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Feature Article

Rural Sociology: Introducing the TASA Rural Issues Thematic Group

By Lyndal-Joy Thompson (ABARES) and Merrilyn Crichton (CSU)

The TASA Rural Issues Thematic Group (RITG) began in late 2010. Its current conveners are Merrilyn Crichton (CSU) and Lyndal-Joy Thompson (ABARES). The diversity of our group reflects the diversity and complexity of issues that can be addressed as part of rural sociology. We have found our group members’ research to be centered around food security, community outcomes of change and change processes, the impact of mining on agricultural and rural communities, health, population, inclusion, farming and farmers, rural community development, the environment, and rural issues for developing countries.

continued p. 4
The School of Justice, Queensland University of Technology is pleased to announce the dates for the 2nd Crime, Justice and Social Democracy International Conference. The conference will take place from 8–11 July 2013, at the Garden Point campus in Brisbane.

We are also pleased to announce the following International Key-note Speakers for the conference:

- Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe, University of Cambridge
- Emeritus Professor Tony Jefferson, Keele University
- Professor Walter S. DeKeseredy, University of Ontario

Additional international speakers will be announced later in 2012.

The First Call for Paper Submissions: Closing Date – 22 February 2013
A second call for papers will be announced early in 2013.

If you require further information, please visit the conference web-site at:
www.crimejusticeconference.com
or
email the acting Conference Convenor, Juan Tauri: juan.tauri@qut.edu.au
Letter from the Editors

We are delighted to bring you this bumper second issue of Nexus for 2012, which demonstrates the potential of this newsletter to provide TASA members with a forum for sharing news about what we are doing and dialogue about issues of importance for sociologists in Australia.

The Rural Issues Thematic Group responded to our call last year to produce a special issue of Nexus for 2012. Our thanks to convenors, Lyndal-Joy Thompson and Merrilyn Crichton, for coordinating contributions which showcase some of the diverse work being undertaken by members of the thematic group.

The academic boycott of academic publisher, Elsevier, to protest its practices around publishing and pricing, has attracted recent media attention. The University of Sydney’s current round of redundancies, based initially on crude number-of-publications tallies, and the steady stream of emails from vanity publishers and journals soliciting contributions, also speak of the pressures to publish and some of the challenges involved in doing it well. We’re very grateful to those sociology academics, from various career stages, who provided their views and advice for our editorial feature on publishing. It makes fascinating reading and we hope will prove especially useful for PhD students and early career academics.

Last issue we put out an ongoing invitation for commentary pieces on matters of relevance to the discipline, and we have been thrilled with the response, presented in this issue. Complementing our editorial, Val Colic-Peisker issues a warning about fake refereed journals; and Raewyn Connell has shared her essay, originally presented to the Sydney Academic Board, about the effects of neoliberalism on higher education, our teaching and our research. Alan Scott, convenor of the Applied Sociology thematic group, discusses the social implication of “offshoring” of jobs, while Eduardo de la Fuente invites us to reflect on faddishness in sociological theory, and the advantages of ‘mature’ social theory.

This issue also contains gems in its news features and regular columns. In our second history-of-sociology column, Peter Beilharz writes beautifully about Jean Martin, who also features in a new encyclopaedia of Australian women leaders to which Helen Marshall urges us to contribute. Migration, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism group coordinators report on a recent Sydney lecture on ‘interculturalism’ by Tariq Modood. In our Teaching column, Pol McCann provides insights into the experience of teaching sociology in a private setting. PG rep Theresa Petray brings us up-to-date on the Postgraduate Day for TASA, and President Deb King brings us the latest news following the July TASA Executive meeting.

May the conversations continue!

Nick Osbaldiston and Kirsten Harley
Nexus Editors 2012/2013.

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Follow TASA on Twitter at: @TASA_2012
Letter from the President

Having just finished our July Executive Meeting, I have plenty to report. We had birthday celebrations to decide upon, business to attend to and strategic issues to ponder! I always come away from TASA Executive meetings with admiration for the energy and ideas that its members have for ensuring TASA works in the best way possible to promote sociology in Australia and provide opportunities for sociologists to showcase their achievements. But before I move onto some of the issues we discussed, it is worth noting that we are in an election year (for TASA) and the call for nominations is on page 17. Please consider standing and shaping the future of your professional association. I am more than happy to answer your questions if you would like to find out more about what is involved (deb.king@flinders.edu.au).

