IN OUR OWN RIGHT

“...In quoting from my article, the editors ‘sic’-ed me!”

To He or Not To He?

See Page 25

Full Story Page 8
From the Editor

This is the last issue of Nexus for 2005 and marks the end of my first year as editor. The year has been a fast learning curve as, together with Nona, I have learnt the intricacies of formatting a document, printing and proofing, and, that great horror, doing a Print Post sort. But, we have enjoyed ourselves, and hope that you have found the newsletter informative and interesting. It is difficult to provide articles of interest to all members and again I encourage you to send anything of interest for inclusion in the newsletter.

The next event on the calendar is TASA conference, which will be held in Hobart in December. I will be there with my camera to generate copy for the April 2006 issue. If there is anything in particular that members want covered, please email me with the details prior to the conference.

This issue we offer you some articles of interest – non-sexist language from Chilla Bulbeck and the public lecture given by Prof Gilding at the TASA AGM. A number of universities have provided information from their departments. We also start a new regular feature on the Health Sociology Review. There is also information regarding a number of new books.

Looking back over the year and the many incidents that we have heard about during this time, I felt that I would like to share with you a significant incident for me. At the beginning of the year, I was fortunate enough to visit Guatemala. This is a country that has been ravaged by Civil War. Since the Peace Agreement between the Government and guerilla forces was signed in the Peace Plaza of the National Palace of Culture on 29 December 1996, every day at 11.00 am, a very simple but important protocol takes place to remind everyone and call everyone to think about an everlasting peace and creating a genuine desire for being a peace ambassador to locals and foreigners. A rose held within a
monument is replaced and the “old” rose passed on to a new Ambassador for Peace – the “Changing of the Rose”.

At the ceremony on 4 February 2005, (coincidentally my birthday but I’m not saying which one) it was my great honour and privilege to receive the rose, thus making me an Ambassador of Peace, taking the message to my family, friends, community, and country with the vision of sharing it with the whole world. This simple ceremony reminds us that peace is not a given in our lives but something that each of us must work very hard at maintaining. In our current world, it is a message that is important for everyone to remember.

I wish you all the compliments of the season, and look forward to seeing you all again in the New Year.

Peace!

– Janet Grice

From The President

3 October 2005

The members of the TASA Executive Committee have recently returned home from a very successful AGM and Public Lecture held in Melbourne on 26 September. You may recall from previous editions of Nexus that a decision was made to hold the AGM in September this year in order to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporations Act 1991. This ‘roadshow’ model for the AGM was first implemented in Brisbane in June 2004. The presentation of a Public Lecture immediately following the AGM was an innovation this year – one that the Executive considers to have been very successful. Overall, the Executive members identified a number of benefits in the ‘roadshow’ model. These included enhancing the visibility (and thus accountability) of TASA and its activities to its members by addressing them at an event other than the annual conference. While the SGM at the December conference typically includes a larger body of members, moving the AGM around the country at an alternative time of year provides access to those who would not normally attend the conference. Combining the AGM with a Public Lecture was also viewed as a way of enhancing TASA’s public visibility. We would particularly like to thank Professor Michael Gilding (Swinburne University) for presenting this Public Lecture on a topic of interest to sociologists and non-sociologists alike – ‘Biotechnology, Public Policy and Public Opinion’. An event such as this is a timely reminder of the significance of sociology in public debate and public policy. Finally, on behalf of the Executive Committee I would like to thank Tim Marjoribanks and his colleagues at the University of Melbourne for organising such a successful event. The view of the Executive is that the ‘roadshow’ model is successful and we look forward to repeating it at another venue next year.

Two significant issues were raised by members at the AGM. One related to registration fees for the annual conference and, as a consequence, the Executive will be reviewing alternative pricing strategies, including the possibility of a sliding scale based on salary (similar to membership fees). The second issue related to the need to develop avenues for research areas to be identified from the ground up: that is, generated by members’ research activities rather than determined from ‘the top’. The Executive also considered this to be an important issue and while the Thematic Groups (see below) are an attempt to move in this direction, we will be exploring other ways of encouraging the participation of members in the identification of research themes that are current and topical and reflect what members are actually doing.

I would like to report on developments in relation to TASA’s Response to the Issues
Paper on the Australian Government’s Research Quality Framework (RQF) that we submitted to DEST in May. The Research Quality Framework Preferred Model was released on 9 September and the Executive prepared a submission to the Expert Advisory Group (closing date 4 October). This submission will be made available on the TASA website along with our initial submission.

TASA’s call for Thematic Groups has led to the establishment of four such groups. These are an exciting new development that provides an opportunity for the association to acknowledge and sponsor research themes that may typically not be included in TASA’s list of ‘areas of interest’ or indeed as ‘sections’ at the annual conference. Thematic Groups will be allocated a concurrent dedicated session at TASA conferences and we encourage the convenors of these new Thematic Groups to liaise with future conference organisers to seek formal inclusion in the list of conference sections.

Speaking of conferences, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you all to attend the TASA ’05 Conference at UTAS in Hobart this year. It is shaping up to be an exciting conference with the goal of encouraging the participation of ‘hardened’ academics and ‘enthusiastic’ postgraduate students – always a recipe for a refreshingly unpredictable event!

Please join us at the conference and we look forward to your participation, feedback and input at the SGM in Hobart.

– Roberta Julian

🔗 From the Treasurer

Presentation of Accounts
The audited accounts of the association for the financial year, 2004–05 have been circulated to members. The accounts are available on the TASA web and were accepted at the AGM in Melbourne on September 26.

The Student Awards and Assistance Funds
TASA maintains a separate account for these activities. Reserves of $27,000 from the previous year were increased by increased donations to the JMA in particular. As the awards for 2005 have not yet been awarded this reserve stands at $31,162.

Main Accounts
The Association receives income primarily through membership subscriptions and royalty payments. There is a small income from interest.

In 2005 we have received a significant increase in royalty payments ($59,104 as compared to $22,801; a difference of $36,303). Expenditures were slightly higher, however this is due to the timing of major bills rather than an significant change in operational costs. The Association must pay corporate tax (30%) on all income other than membership subscriptions and donations. Thus the income tax paid has risen in proportion with the increase in royalty income.

There is a total of $31,100 added to the Association’s assets (retained profits). The net assets of the Association stand at $155,397.

Comments
The sale of the Journal of Sociology to Sage publications and the income from the Copyright Agency Limited are creating a new situation for the Association. Whereas our previous activities were structured around the income generated by membership subscriptions, we are now in receipt of a flow of business income. This allows the Association to direct increased funding to its traditional activities, effectively subsidising them or to undertake new activities whose scale and duration (and purpose) may be tied to the generation of non-membership income.

The first task is to make a reasonable estimate of the scale and longevity of our non-membership income.

The second task is to implement operational procedures in our invoicing that allow us to track expenditures on the separate activities of the association; viz JoS, Nexus, Conferences, and the traditional services to members (maintenance of the office, distribution of the journal, maintenance of the website etc.) The accountant recommends that we implement
procedures for tracking expenditure through the creation of ‘Job Code’ categories in our MYOB bookkeeping system and I support this suggestion.

– Malcolm Alexander

❖ From the Health Section

The Health Section has been a large and active group within TASA for many years. It initiated the journal Health Sociology Review and the online forum eSocHealth, and it holds a health sociology day at each TASA conference. Membership procedures are informal, with members indicating their interest each year on the TASA membership form, or by attending the health day at the conference.

TASA has now sanctioned the creation of thematic groups to bring together members with similar interests, and I believe it is now the time for the health section to move towards becoming one or more thematic groups. This would bring the Health Section into line with other interest groups within TASA, and would help to make membership more transparent. There has also been interest shown in establishing a thematic group focused on mental illness, and another on critical disability studies.

The formation of a thematic group requires endorsement by a minimum of fifteen members, two of whom are identified as convenors. Membership is not mutually exclusive, so people can be a member of more than one thematic group. Applications to form groups must be approved by the TASA Executive, who call for expressions of interest by 31 July each year. Full details are available on the web at http://www.tasa.org.au/members/docs/Thematic%20Groups.pdf

I invite discussion on my ideas by email (E.Clark@latrobe.edu.au) and at the Health Section AGM in Hobart.

– Eileen Clark

❖ TASA Public Lectures

TASA Public Lectures are designed as public events that aim to foster a positive public perception of sociology as a profession and create links between sociologists and a broader community. TASA public lectures also aim to showcase sociological scholarship and provide a forum for communication between TASA members.

General guidelines

❖ Up to two TASA Public lectures may be organised each year.
❖ One TASA Public Lecture will generally be held in the AVCC Common Week in September.
❖ The convenor(s) of the Public Lecture during the September AVCC common week may be asked to combine the Public Lecture with the TASA AGM.
❖ The convenor of the TASA Public Lecture must be a current member of TASA.

Selection process

❖ TASA will call for expressions of interest for the hosting of Public Lectures early each year. The expressions of interest must contain the following:
  a. The name of the convenor(s)
  b. The name of the host institution(s)
  c. The title of the lecture and the name of the presenter
  d. A brief bio of the presenter and the justification for the selection of the presenter
  e. Media plan
  f. Draft budget and identification of supplementary sources of funding (including top–up funding)
❖ TASA Executive will make a final decision on the selection of the public lecture event(s).
❖ On the provision of a budget from the convenor and signed MOU, TASA will support Public lectures in the amount of up to $1000 ($1500 if TASA AGM is also held).
❖ TASA Public Lecture will prominently display TASA logo and promote TASA. The TASA Office will assist in promoting the event.

For more information on TASA Public Lectures please contact TASA Vice–president, Dr Zlatko Skrbis.

– Zlatko Skrbis
To He or Not To He?

