a substitute for participants' biological kin who had been lost because of their rejection of the participants' homosexuality, or whose relationships had become distant through the participants trying to keep their sexual orientation undisclosed. Weston's research explored the ways in which gay men and lesbians were constructing their own notions of kinship by drawing on the symbolism of love, friendship, and biology. Historically, few social scripts or guidelines have existed for those living outside conventional heterosexual structures and this has led to LGBTIQ+ people inventing their own ways of constructing family. Similarly, same-sex parenting has often been uncoupled from biology and this has provided some families, or perhaps academics, with an opportunity to question the boundaries of the nuclear normative family. This conference not only gave all those attending an opportunity to explore the theories of these classic texts, but also to develop new ideas and understandings on the future of queer kinships and LGBTIQ research.

The best part of this conference was the incredible conversations we had around the breakfast, lunch, and dinner tables. While the various plenaries, parallel sessions and keynotes stimulated and expanded our knowledge on queer kinships, it was these conversations that happened later which truly energised us – and what better place to discuss the family and relationships than around the dining table? Over a bowl of Polish spaghetti with strawberries and cream (strangely delicious) old friendships were rekindled and new friendships and relationships were made. Perhaps I am just a romantic, but I truly felt like something special was taking place that week in the Polish countryside.

It was particularly exciting to see a strong Australian presence at this conference. Six of us made the journey to Poland: Deb Dempsey from Swinburne University, Damien Riggs from Flinders University, Todd Fernando and Simon Crouch from the University of Melbourne, and Elizabeth Smith and myself from La Trobe University. It is hoped that this conference will not be a one-time event and that it will be held again, with a rumour already going around of a possible future conference being held in Portugal in 2017 – start saving!

At the closing plenary, Professor Mizielińska stumbled on her words and instead of saying ‘Queer Kinship’ she used the word ‘Queership.’ Despite being a slip of the tongue, this new word was a perfect
way to summarize our shared experience of a week in the Polish wilderness exchanging knowledge and friendship among our families of choice.

Some of the Queer Kinships Conference was recorded and is available to be viewed on YouTube. Please see the following links:

http://bit.ly/queerpoland1

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer References

Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities

This scholarship is an acknowledgement that members with disabilities incur additional costs when attending TASA Conferences. The aim of the scholarship is to help defray these additional costs and promote participation by members with disabilities in TASA Conferences.

Recipients of the scholarship will receive
• registration for the annual conference in November in Cairns
• travel funding (see application form for available amounts by State)
• a certificate for receipt of scholarship
• a listing on the TASAweb scholarship page
• an opportunity to write about receiving their scholarship for Nexus

Applications for the 2015 conference scholarships will close on September 7th

From left to right, Elizabeth Smith, La Trobe University, Marta Olasik, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Brian Horton, Brown University, Luke Gahan, La Trobe University, Deborah Dempsey, Swinburne University, Juan Anzola, University of Nottingham
The glue. I think that is the best word to describe my role with Nexus. Please don't stop reading there though! I do not, for one minute, think that the production team would break down and the publication would cease the moment I departed. I would like to think there would be a slight hiccup but that's just my ego out for a run! TASA has a great many talented and passionate members like myself, (there goes that ego again!) who could easily step into the breach if the need arose. I know this because I interact with many of you every day. However, in the end, the needs of the Nexus production team are not so different from those of a tribe, a marriage, a family, a government or a sports team for that matter, they all need glue. Someone has to fill that role. The mix of glue might be different (courage, hope, trust, honesty, faith, conspiracy, mateship, administration, etc.) but, at the end of the day, it's still glue. And that's me. The glue.