Thematic Groups
Thematic Groups have been a fantastic success. We now have over 20 groups, three of which have more than 100 members; they generate a range of activities and opportunities for members throughout the year; they are a core part of the conference, including its organisation; and we get great feedback about their contribution to promoting sociology (and TASA). We have now streamlined and systematised the administration of the TGs; increased the funding, but kept it competitive; put in place measures to ensure that TGs are treated equitably; and instigated formal mechanisms through which the contribution of the work done by TG convenors is recognised. On the other hand, we have clarified TASA’s relationship to the TGs in terms of our policies, our expectations regarding the timing of events (i.e. so that they don’t clash with TASA’s scheduled events), and the ways in which TG events should promote TASA.

“...we are in an election year (for TASA) and the call for nominations is on page 17.”

Media profile
We also had a long discussion about raising the profile of TASA and TASA events through ‘new’ and ‘old’ media. The recent TG event held by the sociology of religion group is a great example of how TASA events can generate media interest. We are reviewing where this can be done more often and will be seeking advice about generating media interest around Public Lectures and the Conference (amongst other things). We have also made inroads into ‘new’ media: we are on Twitter, have a Facebook page for postgrads, have extending the Nexus–TASAweb interface to become more interactive, and will be providing podcasts or video links for some TASA activities. We will also be looking for events that are supported by TASA to incorporate a more explicit ‘media strategy’. TASA’s 50th Anniversary is a wonderful opportunity to generate interest in sociology and we intend to make the most of it!

Sociology and the shrinking of social science departments
Another strategic issue discussed by the Exec was that of the shrinking of departments in which sociologists work. Over the past year several universities have announced cuts to the social sciences, and this has consequences for sociologists (both present and future). It is easy to mount a critique of these cutbacks in terms of its short-sightedness, its under-estimation of the value of social sciences to community and economic development, and the capture of university hierarchies by principles of economic rationalism. In the end, though, jobs are being lost and opportunities squandered. Resistance is one strategy, and TASA adds its support to those who are actively trying to prevent these changes. Rebuilding is another strategy. Many of us have been through this cycle before and know that renewal is likely to take place. Sociologists also need to take leadership in this project, so that when departments expand we are well placed to take advantage and create further opportunities for sociology. In the end, we need to keep thinking strategically about these issues and how they might change the landscape of sociology.

continued p.2
*New* Annual Report

We are making changes to our AGM so that it becomes an exchange of information, rather than an exercise in report giving. In the lead up to the AGM we will be releasing an Annual Report that will summarise TASA's activities and achievements throughout the financial year. The Annual Report will be available on TASAweb, and we have designed it to be comprehensive and informative; certainly a vast improvement on the previous way we disseminated information. At the AGM we will still have brief reports from the President, Treasurer and Journal Editors, but then we would like to open up the meeting so that you have a chance to air your views, and let us know what you would like TASA to be doing. We look forward to your feedback on these changes.

Academic Standards

We are very close to releasing the Academic Standards for Teaching and Learning in Sociology. We thank everyone who provided feedback, which has been valuable. This is currently being incorporated into the final document which we will post on TASAweb before sending to TEQSA/ Standards Panel.

“*We are keen to make the FoR codes more relevant to the type of sociology being conducted...*”

Field of Research Codes

From last year’s meeting of senior academics we were asked to consider revising the Field of Research Codes. Although the ABS is not undertaking their review for a year or two, we have been advised to put in a submission which will be considered in due course. We are keen to make the FoR codes more relevant to the type of sociology being conducted (we can't all be doing sociology ‘other’), and we have been consulting with members about their views. If you have ideas about this, please let us know. We will again hold a meeting of senior academics at the conference, where we will discuss the submission and other topics of interest.

Birthday Celebrations

There will be three main ‘events’ tied into the 50th: a Public Lecture and Masterclass by Michael Burawoy in February; a Public Lecture in July (EOI’s will be called for); and activities around the conference in December. In between we have several other initiatives that showcase sociology over the past half century. We will be producing ‘rolling’ histories of Australian sociology, canvassing postgrads to see which Australian books are being read, and uploading podcasts and video clips of interviews with key sociologists. JoS, HSR and Nexus also have plans for celebrating our milestone.