The use of non-sexist language in sociological writing

- Chilla Bulbeck, Professor of Women’s Studies, University of Adelaide

Shortly after he became Prime Minister in 1996, John Howard ordered that ‘chairperson’ and other non-sexist terms would no longer be allowed in the Department Prime Minister and Cabinet’s documents.

This caused a flurry of outraged emails on the list Ausfem-polnet. In my materialist opinion, removal of funding support to the Office of Women and feminist NGOs has done more harm to the status of Australian women than the Prime Minister’s demand that we all become ‘chairmen’ again. On the other hand, I realize that it could be argued that, under Howard, all chairs will become men again, thus bringing language and experience together in the subordination of women. Even so, it has always intrigued me that Ausfem-polnet subscribers have waxed more outraged concerning challenges to the discursive order than to the economic or political order. This means that language does matter, and in a deeply heartfelt way.

Given the Prime Minister’s lead, it is little wonder that my students, including some taking gender studies classes, now deploy sexist language much more readily than they did in the heyday of feminist activism in the 1980s and early 1990s. Ships and nations have again become ‘she’ while ‘man’ is once more applauded concerning challenges to the discursive order than to the economic or political order. This means that language does matter, and in a deeply heartfelt way.

Imagine my mortification, then, when I read the following in an editorial in a recent issue of the Journal of Sociology. In quoting from my article, the editors ‘sic’-ed me!

The white worrier may live on a farm up against the drought, in a lower middle class family struggling to send him [sic] to a private school, or a privileged family where individualism and economic rationalism have eradicated any sense of community obligation


How could I have slipped in this terrible way? As my article explores, the ‘white worrier’ (adapted from Ghassan Hage, my young respondents who expressed the most antagonism to reconciliation, refugees and so on) ‘is indeed white and is more likely to be male than female’. Thus the quotation reflected the likely gender of the white worrier by identifying one example as male, and not identifying another possible example as female. This technique is employed by some writers who wish to avoid the clumsy ‘he or she’ or, for various reasons, do not want to use the plural, ‘they’. I could have deployed this strategy as follows:
The white worrier may live on a farm up against the drought, in a lower middle class family struggling to send him to a private school, or a privileged family where individualism and economic rationalism have eradicated her sense of community obligation.

I have written this note, not only to exculpate myself, but also to encourage responses from other sociology teachers (and writers). Are your students increasingly unaware of sexist language? How (if) do you correct their infelicitous phrases? Do you represent a gendered world in a gender-neutral way or do you employ devices similar to the one I chose in my article?

Agrifood Conference 2005

Regulatory contradictions in the contemporary food system

The Agri–Food Research Network was established in 1992 to provide a forum for Australian and New Zealand researchers analysing contemporary agri–food systems.

Its aim is to facilitate and maintain the exchange of information, to encourage collaborative research, and to organise conferences and meetings.

The 12th annual meeting of the Network was held 5–8 July 2005, at Rossyln Bay Inn Resort, Yeppoon, Central Queensland. The meeting was coordinated by Assoc Professor Stewart Lockie – Associate Dean (Research) Faculty of Arts, Health and Science at Central Queensland University. A total of 38 papers were presented with sessions in Ethnographies of food production, Consumption and risk, sustainability, Reconfiguring production spaces, The mantra of free trade, Auditors shall inherit the earth, Regulating risk, and Clean, green and accountable. As well as Australian and New Zealand participants, there were also presenters from Turkey and Japan.

Two books were launched at the conference dinner – Agricultural Governance, edited by Vaughan Higgins and Geoffrey Lawrence, and Cross Continental Food Chains, edited by Niels Fold and Bill Pritchard.

In addition to the plenary sessions, a tour of a local organic farm was conducted. At the business meeting, it was decided to hold the next meeting of the Network in Dunedin in late 2006.

The Agri–Food Research Network does not have formal membership. If you would like to participate in the Network, please contact the convener: Bill Pritchard, University of Sydney.

Contact b.pritchard@geosci.usyd.edu.au

Public Lecture Guest Speaker: Professor Michael Gilding

In conjunction with the AGM, Professor Michael Gilding presented a public lecture at University of Melbourne on September 26.

Professor Michael Gilding is Deputy Dean (Research) and Director of the Australian Centre of Emerging Technologies and Society (ACETS) in the Faculty of Life and Social Sciences at Swinburne University of Technology. He is the author of The Making and Breaking of the Australian Family (1991), Australian Families: A Comparative Perspective (1997), and Secrets of the Super Rich (2002). He is currently working on two ARC funded projects, ‘Biotechnology entrepreneurs: making the decision to stay in Australia or relocate overseas’, and ‘Genetic Identity Testing and the Family: The articulation between biotechnology and family relationships, politics and policy’.

His lecture “Biotechnology, Public Policy and Public Opinion” is reproduced as the Nexus Cover Story (see page 8).
Biotechnology, Public Policy, Public Opinion

– Michael Gilding

Background: ◊Technological Revolution
A few weeks ago the Vice Chancellor of my University let it be known that he would conduct a tour of my Faculty. As it happens, my Faculty is breathtakingly diverse. It includes chemistry and biotechnology, biomedicine, neurosciences, multimedia and games, psychology, politics, philosophy, communications, literature and sociology! As Deputy Dean (Research) I was involved in preparing an itinerary for the VC. He would visit various labs and facilities around the campus – the Biotech Lab, the Games Lab, the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (or CATI) facility, the Institute for Social Research, the postgraduate room, and so on.

When I compared notes with other staff members following the tour, it became apparent that the VC’s tour was basically a walk from one room filled with computers, to another room filled with computers, to another room filled with computers. In the CATI facility we do our surveys on computers. In the Games Lab students construct computer games. In the Biotech Lab, computers are used to interpret the results of DNA tests. In the Institute for Social Research and postgraduate room, everyone sits in front of their computers. The computer is everywhere, across disciplines and activities.

This is a neat illustration of why so many writers now speak of a ‘technological revolution’ in the late twentieth century. Computers created technological discontinuity across an enormous range of human activities, destroying established skills and formations in the process. There was an article in last week’s Economist about how computers are about to destroy the telephony industry. No wonder that the ideas of Schumpeter enjoyed a revival in this context, and that his phrase ‘the gales of creative destruction’ was repeated so often.

Manuel Castell’s three volume opus The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture mapped out the social dimensions of this revolution in a comprehensive way. Castells framed his account in terms of the Information Technology Revolution, resulting in what he called the Network Society. There is now an extensive sociological literature on various dimensions of this technological revolution – in particular, as far as I can tell, in the areas of surveillance, and online communities and relationships. Castells also briefly discussed what he called the ‘genetic revolution’ and the anticipated ‘blossoming of genetic engineering, and its applications, in the early years of the new millennium’ (2000: 59). This is the subject of my address.

◊Biotechnology Revolution
In fact, biotechnology is still a long way from having the same influence in our everyday lives as IT. Before I go any further, though, we need a definition. Biotechnology, broadly speaking, is the use of micro-organisms, plant or animal cells to make or modify products that are useful to humans. This definition might include the use of yeast to make beer and bread, or the use of mould to make cheese, or the use of bacteria to make yoghurt. Humans have been transforming their environment using micro-organisms for thousands of years, and in this sense biotechnology has a long history.

What distinguishes modern biotechnology is not the principles, but the techniques. Modern biotechnology operates at the molecular level, where many of the biological barriers established from speciation are removed. We cannot combine our DNA with that of another animal – or plant, or bacteria – through traditional methods. It is possible at the molecular level. It is possible because all living cells possess DNA, which carries genetic information using a simple universal code.

In this context, the discovery of cells (1665), the discovery of the principles of heredity (1865), the discovery of DNA (1944), the discovery of the helix-like structure of DNA (1953) were all necessary steps on the path towards modern biotechnology. The pivotal event, though, in terms of the emergence of an industry around biotechnology was the development of recombinant DNA techniques in 1973, when Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen constructed a gene with portions of DNA from bacteria and an amphibian.

Recombinant techniques are also sometimes described as genetic engineering and genetic transformation. In its most basic form it involves the introduction of foreign genes (or transgenes) into an organism in a way that they might be expressed. The final objective of genetic engineering is the stable and inheritable expression of a new trait in a different organism, or individual.

Like digital technology, biotechnology is a competence-destroying technology, because it
Here is an example from my own area of research. In the early twentieth century the discovery of blood types meant that in some instances it became possible to identify misattributed paternity – that is, circumstances where the putative father was not the biological father of a child. Of course many of us share blood types with people with whom we are unrelated. I have the same blood type as my step son, but I know that he is not my biological son, as I had not met his mother at the time of his birth. If I had, though, blood type testing would not have ruled me out as his biological father.

In the course of the twentieth century blood testing became very sophisticated. By the 1980s it was able to declare with up to 98% certainty whether a man was not the biological father of a child. In the late 1980s another breakthrough – Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), whereby a single cell of DNA can be reproduced in large amounts – made the tests faster and cheaper. It was at this point that blood testing for paternity more or less disappeared. The old technology became irrelevant. The new technology became ubiquitous.

Some of the old players continued to play a role. In Australia, for example, the Red Cross Blood Bank was a player in the new DNA-based industry for a short time. In the US the American Association of Blood Banks still operates as the industry organisation.

But the ball game is fundamentally different. The major providers of paternity tests are different. There is now a commercial industry, whereas there was not one before. Governments are the major customers for the tests. The industry has a whole variety of social and policy ramifications.