Crikey, 177 words about glue and you still don't know what I actually DO for Nexus. I wonder, do I really do much for the publication anymore, aside from the glue thing? This wasn't always the case, though. Turning back the memory clock to 2008, my first recollection of involvement with Nexus was meeting one of the then editors, Christopher Fox, in Collingwood one Saturday morning to pick up the excess copies of the latest issue. Coincidently, Christopher lived a few doors down from my dentist and I had an appointment. Too easy. Back then, picking up excess copies was really all the TASA office had to do with the production of Nexus, apart from the provision of about $10,000. Money aside, I am now fully aware of the work involved in getting an issue out so I have no doubt that Christopher Fox and Nicole Asquith (the then editors) had to be glued together (sorry, couldn't help myself!) to get the issues out. How's that, in 340 words you've learnt that I provide glue and do dealings with editors from the boot of my car. And I thought I had nothing to say. Who knew that saying nothing could be such fun!

Alright, I know, you're busy…I'll get down to it. Here goes…since 2008, I have played a larger role, in varying degrees, in the production of Nexus; sourcing printers, revamping the look, taking over the layout, uploading the content, liaising with editors, chasing articles and images, liaising with advertisers and creating ads, building production time lines, organising and collecting boxes of envelopes, generating mailing lists, and printing and affixing mailing labels. By the way, I used to transport boxes of the finished publication from the printers to the TASA office on foot (borrowed trolley). Up creaking, narrow, precarious steps I'd go, carrying the boxes to the then TASA Office and carrying them back down once I had them ready for mailing. I am happy to report that since those rabbit-warren days, the office has been relocated twice, and is currently, conveniently located two doors down from the printers. Not that it really matters anymore; because of the heart-warming take-up of the electronic version of Nexus, I only need to organise mailing of this issue to 30 members.

Aside from the marked reduction in printed copies, the time I need to devote to the publication has been largely reduced by Roger Wilkinson and Eileen Clark (not to take anything away from the editors, during my time, who have been awesome: Brad West, Priscilla Dunk-West, Nick Osbaldiston, Peta Cook, Kirsten Harley, Sue Malta and Christopher Baker). Roger came on board as the Web Editor in 2011 (the role now referred to as the Multimedia Portfolio Leader). At some point during Roger's Executive term, he introduced me to InDesign (desktop publishing program), which spruced up the look no end. When Roger's term finished, he offered to continue helping with the layout of Nexus. Over the past couple of years, Roger has been doing more and more of the layout to the point where my main...
layout role is to insert the TASA ads. With Eileen doing the proofreading, Roger doing the bulk of the layout & Sue & Christopher being so editorially organised, I’m left being the glue and I think this is the way it should be. It is important that the TASA Executive Officer (EO) stays connected to the production of Nexus, on some level, because this greatly assists with editorial team transitions and the transfer of Nexus tacit knowledge, for example. Equally though, I think it is important that the production is predominantly put together by TASA members so that the EO can focus on other ways to increase TASA’s value to its members and the wider public.

On that note, I best get back in my tube and get on with it.

Nexus Editorial Team

Eileen Clark
Proofreader

What’s your role in the team?
When articles arrive from contributors, I go through them carefully and correct any errors of grammar, spelling and keyboarding. I check that proper names are spelled correctly, and expand all but the most common abbreviations. Academics are great abbreviators, but for those outside universities, especially overseas readers, these can be mystifying. Readers may not know what a DECRA is, for example. The editorial team tries to keep things simple for contributors, so we do not have a set style for submissions. The last part of my job involves putting all submissions into the same font and ‘Australian’ English, and removing any hidden data that may show up later in the production process.

What skills and attributes do you bring to the team?
It helps to be an anal retentive pedant! I love English grammar, language and words, just the whole mechanics of how we communicate in writing. I have a good eye for detail and something called field–ground independence that allows me to spot errors, and I know quite a bit about TASA and sociology in general.

How were you picked for the team?
I think I complained when the President’s name was spelled incorrectly in several issues.... When I worked as a lecturer, I taught mainly first year undergraduates. Many of them knew little about referencing, so I developed a guide and then ran classes in academic writing. I believed that academics should set a good example, and when I noticed errors in my colleagues’ handouts, I offered to proofread them. When I left lecturing, I worked for a company that offered English language editing of academic papers to people whose first language was not English.