Keep your eyes on the e-list and TASAweb for more information or, for the more tech savvy, follow us on Twitter (@TASA_2012) to keep really up to date!
Rural Sociology:
Introducing the TASA Rural Issues Thematic Group

More specifically, members present at our first planning day, held in October 2011, identified areas of interest including (but not limited to):

- Adaptation and resilience of agricultural and rural communities
- Social inclusion
- Environment – relationships with the environment and environmental management in agricultural and rural areas
- Community engagement for participation in policy processes and decision-making
- Impact assessment of policies and programs
- Urban/rural interface; the peri-urban
- Lifestyle migration (in- and out-migration e.g. ‘tree’ and ‘sea’ changers)
- Population (demographics and the implications for rural communities e.g provision of infrastructure and services such as education and health).

For those of you who, like Merrilyn, have students asking what you can do with a sociology degree, being a part of the RITG has provided all that is needed to give good guidance. This is because, like our research interests, the employment base of our membership is also diverse. We have members in the public service, CSIRO, teachers, extension officers (people employed to explain current research and innovation to farmers) as well as academics. This membership base reflects the highly practical nature of rural sociology and its focus on contributing to solutions to social issues through input into policy-making processes.

The planning meeting really was a great day. We not only established our common ground and the extent to which we can contribute to real change in the regions, we also developed a solid plan for the group. One of our main priorities is to raise the profile of rural sociology in Australia; our field has traditionally been small, focussed on agricultural extension and in more recent times arguably superseded, subsumed and subordinated by environmental sociology. We would like rural sociologists to be able to badge themselves as such and not as environmental sociologists instead.

Already this year we have supported CSIRO based members Tom Measham and Rachel Williams to pull together industry and social researchers over the very ‘sticky’ issue of mining in rural communities. This effort is already seeing fruit in terms of an ongoing network of researchers and industry members who will be working together. The RITG is looking forward to being part of this collaboration and is looking at ways of supporting such collaborations while maintaining the integrity of research and positive outcomes for regional communities. Our future looks bright. Many of our members are headed for Lisbon (Portugal) at the end of July to present at and attend the World Congress of Rural Sociology, and we have many more activities in our 5 year plan including:

- An edited book that can act as a rural sociology text. This book will cover a variety of topics, problem and issues addressed by rural sociologists.
- A special issue of a journal covering the mining workshop. A special issue of Rural Society is currently in progress.
- A special edition of a sociology journal.
- A public lecture.
- Hosting a national rural sociology conference – which may include bidding to host the International Rural Sociology Association conference.

So as you can see we expect to be quite busy, and this is on top of having our own stream at the TASA Annual conference. We welcome new members, and are grateful to the National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia (www.nirra.anu.edu.au) which has supported the work of our group since it began.

For this thematic group issue of Nexus we have commissioned pieces that cover several themes of interest in rural sociology. John Scott (UNE) and colleagues have written about the rural and regional mental health CRN recently established, while Daniela Stehlik (currently visiting at ANU but usually director of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation) and Flo Frank question the nature and meaning of ‘engagement’ in regional policy making and planning. We also feature two PhD students, Jane Cowie (University of South Australia, Whyalla) and Beau Austin (Charles Darwin University). Jane’s work has taken on the issue of how rural and regional young people transition from school into the labour market and higher education, while Beau explored three Indigenous enterprises in rural and remote North Australia.
They say that in research we stand on the shoulders of giants. In Australia we are lucky to have a strong base of rural sociologists (Professor Geoffrey Lawrence, Professor Margaret Alston, Professor Stewart Lockie, Professor Frank Vanclay, Professor Daniela Stehlik, Associate Professor Ian Gray to name just a few) whose exceptional work in areas such as rural and regional governance, child protection, gender and regional community development has provided the foundations of our field of interest. In our Rural Issues Thematic Group, we are even luckier because we have had the support of many of these people in the development of the group. As such, we would like to use our final lines to congratulate thematic group member, Professor Geoffrey Lawrence of the University of Queensland, who was recently elected President of the International Rural Sociology Association for the next quadrennial period. This should do much to raise the profile of Australian rural sociologists.

Collaborating to improve Mental Health in Rural Australia

Tinashe Dune, Virginia Mapedzahama and John Scott
University of New England

Sociology, with its long-standing preoccupation with processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, has tended to locate certain social concerns, such as mental health, as being largely urban phenomena or ignore the broader spatial dynamics which impact on such phenomena. Mental wellness of people living in rural regions of Australia is of vital sociological concern. Rural regions depend on a diversity of healthy, positive citizens to work and contribute to communities long into their lives. The reality is the opposite, with studies across Australia finding people living in rural regions and remote areas to be generally of poorer health than those in urban areas. While the prevalence of mental health disorders is similar between urban and rural, there is excessive mortality in rural areas from mental health disorders, mainly due to suicide. Australian statistics indicate avoidable deaths, including those with links to mental health, continue to be high in outer regional and remote areas. Further, access to effective healthcare appears to have deteriorated in some regions.