Applications

DNA paternity tests are one application of the new biotechnology. There are many other possible applications for biotechnology. In terms of applications that have been applied on a substantial scale so far, there are three main ones:

First, human health. DNA technology underpins the mass production of proteins such as insulin and human growth hormone; it underpins screening and testing for genetic conditions such as Downs syndrome and Huntington’s disease; and it underpins genetic manipulation of eggs and sperm for medical outcomes. In particular, genetic screening of pregnant women is now widespread.

Second, food production. This is the most controversial of applications so far, especially in Europe. There are now transgenic varieties of soybean, corn, cotton, canola, papaya, rice, tomato. Acreage under cultivation of GM crops around the world is growing rapidly – especially in Latin America and Asia. GM products are used in animal production, for example bovine growth hormone. Transgenic salmon are available in the North American market. The transgenic salmon have an extra gene that causes the fish to grow more rapidly because of an improved food conversion rate, 15% greater than in nontransgenic salmon.

Third, identity testing. Paternity testing is one example of identity testing. Forensic testing is a much bigger industry, though, and it gets promoted every night on television with shows like CSI, or Crime Scene Investigation. It has transformed law enforcement.

These applications are significant ones. But they do not add up to anything like the pervasive effect of IT. Most of us in this room rarely eat GM food. Most of us would not have had a DNA identity test. And probably most of us have not had a genetic test for a medical condition. The closest I get to biotechnology in my daily life is probably watching CSI. The claims for biotechnology and its importance rest heavily on the assumption that existing technologies will become more widespread. For example, it does seem that GM food production is winning the day, notwithstanding sustained opposition. Similarly, there are now calls for mandatory DNA paternity testing at birth.

The claims for biotechnology and its importance also rest on the assumption that there will be more biotechnology breakthroughs, and new applications. For example, the creation of new strains of genetically engineered plants and animals: the use of stem cell technology to replace failed organs: the commercial application of bioremediation, whereby biological agents are used to degrade or remove noxious pollutants from the environment: and so on.

Sociological dimensions of the biotechnology revolution

In this lecture I plan to discuss the sociological dimensions of the biotechnology revolution. If biotechnology involves technological discontinuity,
then how does this discontinuity bear upon social life, and our understanding of social life?

There are four sociological dimensions that I want to focus on.

First, I want to discuss the interface between biology and culture.
Second, I want to discuss the economic dimensions of the biotechnology revolution.
Third, I will address the role of the state – and public policy.
Finally, I want to consider public opinion about biotechnology – and the related issue of trust.

**Biology and culture**

First, the interface between biology and culture.

**Sociobiology**

This is a debate with a long history. The debate took on its contemporary shape with the emergence of sociobiology in the 1970s. The most prominent sociobiologist was the US entomologist Edward Wilson, who coined the word, but the approach gained currency through popular science writers, such as Desmond Morris.

Sociobiologists emphasised evolutionary competition and genetic determination at the expense of social explanations. They took pride in the application of what they regarded as scientific method to the study of social behaviour. In fact, as many social scientists observed, there was often not much science in sociobiology – especially when it came to identifying specific cause and effect. In effect, sociobiologists often identified what they believed was a widespread pattern of human behaviour, and then speculated about the adaptive advantages of this behaviour from an evolutionary point of view. One sociologist observed that sociobiology was a bit like Rudyard Kipling’s Just-So Stories – ‘How the elephant got its trunk’, and so forth. The explanations were unfalsifiable.

Instead, sociologists framed their analysis in terms of social construction. For example, my first book, *The Making and Breaking of the Australian Family*, was framed in precisely these terms. I wanted to demonstrate the social construction of families, and I did so through historical sociology. My point was that the dominant family form of the 1950s and 1960s – the nuclear family – was the social outcome of an historical and cultural process, not the expression of biological imperatives. One of the main historical changes in the period that I studied was the widespread application of birth control.

Given that sociobiology explains most things by the imperative to transmit genes across generations, it struggles to explain why most people increasingly directed their efforts to separating sex from reproduction.

By the mid 1990s the prominent English sociologist Anthony Giddens observed that ‘some of the passions generated early on’ by sociobiology ‘have now abated, and it seems possible to produce a reasonably clear assessment of the issues involved’. In Giddens’ words: ‘little evidence has been found to demonstrate that genetic inheritance controls complex forms of human activity’, and the ‘ideas of sociobiologists are thus at best no more than speculative’ (1997: 21).

**Evolutionary psychology**

Since Giddens wrote these words, there has been a resurgence of sociobiology, rebranded as evolutionary psychology. Prominent evolutionary psychologists include the Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker, the English geneticist Brian Sykes, and the popular science writer Matt Ridley.

In his book *The Blank Slate*, Pinker (2002: 135) writes that in the study of animal behaviour, no one talks about sociobiology anymore, ‘because the ideas are part and parcel of the science’.

‘In the study of humans’, he writes, ‘there are major spheres of human experience – beauty, motherhood, kinship, morality, cooperation, sexuality, violence – in which evolutionary psychology provides the only coherent theory and has spawned vibrant new areas of empirical research.’

‘Behavioural genetics has revivified the study of personality and will only expand with the application of knowledge from the Human Genome Project.’

It would seem that Giddens’ obituary for sociobiology was premature. Ridley’s book *Genome* and Pinker’s *The Blank Slate* are best sellers. The field has its own journal. Evolutionary psychology is flourishing. Not in sociology – but certainly in the behavioural and life sciences. It’s also reaching a wider audience.

**The Biotechnology Revolution: evidence and legitimacy**

Why is evolutionary psychology flourishing? A major reason is the biotechnology revolution. The biotechnology revolution has generated extraordinary new insights into the human genome. Famously, it is now possible to identify particular chromosomes, particular regions, and particular genes with particular human experiences. We have known since the mid 1980s, for example, that the cause of Huntington’s disease is located in a particular region of the fourth largest chromosome of the human genome. By the mid 1990s the particular gene had been found, and the mutation that led to the disease identified.

The mutation involves the repetition of the codon – or ‘word’ – CAG. For some people the repetition
occurs six times. For others it occurs 35 times. For others it occurs 100 times. As Matt Ridley (2000: 55) explains: ‘if the ‘word’ is repeated thirty–five times or fewer, you will be fine. Most of us have about ten to fifteen repeats. If the ‘word’ is repeated thirty–nine times or more, you will in mid–life slowly start to lose your balance, grow steadily more incapable of looking after yourself and die prematurely.’

Ridley (2000: 56) writes: ‘No horoscope matches this accuracy. No theory of human causality, Freudian, Marxist, Christian or animist, has ever been so precise. No prophet in the Old Testament, no entrail–gazing oracle in ancient Greece, no crystal–gazing gipsy clairvoyant on the pier at Bognor Regis ever pretended to tell people exactly when their lives would fall apart, let alone got it right. We are dealing here with a prophecy of terrifying, cruel and inflexible truth. There are a billion three–letter ‘words’ in your genome. Yet the length of just this one little motif is all that stands between each of us and mental illness.’

There are other genetic diseases such as Huntington’s, where genetics is everything – cystic fibrosis, Tay Sachs syndrome and so on. But there are many diseases which are much more complicated. Schizophrenia is one of the more complicated illnesses. There is apparently a genetic component in schizophrenia. Twin studies show that there is about a 50% chance that identical twins will both suffer from schizophrenia. For non–identical twins, the result is 20%, and for unrelated individuals it is just 1% (Little 2002: 35). By implication, there is a substantial environmental component to the disease.

It is one thing to identify the genetic causes of a disease. It is another to explain the genetic basis for complex forms of human activity.

Whereas writers such as Ridley wax eloquent on the genetic determinism of Huntington’s, they become more vague when talking about complex human activity. The complex human activity about which they are most precise is language – and I assume that this is because this is where the evidence is best. For example, Ridley (2000: 104) writes: ‘The evidence that grammar is innate is overwhelming and diverse. The evidence that a gene somewhere on chromosome 7 usually plays a part in building that instinct in the developing foetus’s brain is good, although we have no idea how large a part that gene plays.’ (The emphases here are my own.)

This is a very qualified statement. In fact, evolutionary psychology draws little on molecular biology – and by implication, it owes little in terms of its tools of trade to the biotechnology revolution. Evolutionary psychology still depends heavily upon the same tools of trade that were used in sociobiology during its first manifestation – deductive logic, twin studies, animal studies and statistics. If you read much evolutionary psychology, this is what you will read about.

In this context, the main effect of the biotechnology revolution is the immense legitimacy that it has conferred upon biological–based explanations.

Misplaced legitimacy

Sometimes that legitimacy is misplaced. My own research provides an apt example. I cannot imagine that any of you here would not be familiar with the Tony Abbott story earlier this year. Tony Abbott thought that he had adopted out a son many years ago: 28 years later he was contacted by his alleged son: whereupon DNA tests revealed that Abbott was not in fact the biological father.

At the time my colleague Lyn Turney and I were bombarded with media demands, as we were the only social scientists doing empirical research in this field in Australia. The one question that reporters invariably asked was how widespread is misattributed paternity in the general population.

We always answered that we did not know, as there is no definitive random study on the subject. On several occasions I was contradicted by other authorities, and I was challenged and ridiculed on talkback radio for not knowing the research in the field. Ironically Lyn was also quoted as the author of a study that showed a 20% misattributed paternity rate!

The figures cited during the media storm varied between 10% and 30% of the population. In the wake of the storm, I got curious. I read every study I was able to lay my hands on – both empirical studies and more theoretical studies. The empirical studies included surveys by doctors and geneticists, industry reports, and sex surveys by sociologists. These diverse sources overwhelmingly suggested that in western countries at least the extent of misattributed paternity was much lower than the figures commonly cited – probably around 1 percent in Australia, and not more than 3 percent in western countries generally.