What training do you do?
I do jigsaw puzzles and cryptic crosswords to practise my skills. I collect dictionaries and style guides. For general fitness, I go bushwalking and pump iron in the gym.

Sociology in Action Award (NEW)

This award recognizes contributions to the practice of sociology outside of academic settings. It is conferred on a TASA member who has made an outstanding contribution to sociological practice in Australia.

In this context, outstanding contributions to sociology in action highlight the value and impact of sociological methods and theories to society. This includes both broad social issues, as well as more focused issues for industry, government, business or community sectors. A TASA member will be presented with this inaugural award at the conference dinner in Cairns on Wednesday November 25.

click here
Australian Sociology NEEDS YOU!

The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) is a vibrant and dynamic association and membership provides many practical benefits, including the Journal of Sociology, the Nexus Newsletter, online access to Sage sociology journals, Health Sociology Review and other Taylor & Francis journals, Conference discounts, Conference scholarship opportunities, eligibility for prestigious awards, membership of up to 4 thematic groups, access to the members-only section of TASAweb as well as the opportunity to be on the TASA Directory of Research Expertise and to nominate for the TASA Executive.

A popular benefit is the weekly Members’ Newsletter, which provides members with access to stay in touch with and disseminate the latest information on Employment Opportunities, Scholarships, Conferences, TASA Events or other information pertinent to TASA members including members’ latest publications such as books, articles from blogs, newspapers, & journals, videos, & audio etc.

TASA encourages student membership, with discounted rates, and is particularly attuned to the interests of postgraduate members by advertising scholarship and early career positions. TASA membership provides an avenue to network with sociologists and keep in touch with sociological developments in Australia and across the globe.

TASA membership is open to anyone with an interest in sociological research. There are no registration or qualification requirements, except for the completion of the membership form and the payment of the membership fee. TASA implemented the anniversary membership model this year, which means that your membership is active for 1, 2 or 3 years, for example (depending on the year length you choose), from the date you join/renew.

JOIN or RENEW TODAY

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TASA Families, Relationships and Gender Thematic Group presents

The changing face of relationships

FRG Symposium 2015 – Melbourne

Melbourne – October 30th and 31st

Stephanie Coontz
Evergreen State College, USA
Director of Research and Education for the Council of Contemporary Families

Prof. Michael Gilding
Former TASA President
Executive Dean, Faculty of Business and Law
Swinburne University of Technology

Register online
TASA Conference 2015 Cairns
Neoliberalism and Contemporary Challenges for the Asia-Pacific
November 23-26, 2015

The conference theme is Neoliberalism and Contemporary Challenges for the Asia-Pacific. The theme is designed to appeal to academic and non-academic sociologists throughout the Asia-Pacific region. As a global structure, neoliberalism has impacted lives around the world in far more than an economic sense. In this conference, we seek to understand the global effects of neoliberalism, but especially the ways neoliberalism is experienced in different local contexts. The experiences of Australia and New Zealand are different from those of Asia and again of the Pacific. What challenges and opportunities does neoliberalism present, and how does sociology respond to those challenges?

Cairns is easily accessible from all Australian airports, and also hosts an international airport with regular flights to East and Southeast Asia, including direct links to Tokyo, Osaka, Guam, Port Moresby, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Conference delegates can take advantage of the excellent tourist infrastructure in the Cairns CBD, and might like to extend their stay to explore more of North Queensland.

With Keynote Speakers:

Professor Eva Cox

Professor Vedi Hadiz

Associate Professor Itty Abraham

TASA’s 2015 annual conference will be held in Cairns, in Far North Queensland from 23 to 26 November 2015. The location makes this conference an ideal site for sociological conversations across the Asia-Pacific region, and will make a major contribution to strengthening regional networks in sociology.

More information at: www.conference.tasa.org.au

Hosted by TASA, the Cairns Institute and the College of Arts, Society & Education at James Cook University

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS CLOSE AUGUST 28