In 2011 the University of New England and its partners (Sydney, La Trobe and NSW, and the Hunter New England Area Health Service) secured $4.8M in federal government funding under the Collaborative Research Network (CRN) Scheme to research mental health challenges across rural regions. The CRN, among other things, will investigate health workforce productivity and citizen self-care, including suicide risk. It also aims to build a network collaboration with integrated mental health research capacity, especially with regard to Indigenous health questions.

A number of project elements in the CRN have strong sociological themes, including a sub-theme of ‘sexuality, well-being, health and inclusion’. Projects linked with this theme take up the challenge for rural studies to engage with neglected rural ‘others’ who have been painted out of the rural landscape. Sociology has tended to construct rural landscapes from the perspective of the dominant social groups residing in rural settings. Since the 1970s, there have been efforts to correct this bias, especially with regard to the invisibility of specific populations in rural research, such as women. Other groups, such as gay, lesbian, transsexual and bisexual people still lack visibility.

Sexual health and well being are critical elements to achieving wellness and good mental health in any society. Rural communities have both the general challenges associated with achieving optimal sexual health and well being and challenges specific to rural localities. For example, The Second National STI Strategy (2010-2013) identifies priority populations for action in the prevention and management of STIs (sexually transmitted infections). Three priority population groups identified in the strategy are covered here: young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and gay men and other men who have sex with men. Each of these priority populations has particular needs and challenges associated with living in rural communities. Such communities can be relatively conservative in their social attitudes and have well-documented service access issues including, but not restricted to, privacy, confidentiality, distance, mobile and intermittent services, staff turnover and lack of access to non-clinical support services. To address such issues, the CRN is developing a number of projects which will examine, among other things: how to achieve inclusive communities where people of different sexualities are not subject to stigma and discrimination; how best to educate young people in rural communities about sex, sexuality and sexual health; and, how to address barriers to successful delivery of nationally best practice sexual and reproductive health services.

For further information about the CRN and its current projects, contact Kerri Fitzpatrick by phone +61 2 6773 2070 or email kfitzpa4@une.edu.au or visit our website http://www.une.edu.au/crn-mentalhealth/
‘Engagement’ – Some Reflections

Daniela Stehlik (Professor of Sociology, Charles Darwin University) and Flo Frank (Common Ground Consulting, Canada)

While we may all agree that language is a fundamental building block of our sociological imaginations, it is more important that we regularly critique our uses of language as the words we use become ‘loaded’ with unstated assumptions and entrenched in our daily use. One obvious example is ‘community’; ‘sustainability’ is another.

This article proposes that the word ‘engagement’ (to engage, engaged) has become one such word, and in this brief reflection, we suggest that it is high time to unpick the load of assumptions that it now carries. ‘Engagement’ is now most commonly used in relation to the power dynamics between the state and stakeholder groups. The word has been ‘captured’ by the dominant player in that dynamic – the state. It has become a shorthand for: the state has a goal, a target, a plan, and it needs ‘engagement’ with its citizens to achieve its purpose. Engagement is not the same as consultation or communication, although it may include consultation and well-practised communication and marketing strategies. The word engagement is rarely used at the community level, but when it is it implies participation and active involvement – based on an established relationship.

Our point here is that the current usage of ‘engagement’ has captured and overwhelmed the previous meaning of the word. Where ‘engagement’ appeared to once mean a promise (as in ‘engaged to be married’) the term no longer implies a promise of any kind. One might argue, based on previous government-community involvements in Canada, that a “healthy” relationship must be in place in order to “engage” in any real way. This is particularly true in Aboriginal communities where a history of distrust of state motives or institutional intention exists. The notion of a flirtation or curiosity, rather than a promise based on a relationship, is more likely to be the case.

Engagement steps right over the idea of a healthy, shared or equitable relationship, and has come to symbolise the power dynamics between citizens and the state. It often becomes part of the accountability statements government agencies must make to meet their auditing requirements. Have you consulted with your communities? Yes, we have engaged with them. Or in the context of funding and grants, the funders and recipients see the notion of relationship and engagement quite differently.