What explains the inflated estimates? As I discussed in a recent article in People and Place, there are a variety of reasons – these include the role of fathers’ rights groups, the commercial interests of the paternity testing industry, and the way in which information is transmitted through the mass media and the Internet. But the intellectual scaffolding for these estimates came from evolutionary psychologists.

Evolutionary psychologists routinely argue that men and women want to maximise viable reproductive output, but they have different capacities to do so.
More specifically, the minimum reproductive effort for men (copulation) is much less than it is for women (pregnancy): and men, unlike women, face the risk of raising someone else’s child. From this perspective, the institution of marriage is a compromise between competing capacities and needs, within which men and women pursue their different interests. In this context, extra-marital sex and misattributed paternity are strategies designed to enhance reproductive output. On the one hand, men are more likely than women to pursue opportunities for extra-marital sex. On the other, women will take advantage of misattributed paternity when it suits them, usually to mate with higher status men whom they would be unable to lure into marriage, and have the children raised by their lower status husbands.

On the basis of this framework, evolutionary psychologists have routinely cited very high rates of misattributed paternity. It is remarkable how little curiosity they have shown in the actual evidence for misattributed paternity. The theory meant that the evidence was superfluous.

Of course, evolutionary psychologists are not the only ones with an axe to grind. Writers such as Ridley and Pinker have observed the often-reflexive environmental or cultural determinism in the social sciences. Our tools of trade – notably, cross cultural and comparative analysis – often predispose us in this way.

My point is just this. The biotechnology revolution has provided legitimacy to evolutionary psychology, but it has provided little new evidence. As sociologists, we need to be open to new evidence, but our tools of trade are also an important check against the inflated claims often made in the current environment.

The economy

\*Neoliberalism and economic sociology*

The second dimension I want to consider concerns the implications of the biotechnology industry for our understanding of the economy. Of course, this would normally be something of more interest to economists than sociologists. Since the 1980s, though, there has been a resurgence of economic sociology – if not in Australia, then certainly in the US. One of the reasons for the resurgence of economic sociology is the hegemony of neoliberal economics and market-based explanations – not just for the economy, but for social behaviour. Economic sociology is partly reactive. Another reason is the distinctive structure of so-called ‘new economy’ industries, such as IT and biotechnology. In the wake of ‘new economy’ industries, there has emerged a substantial sociological literature on what are sometimes called – consistent with Castell’s account – ‘network forms of organization’.

\*Markets, hierarchies, networks*

This literature argues that the networks characteristic of new economy industries are neither reducible to markets, nor hierarchies. AnnaLee Saxenian pioneered this argument in relation to IT. Woody Powell pioneered it in relation to biotech. As Powell (1990: 301) wrote, companies are increasingly ‘involved in an intricate latticework of collaborative ventures with other firms, most of whom are ostensibly competitors’. Powell proceeded to map the structure of the biotech industry.

\*Biotechnology clusters*

Powell observes – and many other researchers have observed – that biotech companies, like IT companies, are heavily clustered – that is, they are located close to each other, in locations such as San Francisco, San Diego, Boston, Cambridge and Munich. They are heavily clustered on account of two dynamics. First, they are located close to public research organisations – universities, research institutes, hospitals and so on – whence their technologies originated. Second, they are located close to the capitalists who provided their first round funding.

\*Biotechnology networks*

Woody Powell also observes that biotechnology companies are heavily networked – they have broad collaborative networks. He argues that within the biotech industry there are ‘severe limitations to market transactions and disincentives to vertical integration’ (1996: 197). Powell rejects an explanation for biotech partnerships grounded in Oliver Williamson’s economics-based transaction cost theory. That is, partnerships are not just about reducing transaction costs in the market. Rather, he argues, partnerships are about learning. In his words: ‘Knowledge creation occurs in the context of a community, one that is fluid and evolving rather than tightly bound or static’ (Powell et al. 1996: 118) Hierarchies are a poor vehicle for learning. Innovation does not reside exclusively inside firms. Instead it is ‘commonly found in the interstices between firms, universities, research laboratories, suppliers, and customers’ (Powell et al. 1996: 118) Powell’s network analysis of the US biotech industry supported his analysis. His results showed that the companies that grew most were not those that were big in the first place, but rather those that were best networked (Powell et al. 2005).

\*Wider implications*

Powell’s research on biotechnology clusters and networks has wider implications for economic
behaviour in the ‘New Economy’, where knowledge plays a critical role in the creation of new products. Perhaps the network organisation in biotechnology is a template for new economy industries generally. Certainly Woody Powell argues a case along these lines. Whether or not this is true, the new economic sociology – and in particular, sociological research on new economy clusters and networks – has attracted widespread interest – not just within sociology, but further afield. Industry organisations and governments have both turned their attention to the influence of clusters and networks. For example, when I attended a Biotechnology Australia conference several years ago, there was a major plenary session on biotechnology clusters, grounded in popular sociology. Commonwealth and state government reports on biotechnology and new economy industries invariably refer to the role of clusters and networks.

Clusters and networks in Australia

In an article that is to be published in the forthcoming issue of the Journal of Sociology, I argue that one of the reasons why economic sociology has not prospered in Australia is on account of the weakness of new economy industries. After all, writers such as Saxenian and Powell are based in Silicon Valley, the hub of the New Economy.

Then again, we do have a biotechnology industry. More than this: Australian governments – notably, the Commonwealth Government, the Victorian Government and the Queensland Government – have thrown their weight behind the biotechnology industry. The Australian industry – like the industry generally – is heavily clustered. It is also heavily networked. My research on the industry shows that the research networks are heavily grounded in Australia. Indeed the public research organisations are the hub of industry partnerships, providing the basis for clusters.

Commercialisation networks are a different story. They are ubiquitous and they lead out of the country – back to the world hubs of the biotechnology industry. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but it does mean that clusters and networks work differently in Australia to the way in which they work in the US or Europe – and this must have policy implications. Biotechnology is a global industry. Its organisation has distinctive characteristics that challenge conventional wisdoms about economic behaviour and markets. Our location at the periphery of this industry provides us with a unique perspective on the industry and its sociological dimensions.

Public policy (the state)

The third dimension I want to consider concerns the implications of the biotechnology industry for our understanding of the state and public policy.

The role of government

The biotechnology industry depends fundamentally upon the state. As economic sociologists observe, this is true for all markets, but it is especially true of biotechnology. Given the hegemony of neoliberalism, the articulation between biotechnology and the state is especially interesting. There are four points that I want to make in this regard.

Research and development

First, the biotechnology industry depends upon the state for the funding of public research organisations, where most discoveries are made. In turn, industry clusters are grounded in public research organisations. When I interviewed the CEOs of Australian biotechnology companies for my research on biotechnology networks, there was not the murmur of the suggestion that public funding of biotechnology research was inappropriate use of government funds. At the same time, there are tensions and divisions arising from the public funding of biotechnology research in the context of rapid technological change and commercialisation. In the US Jason Owen-Smith and Woody Powell (2001) have described new tensions and divisions in life science faculties around commercialisation.

In my own interviews with biotech CEOs, I was struck by the ambivalence of CEOs towards the public sector. For example, they referred disparagingly to its peer–orientated culture; its focus upon prestige and status; its lack of commercial orientation; and its lack of appreciation for confidentiality.

Intellectual property

Second, the biotechnology industry depends upon the state for the protection of intellectual property through patent law. The principle that a patent could be applied to recombinant DNA was only accepted by the US Supreme Court in 1981. Four judges supported the principle, three opposed it – so it was a close call.

The private company set up by Craig Ventner to sequence the human genome in competition with the public effort highlighted tensions around intellectual property and genetic information. In Melbourne, the listed company Genetic Technologies has patented non–coding DNA, and generated a similar storm of controversy. The US economic sociologist Neil Fligstein (2001) has observed that much economic behaviour is not
about competition, but rather avoiding competition. This observation is especially true for biotechnology.

When I interviewed the CEOs of Australian biotech companies, I was struck by how few of them wanted to be in what they called commodity industries, such as paternity testing, where price competition meant that the margins were small. They wanted products that were protected by patents, where there were big profits to be made.

**Commercialisation**

Third, the biotechnology industry depends upon the state for support in the commercialisation process. This is the case at an obvious level in relation to industry policy. It operates in terms of coordinated support for commercialisation. It also operates in terms of industry subsidies and grants. Notwithstanding neoliberalism, Australian governments have actively supported the biotech industry across the board.

There is some fascinating comparative research concerning Australia and Sweden on this issue. Hans Löfgren and Mats Benner (2003: 25) found that Australian governments have implemented ‘a set of comparatively coordinated regulatory and other measures to foster the growth of biotechnology’. On the other hand, the Swedish industry has ‘a pattern of fragmentation and relatively weak state steering’. Their findings confound expectations, based on the characterisation of Sweden as a ‘strong state’ economy and that of Australia as a neo-liberal society ‘lacking in state steering capacity’.

More generally, Löfgren and Benner observe: ‘The relative open-endedness of the search in these countries for a mode of regulation of biotechnology suggests that the role of the state in economic restructuring today is fundamentally distinct from that of earlier periods’ (2003: 25).

Maybe it is, maybe it isn’t. This issue warrants much closer attention.

Whatever the case, industry policy can happen at many levels. It has often been observed that the US defence budget is a form of industry policy, notwithstanding the high moral ground of the US on neoliberalism. In the case of biotech, the industry has received an immense boost through the government’s concern with bio-terrorism.

There are other ways in which governments can support the industry as a customer as well. In my own research, for example, I have been trying to explain why there are so many more DNA paternity tests per capita – five times as many – in the US than Australia. One major reason is welfare policy.

In the US, the government is a huge customer of the tests through the Office of Child Support Enforcement. It insists on the tests and pays for them, because it wants to make sure that biological fathers support their offspring. In Australia the equivalent agency – the Child Support Agency – has no capacity to enforce DNA paternity tests. The government is a major customer of the industry, but to a far lesser extent than is the case in the US. So much for the characterisation of the US as a country where the government is less involved in industry and markets than is the case in Australia!

**Legitimacy**

Finally, the biotech industry depends upon the state for legitimacy. In the early 1980s, stringent public safety requirements in relation to genetically engineered organisms cleared the path for commercialisation in the US. Most biotech companies are directed towards diagnostic and therapeutic products. Their products must get through the hurdles constructed by the state to ensure the safety of these products. Above all, they must meet the demands of the Food and Drug Administration in the US.

Governments around the world are struggling to keep up with the legislative ramifications of biotech applications. In Australia the Australian Law Reform Council have published several large reports – one on Protection of Human Genetic Information and another on Gene Patenting and Human Health. The former report included a substantial chapter on DNA paternity testing, my own area of interest. The major issues there are the existence of non-accredited laboratories, and the availability of tests without the knowledge or consent of the mother. The report also addressed access to genetic testing, the regulation of genetic research, the regulation of genetic databases, regulation of population screening, discrimination in insurance, discrimination in employment, and the use of DNA in criminal proceedings. It recommended, following the British example, the creation of a new institution – a Human Genetics Commission of Australia.

In the US, Francis Fukuyama (2002) – a champion of neoliberalism on account of his famous book *The End of History* – has also recommended a new institution to oversee biotechnology on account of its wide-ranging implications.

My general point is this: the state is inextricably involved in biotechnology, at many levels. The involvement of the state in biotechnology makes a nonsense of neoliberal orthodoxes about the role of government. The industry depends upon government. There is a raft of sociological issues embedded in this relationship. In Australia so far sociologists have barely addressed these issues.
Public opinion (trust)

Fourth, I want to consider the implications of the biotechnology revolution for our understanding of public opinion – or more precisely public perceptions of science and technology.

Risk society

As Anthony Giddens has observed (drawing upon the work of Ulrich Beck), in earlier times human societies experienced risk as ‘coming from the outside, from the fixities of tradition or nature’. In contrast, our society ‘lives after the end of nature’, where risk is ‘manufactured’, ‘created by the very impact of our developing knowledge upon the world’ (2002: 26). Our world is not more dangerous than was the case in earlier times, but it is one ‘where hazards created by ourselves are as, or more, threatening than those that come from the outside’ (2002: 34).

In turn, most people are forced into ‘a much more active or engaged relationship with science and technology than used to be the case’ (Giddens 2002: 31). Not least, this is because scientists themselves disagree with each other. In the context of what Beck called ‘risk society’, the issue of trust becomes more salient – and there is a growing sociological literature on trust.

For example, the Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka – in his book entitled Trust – observes that social and technical complexity have generated ‘new and expanding threats and hazards of our own making’, requiring an ‘enlarged pool of trust’ (1999: 12–13). The biotechnology revolution exemplifies the issues arising in the literature on risk society and trust. This is most obviously the case in relation to the application of biotechnology to agriculture.

Public opinion as a hurdle

The Canadian biologist Mark Winston has some interesting things to say in this regard. In his book Travels in the Genetically Modified Zone, Winston attempts to explain the successful opposition campaign against GM foods in North America and Europe – and we might as well add Australia, given the current state of play here. Winston is cautious about the science of GM crops, but fundamentally sympathetic. Given the absence of the GM equivalent of a ‘Chernobyl’, Winston thinks that the opposition campaign to GM agriculture should not have been so successful. More than this: the vast PR resources of industry and government should have swept away the savvy but financially constrained opposition movement. Winston concludes that the ‘blatantly self–servings attitudes of industry’ in introducing the new technology with minimal independent testing or regulation eroded public confidence (2002: 128).

He writes (2002: 129): ‘Biotechnology opponents have grasped one simple public relations fact considerably better than industry. Science and data cannot substitute for actions and statements that engender trust’.

There is now no ambiguity about the fact that public opinion is a major hurdle for the biotechnology industry. Public opinion can trip up a new technology in which billions of dollars have been invested. Companies and governments are increasingly recognising that they ignore public opinion at their peril.

Surveys of public opinion

In this context, there is an increasingly large literature on public opinion and biotechnology. In Australia a number of academic groups have done work in this area. Government agencies are also doing work in this area. Biotechnology Australia, a multi–departmental federal government agency responsible for managing the National Biotechnology Strategy, has conducted its own surveys.

As some critics have observed, there is a sense in which such surveys can become tools for the management of public opinion, designed to legitimise biotechnology rather than facilitate public engagement. On this account they are very critical of the use of surveys at all in measuring public opinion. My view is one of horses for courses. Sometimes surveys are useful, sometimes they are not. There is no substitute for large–scale surveys, though, in terms of getting an overall sense of public opinion, notwithstanding limitations. At the same time, the way in which surveys are designed can have a very significant impact on what is found.

Australian surveys on GM agriculture

Consider, for example, 2 surveys: one run by Jonathon Kelley and his colleagues through the International Social Science Survey (ISSS) based at Melbourne University, and the other run by Australian Centre for Emerging Technologies and Society (ACETS) at Swinburne University.

The ISSS survey is much more detailed about genetic engineering. It asked about specific examples of genetic engineering. For example, the survey script goes like this: ‘Recently, scientists have made an improved variety of tomato that has a better texture, costs less, and might make a valuable export. They turned off one of its genes, which would otherwise have made the tomato go mushy.

...Continued on page 23
AGM Review

Ian Woodward

Important developments

The TASA Annual General Meeting was held at Melbourne University on the afternoon of Monday September 26, attended by the Executive and around 30 other TASA members. Planned in conjunction with the TASA Public Lecture, delivered by Prof Michael Gilding of Swinburne, both were most successful events. Thank you to Tim Marjoribanks and the sociology team at Melbourne University for their assistance in helping plan these events.

The AGM is a chance for TASA members to hear about the Executive’s activities over the past twelve months. One of the most interesting developments has been the formation of Thematic Groups (TGs), formed around member’s research interests. After calling for submissions from interested groups in the first six months of 2005, TASA received 5 proposals. The minimum criteria for the formation of a TG are the willingness of 15 TASA members to join, including two TG convenors. Each of these TGs is now planning their activities for the Hobart conference. The TGs are in place for 3 years, having web presence through TASA web pages and dedicated sessions at conferences.

The existence of TGs could potentially transform the nature of future TASA conferences. Along with each conference local organising committee organising streamed sessions around major themes, each TG may play a role in calling for papers and developing conference sessions. In Hobart, each TG has one dedicated session, but there may be opportunity to expand this in 2006. Please let us know how you feel about this development.

The five TGs, with convenors and contact details, are:

- **Cultural Sociology**
  Brad West
  Brad.West@flinders.edu.au
  Eduardo delaFuente
  Eduardo.delaFuente@scmp.mq.edu.au

- **Economic Sociology**
  Michael Gilding
  mgilding@groupwise.swin.edu.au
  Malcolm Alexander
  m.alexander@griifith.edu.au

- **Media**
  Tim Marjoribanks
  tkmrarj@unimelb.edu.au
  Andrew Kenyon
  a.kenyon@unimelb.edu.au

- **Mental Illness**
  Pauline Savy
  P.Savy@latrobe.edu.au
  Katy Richmond
  k.richmond@latrobe.edu.au

- **Social Stratification**
  Julie McMillan
  jmrice@coombs.anu.edu.au

Please contact the organisers of each TG if you are interested in becoming involved. Alternately, if you are interested in forming a new TG to begin at the TASA ’06 conference, the Hobart conference is the perfect opportunity to mobilise interest. The Executive will call for new TGs to be proposed by July 2006.

Wishing you all the best for the completion of semester 2, and a productive and (or) restful vacation.

TASA Conference Update

- Roberta Julian
- Rob White

5–8 December 2005
UTAS, Hobart campus

The organization of the TASA’05 Conference is well underway and progressing smoothly. The people at the PCO (Conference Design) are proving to be extremely helpful and efficient. They have taken on a wide range of duties including organizing the review process for refereed papers.

Conference website
http://www.tasa.org.au/conference

Have a look at the detailed and interesting conference website! Almost all the relevant information has been uploaded onto the conference website. Keynote speakers are in the process of being finalised and their
details will soon be on the web.

Keynote speakers
The following keynote speakers have been confirmed:

*Community, Place and Change*
- Professor Roger Burrows, Department of Sociology, University of York, UK

*Professional Issues: Anti-intellectualism and Sociology as a Vocation*
- Professor Chilla Bulbeck, Gender Studies and Labour Studies, The University of Adelaide
- Professor John Carroll, School of Social Sciences, Latrobe University

*Public Lecture – The Global–Local Community: Where to Now?*
- Dr Natalie Jackson, School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania
- Mr Jim Everett, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC), Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)

*Bob White Memorial Lecture*
This annual lecture hosted by the School of Sociology and Social Work has been held in September in the past two years. We are holding it in December this year to coincide with the TASA Conference. Well-known Australian sociologist and long-standing TASA member, Yoland Wadsworth, will be delivering this address.

*TASA Awards*
The Stephen Crook Memorial Prize for the best authored monograph within the discipline of Sociology published in 2003–2004 will be announced at the TASA’05 Conference Dinner in Hobart in December.

The Jean Martin Award for the best PhD thesis in social science disciplines from an Australian tertiary institution submitted to the Award Committee will also be announced at the TASA’05 Conference Dinner in Hobart in December.

*Refereed Conference Proceedings*
110 papers were submitted to the refereed papers section this year! I would like to thank the Section Convenors for the work they have done in organising the reviewing of papers submitted to the refereed papers section for publication in the conference proceedings.