It might be worthwhile to ask: what is the genealogy of the term ‘engagement’? What is the pathway by which it has now become over-used and ubiquitous? It appears to be a concept that gradually transited from psychology into the broader social and political sciences in the early 1990s. There is some limited evidence of its being used in the late 1990s, specifically in the inter-relationship between social capital and civic engagement in the US (see Putnam) but its complete absorption into public service concepts and policy platforms in Australia and Canada was well established and obvious by the mid 2000s. It became popular as a way to indicate that the public had input or “a say” in policy and program design based on consultation, with no research or survey. The idea of engaging a community or group was directly connected to community development in Canada in 1995 when the term was incorporated into federal government grants that were designed to be “community-driven” and engagement the vehicle to prove that they were.

Two brief case studies in Australia offer examples of this complete and pervasive transition over the past decade. The first comes from 2003, when the Beattie Labor Government in Queensland (as part of its Smart State initiative) created a Community Engagement Division within the Premier’s Department. As part of its communication strategy, this Division produced a statement that defined engagement as: ‘… the many ways in which governments connect with citizens in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services’ (‘Engaging Queenslanders’, 2003, p. 2). In its 8 pages, the document uses the term engagement and its variants some 125 times and its longer term public service legacy is therefore not surprising – the www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au website now has over 6000 ‘hits’, ranging from education to transport across all agencies. The transition over this ‘decade of engagement’ has indeed strengthened the relationship between accountability in program delivery, and the involvement of ‘stakeholders’ (see http://www.accountability.org/about-us/index.html and their AA 1000 standards document). One example comes from the...
Australian Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship which produced a Stakeholder Engagement Practitioner Handbook (2008), linked directly to such accountability standards. A further example from the federal sphere is the Murray-Darling Base Authority’s (MDBA) (2009) Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. This document no longer includes any definition of ‘engagement’ (as it would be assumed that most ‘stakeholders’ would now be comfortable with the term) but instead explains in extensive detail just how such ‘engagement’ will be undertaken. Engagement here is now presented primarily as a top-down process and all activities identified are those specifically initiated by the MDBA, including forums, meetings, stands at field days, web pages, facts sheets and workshops, designed to assist it in meeting its four stated objectives (p 4). It is interesting to reflect on just how valuable such ‘engagement’ proves to be, as the MDBA has recently completed a second ‘round’ of community consultations following the breakdown in community acceptance of its previous 2009/10 Plan.

Within the social sciences generally, and sociology in particular, we need to maintain our critical edge by rejecting the soporific nature of the term ‘engagement’ and its implied meaning that people are involved in decision making in true partnership with various power structures. The term is overused, untrue in its actual definition and has become something of a joke – or at least resented by those who have been “engaged” upon or consulted or have become a checkmark on a government employee’s to-do list. True engagement is worthwhile when it means a promise, a relationship and shared respect and responsibility – this is what communities are aiming for regardless of what it is called.

Details of references are available from the authors.

Transition from School for Rural Youth, my PhD

Jane Cowie, University of South Australia

I am in the final year of my PhD at the University of South Australia’s Centre for Regional Engagement, on the Whyalla Campus. My thesis reports on regional, rural and isolated young people’s experiences of the first year of the transition from school and how these compared with their aspirations, plans, and expectations. Reasons for, and effects of, transition choices were also explored.

My interest in this topic was influenced by a number of factors, the first and foremost being that I grew up in a rural area. I discovered – through my own experiences and those of my friends – that the first year after leaving school posed many challenges and barriers related to living in a rural area with little access to further education and limited employment opportunities. A number of my friends were unable to attend university to pursue their career goals; and many of those who moved to the city experienced adjustment difficulties. As a result, I was curious to find out how other rural youth found the transition from school. Was it just us that faced these barriers and found the transition difficult, or was this a common phenomenon?

Data were collected through a longitudinal panel study conducted over 15 months with 33 young people from three different regional and rural locations in South Australia. The towns chosen for the study were Whyalla (regional centre/industry based); Roxby Downs (isolated mining town); and Kimba (agricultural/farming area). These towns were selected for comparison due to their differences with respect to population size, industry and economic base, and remoteness classifications.

Participants were each involved in two individual semi-structured in-depth interviews. The first round of interviews took place during participants’ final months of Year 12 of high school and gathered information on their aspirations, plans, preparation for, and expectations of their first year after leaving school and factors influencing these. The second round was conducted at the end of the

“The cost of moving to the city and living independently was identified as the main barrier.”

continued p. 8
following year. It explored participants’ experiences of their first year of the transition from school; the congruency of these with their expectations, plans and goals; and influencing factors.