*Honours Poster Session*
One of the innovations for the 2005 Conference will be the opportunity for Honours students to present their research in poster format. This is an exciting innovation, proposed by the Postgraduate Representative on the TASA Executive, that will extend our involvement and support among newly-emerging sociologists in Australia.

*Celebration of Australian Sociology*
The co-convenors at this year’s conference have also decided to include a display of publications by Australian sociologists. We encourage TASA members, in particular, to bring along a few copies of any book(s) they have had published in the past year. We will be putting together a display of these books to celebrate the health of Australian sociology!

*Health Day and Postgraduate Workshop*
The Health Day and Postgraduate Workshop are both being held on Monday 5 December. Both are shaping up to be exciting events to kick–start the conference. Check out the details on the conference website.

*Conference Dinner – Meadowbank Estate Winery*
The conference dinner is included in the cost of full registration again this year. This should encourage as many delegates as possible to attend to ensure another lively event! The setting for the dinner at Meadowbank Estate is absolutely magic and we have secured ‘The Giant Hamsters’, an extremely popular Tasmanian band, to entertain us. For those who prefer to talk at dinner, there will be tables set up away from the band to ensure you’re not drowned out. For
those who love to dance, The Giant Hamsters are well known for their capacity to entice people onto the dance floor!

Additional Tours
For those of you interested in experiencing the beautiful environment in Tasmania – the ‘clean and green’ state – three tours have been suggested before and after the conference:
- Peppermint Bay Cruise
- Tahune Airwalk
- Bruny Island

Wilderness Coast
For those with other interests, contact Tas Vacations for information on alternative highlights (and individual itineraries). Their contact details are available in the Conference brochure and on the Conference website.

Submission of Abstracts for Full Papers and Work in Progress Papers
Deadline – 14 October
Registration deadlines
Early Bird – before 15 October.

Conference Brochure
Download the conference brochure from the TASA website:
http://www.tasa.org.au/conference
We look forward to your company at the TASA ‘05 Conference in Hobart!!

PG Postings
Summer School in Sweden
The topic for the two-week intensive summer school course was "Sustainable Development of Global Society". Undergraduates, Postgraduates and professors from around the world met in the beautiful town of Lund, facilitated by Lund University and Universitas 21, to exchange ideas and skills on issues relating to global climate change and global health problems.

Professors Tor Hundloe and Geoffrey Lawrence attended Universitas 21 with the eight students from UQ that were selected to attend – three from Social Science: Kiah Smith (Development & sociology), Carmen Ariotti (Arts/law), Shelley Moore (Arts) and five from Environmental Management: Ross Westoby, Matthew Crisp, Shannon Ireland, Fleur Vogel, Kailee Parkinson

My experiences and insights:
The experience in Lund was so rewarding, both personally and academically. The coursework exposed us to cutting edge research into climate change (trends and projections) and global health problems (such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality etc.), as well as lectures by prominent European experts in these fields on the causes and possible solutions to these issues. During classes we were given the opportunity to debate and critique these issues amongst a group of people from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. This was perhaps the most valuable part of the process – students of different ages, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, from different countries and various professional fields (we had doctors, engineers, social scientists, economists, environmental managers, development specialists, climate change scientists, political scientists, architects, anthropologists) spent much of the time discussing how these seemingly 'scientific' problems are largely social problems requiring social and political solutions. This became a HUGE issue over the course of the two weeks, and almost every conversation contained some reference to how we need integrated solutions to these problems, taking into account the need for social, economic, political and sometimes cultural changes as well as a real commitment on the part of policy makers to influence positive change. Through group project work, we analysed the problems and solutions associated with sectors contributing to global climate change and health, energy, transport, agriculture and waste. We did this from various national perspectives first, and used this knowledge to devise global solutions, which recognised the synergies between these sectors, the environment and health. We also went on field trips and had access to some great development software.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect was being witness to the process of healthy debate, discussion, sharing, compassion and intelligence of such a diverse group of young people. The passion
and dedication of so many of the people I met has made me even more optimistic about our capacity to find solutions and implement them. Climate change may be the largest problem for the future, but the discussions at Lund have showed me how intimately connected it is with the broader issues of poverty, social justice, human rights, environmental ethics, global political systems, and consumption patterns. Knowing that there are so many passionate and active people working on this was very inspiring.

We also owe a great deal of thanks to the organisers and Lund University for their wonderful generosity and hospitality: we were exposed to traditional Swedish dance, fantastic food, the beautiful countryside, the nightlife, the 'sustainable bicycle lifestyle', and the friendliness of the people there.

- Kiah Smith

July 2005

Uni News

Sociology at UQ

- Margery Mayall

Geoff Lawrence has been crossing the globe for his sociological pursuits. He presented a paper at the 11th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management in Ostersund, Sweden in June (entitled ‘The Regional Approach to Natural Resource Management in Australia: Achievements and Continuing Concerns’). He was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Rural Research at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim in June and a Visiting Professor at the University of Bergen in July. He accompanied students from UQ to a Universitas 21 Summer School on sustainable development at the University of Lund, Sweden in July/August. His co-edited book Agricultural Governance: Globalization and the New Politics of Regulation was published by Routledge in June. Geoff was also on the Steering Committee of the United Nations/Qld Government ‘Engaging Communities’ conference in Brisbane (see below).

Zlatko Skrbis is a co-convenor of a forthcoming workshop on second-generation migrants. Sponsored by the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences, the workshop will be attended by nearly 20 academics that work in the field and will be held at St Lucia on 1-2 November. Zlatko was also on the conference organizing committee of the recent conference ‘Sites of Cosmopolitanism: Citizenship, Aesthetics, Culture’ – see http://www.griffith.edu.au/centre/cpci/cosmo/ for details of speakers and papers.

Lynn Cook has arrived from Oxford University to begin a 3-year UQ Postdoctoral Fellowship in Sociology. Lynn’s research is in the areas of family, policy and inequality in a comparative context. She has recently presented papers and served as a discussant at two International Sociological Conferences in the United States: the RC28 Conference on Inequality and Mobility in Family, School and Work, and also the RC19 (Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy) annual meeting. She has just had a paper accepted in the American Journal of Sociology. The paper is titled "Doing' Gender in Context: Household Bargaining and the Risk of Divorce in Germany and the United States". Also newly arrived is Tabatha Wallington, who in her position as Postdoctoral Research Fellow will be focusing on the social aspects of environment and natural resource management. Tabatha joins us from Murdoch University’s Department of Environmental Science, where she investigated the role of ecology theory in conservation policy.

Robyne le Brocque has submitted her PhD thesis and has started work at CONROD (Centre for National Research on Disability and Rehabilitation) in the medical school. She will be working as a Research Fellow managing a research project...
on post traumatic stress disorder and children with traumatic brain injury. This is an exciting opportunity to bring a social science perspective to an issue, which would usually come under the domain of psychology or medicine.

Finally, a number of staff and students participated in the recent Engaging Communities conference, sharing the limelight with luminaries such as Mary Robinson, Jose Ramos-Horta, Robert Putnam and Stephen Coleman. As well as the contribution made by Geoff Lawrence (above) and David Ip in the conference organisation, the following people presented papers: Jo-Anne Everingham, Barton Loechel, Jenny Moffatt, Ted Rosenblatt, Kiah Smith, Peter Walters and Natasha Wright (details of the conference and papers can be found at http://www.engagingcommunities2005.org/).

Central Queensland University

- Dr. Aminul Faraizi
The discipline has appointed two new lecturers, Dr. Merryn Ekberg and Dr. Nik Taylor in tenurable positions. Both come with impressive research and teaching backgrounds. Currently, the discipline is going through a review process and the report is due soon. Associate Prof Stewart Lockie was appointed as Associate Dean Research earlier this year. Other news:

- Dr. Merryn Ekberg has her third publication since starting her position with us in July 2005. The title is: Maximizing the Benefits and Minimizing the Risks Associated with Pre-natal Genetic Testing in the journal of Health, Risk, and Society.

- Dr. Aminul Faraizi and Dr. Jim McAllister have received support from the Honorable Judi Moylan MP for his investigation into the global garment industry with special reference to Bangladesh and the impact of globalization on child labor countries.

- Dr. Nik Taylor (Sociology) and Dr. Tania Signal (Psychology) have had another paper accepted "Attitudes to animals: Demographics within a community sample" in the journal Society & Animals. In collaboration with Professor Kevin Ronan (Psychology), they have also been successful in the first round to secure funding to develop an information/help pack for parents who are concerned that their child is deliberately harming animals.

- The minor changes to our course SOCL19070 Health & Medical Sociology have been approved by the Chair of the Academic Board.

UTAS

- Prof Frank Vanclay

Applied social science scholarships at UTAS
Several PhD scholarships (APAI) in the area of applied social science (rural social research) are available through the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research at the University of Tasmania. The students will work in the Rural Social Research Group under the direction of Prof Frank Vanclay. The projects include one about improving community engagement processes funded by the CRC Forestry; another that is about rural fire services as sites for building social capital, which is funded by the Bushfire CRC. Scholarships are also available for any worthwhile project that is about applied social science in an agriculture or natural resource management setting. For more information, or to discuss a project, please contact Professor Frank Vanclay, phone (03) 62262618, Frank.Vanclay@utas.edu.au

Information is also available on http://www.agsci.utas.edu.au/vanclay.htm.

University of Sydney

- Jen Harrison

Postgraduate Studies Information Session
The School of Social Work and Policy Studies at the University of Sydney offers programs of postgraduate study by coursework and research. The combination of social work and social policy units of study provides the foundation for the School’s intellectual focus on equity, social justice and social empowerment in its teaching and research.

20 UNI NEWS
The School has a broad range of research interests such as: specific population groups (including women, young people, old people, migrants and Aboriginal Australians); theories of social work practice; comparative studies of welfare policy and practice in a range of socio-cultural settings (including Europe and Asia); the history and theory of the welfare state; and a range of social welfare and community sector issues and social policy areas.

Staff maintain a broad range of community involvements, including sitting on local, state and national advisory boards, serving on community welfare organisations' boards, and providing advice to a range of welfare agencies.

Coursework Programs

- Master of Social Work
- Master of Policy Studies
- Master of Social Work (International)
- Graduate Certificate in Dying, Death and Palliative Care
- Graduate Certificate in Professional Practice Supervision
- Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Policy and Practice

Research Programs

- Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Social Work
- PhD

To find out more, come to the Social Work And Policy Studies Postgraduate Studies Information Session. Monday November 7th 2005, 5–7pm, Staff Common Room, 401, Education Building, Manning Rd, University of Sydney

For further details about the PhD or MPhil in Social Work, contact Dr Zita Weber: 9351–6896, z.weber@edfac.usyd.edu.au

For further details about coursework programs and the DSW, contact Dr Fran Waugh: 9351–4207, f.waugh@edfac.usyd.edu.au

For further details about all postgraduate programs – by research and coursework – in Social Work and Policy Studies at the University of Sydney, visit our website: www.edsw.usyd.edu.au/future_students/postgraduate/index.shtml

Rural Placements

Sydney University has a long history of placing social work students in rural and regional areas for their field education. Since 2002, this has been supported through an online program of placement classes and peer support and accountability groups. This online program means students on placement outside of the Sydney metropolitan area need not miss out on any of the support structures offered to their peers.

We are currently planning our rural placement program for 2006, and are very keen to hear from agencies outside of Sydney interested in getting involved. If you would like to hear more about our current initiatives, or have any new ideas of your own, please contact Dr Jen Harrison on 9351–6897, j.harrison@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Melbourne Uni

In 2005, the Sociology Program at The University of Melbourne has hosted two significant public lectures. On 24th May, Judy Wajcman, Professor of Sociology at the Australian National University, delivered the 4th Annual Ashworth Lecture in Sociology, which for the first time was also part of the prestigious Dean’s Lecture Series in the Faculty of Arts. Before a large and engaged audience, Professor Wajcman spoke on the topic of ’TechnoFeminism: gender relations in a digital age.’ Through her lecture, Professor Wajcman revealed the critical role that sociology has to play in interrogating technological transformation. The Ashworth Lecture has now become a well-established part of the Sociology Program calendar, providing an important means for the Program to engage with the public. Judy Wajcman’s lecture certainly continued this tradition, following on from the 3 previous Ashworth lectures presented by Bob Connell (2002), Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2003), and Barbara Pocock (2004).
On 26 September, Michael Gilding, Professor of Sociology at Swinburne University, presented The Australian Sociological Association Public Lecture 2005 hosted by the Sociology Program. In front of a good sized and receptive audience, Professor Gilding spoke on the topic of ‘Biotechnology, Public Policy and Public Opinion’, and revealed the vital contribution that theoretically informed sociological research makes to the understanding of biotechnology. The 2005 TASA Annual General Meeting, also hosted by the Sociology Program, preceded the public lecture. The AGM was well attended by members, and the success of the overall event indicates that there is merit in continuing with the format into the future. In addition, the organisation of the lecture and AGM through collaboration between TASA and the Sociology Program at Melbourne University provided an excellent opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas between the TASA Executive and local members.

In other news from the Program, two of our recent PhD graduates have succeeded in securing academic positions. Kay Cook, whose PhD thesis was titled ‘Women, family, work and welfare: A critical analysis of social citizenship’, is Lecturer in the School of Health and Social Development at Deakin University. Merryn Ekberg, whose PhD thesis was titled ‘Genetic expectations: Genetic risk in the risk society’, is Lecturer in the School of Psychology and Sociology at Central Queensland University.

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**SPECIAL ISSUES 2006**

- **Revisiting Sexualities and Health – May 2006**

ISBN 0–9757422–5–6

- Guest Edited by Victor Minichiello and David Plummer, University of New England

This Special Issue of *Health Sociology Review* calls for papers that provide fresh insights into sexuality, identity and health. Late modernity has witnessed a growing critique of discourses which frame sex as deviance, or view sexuality as essential and normative (rather than as multiple and diverse sexualities and identities), or treat sex as a public health problem.

Recently, there has also been a better understanding of the diversity of sexualities and the importance of sexual expression on intimacy, relationships, identity, quality of life and health. Some authors have also provided insights into the sexuality, experiences and rights of groups previously left out of the terrain, such as older persons, or people with a disability.

Equally important has been the notion that through sexualities we can obtain a better understanding of society and how, for example, the current health care system influences the way individuals experience sexual health: whether as positive or negative.

We are interested in receiving papers that further extend this knowledge and offer insights on aspects of sexuality, identity and health across the life span and focus on diverse populations groups and sexualities. Papers that focus on differential access to health care services, exclusion from or discrimination in health care promotion or clinical trials, or on the design or delivery of sexual health services are also welcomed.

The issue will be published in mid 2006 as a special issue of *Health Sociology Review*, and also released as a course reader (ISBN 0–9757422–5–6). Please follow the author guidelines and submission procedures set out in the *Health Sociology Review* website: [www.healthsociologyreview.com/author-guidelines.php](http://www.healthsociologyreview.com/author-guidelines.php). If you have any issues you would like to discuss with the Guest Editors:

- **Victor Minichiello** (Tel. +61 267 73 3862) vminichi@pobox.une.edu.au
- **David Plummer** (Tel.+61–2–6773–3652) dplummer@pobox.une.edu.au

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22 GOOD HEALTH!
Social Equity and Health alludes to several important and inter-related questions: one being the social determinants of health and the distribution of health and illness among different social groups in society; another the inequities in health and mortality as such; and third that inequities in health are caused or at least dependent on the unequal distribution of resources in our societies.

These issues are high on the international research agenda in social epidemiology and public health research, but have attracted less attention among sociologists. Still, they are closely linked to core issues in sociology, such as the interplay between social structures, individual and group-level actions and individual outcomes.

With the launch of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health, which is ‘charged with recommending interventions and policies to improve health and narrow health inequalities through action on social determinants’, these issues are also put to the forefront of global health policy making.

Health Sociology Review (ISSN 1446–1242) is now planning a special issue on Social Equity and Health. We invite papers addressing any aspect of this broad area, covering substantive but also methodological issues of importance. The issue will be published in mid 2006 as a special issue of Health Sociology Review, and also released as a course reader (ISBN 0–9757422–8–0). Guidelines for authors can be found at www.healthsociologyreview.com. Papers should be submitted to hsreditorial@e–contentmanagement.com

---Continued from Cover Story, page 15---

After careful study, a government regulatory committee believes that the new tomatoes are safe. Most scientists agree. But a few are worried and some nation-wide environmental groups say the tomatoes might be dangerous and should be banned. If clearly labelled, are these new tomatoes a good idea or a bad idea?’ (Kelley 2005: 3)

The survey found that 59% of respondents thought the tomatoes are a good idea: 29% had mixed feelings, and only 13% thought they are a bad idea. More generally, Kelley concluded that the ‘Australian public is broadly supportive of genetic engineering although a large minority have doubts’ (2005: 1). The support, he observed, was fundamentally instrumental, on account of approval of the agricultural and medical goals of the genetically engineered products.

The survey that we did at ACETS was much less detailed, and provided much less information to respondents – which may be a weakness, or strength. We simply asked respondents how comfortable they felt with various technologies – ranging from the Internet and mobile phones, through to genetically engineered plants for food and genetically engineered animals for food.

Respondents were asked to rate their comfort on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means very uncomfortable and 10 means very comfortable.

Let’s focus here upon genetically engineered plants for food. The mean response was 4.0 – uncomfortable. The most common response was 0 (very uncomfortable), nominated by 22.9% of the sample. Only 4.4% of the sample said they were very comfortable with genetically engineered plants for food. We reached the conclusion that support for genetic engineering was at the very least heavily qualified and contingent. We also found that respondents who trusted public research organisations and government regulatory authorities were most likely to be comfortable with genetic engineered agriculture (Gilding and Critchley 2003). Our survey questions led to very different findings to those of the ISSS group.

The ISSS survey provided their respondents with much more information. Forget for the moment whether or not the information about genetically engineered tomatoes was reasonably presented (Different groups would have different views on this.) The simple fact of providing this information would influence the responses.

As for our own survey, there is no question that the meaning of feeling ‘comfortable’ or ‘uncomfortable’ about genetically engineered plants for food is ambiguous. It could be that people feel uncomfortable about GM plants, but they would nonetheless support their availability. Similarly, it could be that people are uncomfortable with GM plants in general, but would nonetheless support specific applications – say, genetically engineered rice. Whatever the case, there are going to be many more surveys about genetically engineered agriculture – as well as other biotechnology
applications. In many ways, we are talking here about legitimacy again, and the role of the state in creating a regulatory framework that inspires trust among citizens. Markets on their own cannot create this trust. They rely upon governments. Again, sociological research will play a pivotal role in this process.

**Final thoughts**

Finally, some closing observations:

**Engagement with evolutionary psychology and neoliberalism**

First, I was surprised in the course of preparing this talk by how much I engaged with evolutionary psychology and neoliberalism. I had not planned it this way. Evolutionary psychology and neoliberalism are approaches that took their current form in the 1970s, and have flourished since then. Both approaches encroach upon the established domain of sociology. They both claim – in different but related ways – to provide better explanations for social phenomena than those provided by sociologists.

I was struck by how little effect the biotechnology revolution has had on evolutionary psychology in terms of its substantive findings. Modern biotechnology has bestowed prestige upon evolutionary psychology, but that prestige is not matched by great leaps forward in content or method. I was also struck by how much biotechnology confounds neoliberalism. We would not have biotechnology if neoliberal orthodoxies prevailed. A sociological perspective on biotechnology involves engagement with evolutionary psychology and neoliberalism, and challenges their orthodoxies.

**Implications for diverse fields of sociological inquiry**

Second, the biotechnology revolution cuts across a variety of sociological activities and interests. Its implications are not restricted to a narrow specialisation within the discipline. The biotechnology revolution has already left its mark in diverse fields of sociological inquiry. In this talk I’ve addressed biology and culture, the economy, the state and public opinion. I’ve also addressed – in passing – human health, family relationships, social networks, legitimacy and trust. Moreover, we are still in the early days of this revolution. As biotechnology is applied across a wider range of activities such as employment and insurance, there will be more call for sociological analysis of its impact. In close connection, the boundaries between what is natural and what is social will change – as they already have in relation to paternity. In turn, we will need to make social decisions – including public policy decisions – about what was once ordained by nature and tradition.

**References**


Participation and Governance in Regional Development:
Global Trends in an Australian Context

Editors
- Robyn Eversole, RMIT University
- John Martin, Latrobe University

‘This collection explores some of the most important issues facing Australia and most other countries around the globe: that is, how to deliver benefits to rural citizens and to the environment, while ensuring that marginalized and excluded groups are enrolled in decision-making. This is essential reading for those seeking both to understand emerging regional forms of governance and to assess the ability of the new arrangements to deliver more sustainable outcomes for non-metropolitan areas.’ Professor Geoffrey Lawrence, University of Queensland, Australia

Questions about participation and participatory governance are at the cutting edge of development theory. This book provides a cross-disciplinary perspective on participation and governance issues in regional development — exploring current trends toward increased citizen participation in development decision-making and the establishment of governance structures to facilitate participation. The book focuses on how the concept of participation is playing an increasingly important role in all aspects of regional development theory, policy, and practice. Participation and Governance in Regional Development brings together a group of respected social researchers from across Australia to consider these issues. It brings the Australian experience to the global debate and places Australian regional development experiences within their broader international context. For information: contact the publisher at: ashgate@bookpoint.co.uk

In Our Own Right:
Black Australian Nurses’ Stories

Editors
- Sally Goold OAM
- Kerrynne Liddle

This book grew from the first meeting of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses (CATSIN) held in August 1997. It consists of 23 individual stories of Aboriginal nurses. Each of these stories is powerful in its own right. As a white Australian, I was humbled by these extraordinary people’s experiences. As a woman, I could empathise with some of the battles that they had fought but I had no real concept of their other battles until reading this book. Each story tells of racism – both institutional and individual – that these writers have had to endure. While there are some men included in the book, it is primarily the stories of strong women – the writers, their mothers, grandmothers, sisters and extended families. The stories are written in a matter-of-fact manner with no bitterness or resentment. In many cases, reading between the lines, it is obvious that there are many hurts – both
The stories become more powerful as a result of this understatement.

The book contains an insight into a profession that is seen from the outside as caring and nurturing. It is unfortunate that these ideals are not always reflected within the profession. These stories hopefully will assist changes to be made in various areas so that all nurses, regardless of colour, are evaluated in terms of their humanity. It provides lessons to educators and practitioners that should not be ignored.

Without wishing to trivialize the book, it had, for me, two very important messages that were either explicit or implicit in the stories. The first is "I am not a victim". The writers chose to follow their own destinies rather than remain within the constraints imposed on them by society. The second is "Be strong, girlie, be strong", two messages that I would pass on to my own daughters.

The publishers are offering a 10% discount to TASA members who purchase this book. See insert for publisher details.

Review by Janet Grice

Motherhood: Power and Oppression

Editors
- Andrea O’Reilly, York University
- Marie Porter, University of Queensland
- Patricia Short, University of Queensland

The book is aimed at expanding academic knowledge of motherhood, from a feminist perspective, looking particularly at how motherhood is simultaneously a site of power and oppression. Enriched by the cross-cultural diversity of contributors and of their work, the book focuses attention specifically upon the embodiment of motherhood, representations and practices of motherhood, and experiences of separation in motherhood.

It provides a new perspective in that it focuses on oppression and power in motherhood, and the selected papers develop this focus through the lenses of diversity and commonality. Many of the chapters highlight the strength, courage, stamina and power that mothers display in situations of oppression. They bring to the reader's attention the many ways in which mothers, even as they experience oppression, are not passive victims. As mothers, women are portrayed as active agents creating the best conditions they can for themselves and their families in the variety of contexts.

The papers included in the proposed volume are all predicated upon the value of knowing the wisdom and agency in the experiences of real mothers. The book includes work drawing upon psychological, historical, sociological, literary and cultural approaches to inquiry and upon a wide range of disciplinary perspectives — qualitative, quantitative, corporeal, legal, religious, fictional, mythological, dramatic and action research. Thus, the volume not only covers a wide range of subject matter but also illustrates ways of doing feminist research and practice.

With the exception of one previously published paper Bartlett’s “Scandalous Practices …” of which details are provided below, all proposed chapters are original work prepared for this volume. With the exception of O’Reilly’s chapter, “Maternal Power and Oppression…” earlier versions of all papers included in this volume were presented at the Conference on Motherhood: Power/Oppression held at the University of Queensland, Australia, July 6-8, 2001.
Sasha Lezhnev combines deep academic knowledge to explain the underlying causes of violent warlord politics with practical guidelines for creating peace in affected societies. Through wide ranging interviews and careful analysis, Lezhnev shows what went wrong and why. It is a disquieting analysis that provides important lessons for future policies. This book is a 'must read' for anyone puzzling over the issues of state collapse, warlord politics and their remedies." – William Reno, Associate Professor of Political Science, Northwestern University

"Lezhnev's book provides tremendous fodder for policymakers interested in more than a two-dimensional view of the world of the warlord. If we are truly serious about preventing the growth of terrorism, addressing the roots of conflict, and dismantling the infrastructure of arms and drug trafficking, we will heed his recommendations well. From the vantage point here on the outskirts of a displaced camp in northern Uganda, this agenda seems to be more urgent than ever." – John Prendergast, former Director of African Affairs, National Security Council and Special Adviser to the President, International Crisis Group Perpetuating wars from Somalia to Afghanistan, modern warlords are a growing player on today's international scene. Sasha Lezhnev in Crafting Peace: Strategies to Deal with Warlords in Collapsing States demonstrates how certain elements of globalization are furthering warlordism in the global South.

Lezhnev defines the concept of modern warlords and argues that they should be classified as a type of insurgency. Based on interviews with ex-combatants, policymakers, and academics, Crafting Peace analyzes the underlying political environment that gives rise to warlords and effective strategies to deal with these actors. Case studies include two states, which have had success in combating warlordism, Sierra Leone and Tajikistan. Crafting Peace analyzes warlords in depth, including their organizational structure and the context in which they operate, ultimately exploring the effectiveness of various short and long-term strategies to deal with warlords. Instead of focusing strictly on economic causes, the focus here is on the extremely frail political/security environment that allows warlords to rise up, seize power, and profit in the midst of chaos. This deeper political context, underanalyzed in other texts in terms of its effect on warlordism, is crucial to understanding both why warlords arise and how they should be dealt with.

This book suggests a two-pronged strategic approach to help craft peace: unseating certain intransient warlords through immediate, coercive measures; and taking away the anarchic environment in which these actors thrive by implementing several policies aimed at rebuilding law and order over the long-term. Sasha Lezhnev discusses this approach by looking at real-world cases in Sierra Leone and Tajikistan. Crafting Peace presents a new way of looking at eliminating warlords and restoring peace in war-torn states that will prove essential to both scholars and practitioners in international relations and political science.

It is available from the publisher and is discounted at Barnes and Noble: http://search.barnesandnoble.com/booksearch/isbnInquiry.asp?userid=lp2mwUDCxg&isbn=073910957X&itm=1
Forth-Coming Conferences

* TASA Conference: Community, Place, Change
5-8 December 2005, Hobart
www.tasa.org.au/conference

* Sentencing Conference: Principles, Perspectives, Possibilities
10-12 February 2006, Canberra
Inquiries: http://law.anu.edu.au/nissi/sentencing.htm
Email: sentencing@law.anu.edu.au

* The Ideas Festival
29 March-2April 2006, Brisbane
www.ideasfestival.com

* World Congress of Sociology: The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalising World
23-29 July 2006, Durban, South Africa
http://www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2006/index.htm

* Senses of Place:
Exploring Concepts And Expressions Of Place Through Different Senses And Lenses
6-8 April 2006, Hobart
A joint conference of the Place Research Network, the National Museum of Australia, the Mountain Festival, and the Community, Place and Change Theme Area of the University of Tasmania. The conference will be an exploration of place in multiple formats and media. The conference will go far beyond the traditional concept of 'conference' as well as of 'place' to create a venue for place to be experienced as a sense, analysed as a concept, and expressed creatively. Abstract submissions are invited for consideration by the Conference Committee and are due by Friday 11 November 2005. A publication from the event is intended.
http://www.utas.edu.au/placenet/senses

* TASA Conference 2006: 'Sociology for the mobile world'
4-7 December 2006
To be co-hosted by University of Western Australia and Murdoch University

* For further information see Nexus June 2005 issue

Contributions to NEXUS are welcome: please send all articles, photos (jpeg: 300+ resolution), and images to the editorial team:
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