The study revealed the strong attachment many regional and rural youth have to their communities and the internal battle they fight in deciding whether to move away in pursuit of their desired careers or remain in their home-towns and settle for less preferred employment and study options. A majority of participants held high aspirations whilst in Year 12, with 26 intending to attend university within the following two years. However, many faced numerous barriers to higher education participation, which resulted in only three attending university the following year and thirteen deferring. Many more interviewees joined the workforce or gained apprenticeships than had originally planned to. The cost of moving to the city and living independently was identified as the main barrier. However, closely following this were the fear of being a long distance from family, friends and support networks and difficulty adjusting to living in the city. These barriers, which prevented some from pursuing their original aspirations, also often complicated the experiences of those who did move in pursuit of their career goals.

Sustainable Australian Indigenous Enterprise in rural and remote Northern Australia, my PhD

Beau Austin, Charles Darwin University

When one considers demographics, land ownership and institutional dominance, Indigenous people are the majority in rural and remote northern Australia. However, the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians living in these regions generally ranks poorly. Given this disadvantage, combined with the fact that the Indigenous population continues to grow at a rapid rate and that Indigenous land ownership will continue to expand, a key issue in rural and remote northern Australia is securing sustainable Indigenous livelihoods.

The range of market-based livelihood opportunities available to people living on the remote Indigenous estate remains limited; some people have realised livelihood income by participating in industries such as art, mining, natural resource management, payment for environmental services, tourism and the commercial use of wildlife. Outside these industries, there have been very few market-based opportunities for income generation.

For my doctoral research I have focused on investigating the factors of success for Indigenous Wildlife-based Enterprises (IWBE). An IWBE is simply defined as: ‘a commercial enterprise owned and/or operated by Indigenous people that is based on the sustainable use of wildlife’. By harnessing locally available assets, IWBEs can facilitate economic development, cultural preservation/restoration, increase natural resource management capacity and enhance autonomy.

Intentionally adopting a ‘glass-half-full’ approach, I used participant observation and semi-structured interviews to investigate three already successful IWBE initiatives in northern Australia:

- In the West Kimberley and Darwin, some people have been able to use the fruit of Terminalia ferdinandiana commercially. Known commonly as gubinge, billy-goat plum or Kakadu Plum, this fruit has the second highest concentration of naturally occurring vitamin C in the world. It has been used in products like nutraceuticals, cosmetics, perfumes, jams, chutneys and beer.
- The Gulin Gulin Buffalo Company operates a swamp buffalo mustering operation out of Bulman in southern Arnhem Land. Gulin Gulin use helicopters and modified 4wds to muster the animals before they are transported to Darwin for live export. Buffalo beef is in high demand in Indonesia and Malaysia, especially for the celebration of Hari Raya.
- The Djelk Wildlife Enterprises have supplied saltwater crocodile hatchlings to farms in Darwin for more than 20 years. Hatchlings are produced from wild harvested crocodile eggs from the Maningrida region. These crocodiles are used to produce exclusive saltwater crocodile leather goods, which can be found in upmarket shops in Milan, Tokyo and New York.
There were seven key factors that underpinned the success of these enterprises:

- An abundant, resilient, high yielding, and predictable natural resource base;
- Minimal anti-use sentiment;
- Scientifically demonstrable sustainability;
- The presence of markets that are pre-existing, of international scale, involve the sale of luxury/niche items, and that leverage the unique properties of the produce, or the unique context in which it is harvested;
- Access to natural resources and the right to use them commercially;
- Strong stocks of social capital (especially bridging social capital); and
- Supportive parent organisations/institutions.

Lessons learned from these case studies will be useful for establishing guidelines for Indigenous entrepreneurs who use wildlife commercially, or who are considering establishing such enterprises. Service providers and policy-makers concerned with sustainable Indigenous livelihood development will find the results of this research useful in making decisions and designing programmes to better support client’s aspirations.

The Mabo Day celebrations this year will mark twenty years of land repatriation to traditional owners. It seems an opportune time to reflect on how these hard-won assets can be better leveraged in an appropriate and sustainable manner to create livelihood opportunities and enhance the wellbeing of Australia’s first peoples. For some, commercial use of wildlife may bear fruit.

The ARC linkage project ‘Australian women and leadership in a century of Australian democracy: a national study of women leaders and their role in the creation of a democratic Australian society’ began in 2010. It aims to identify the extent of women’s leadership within movements for social and political change in Australia, from the neighbourhood to the international level, and to make this record of active citizenship widely available. As part of making available the records of many women’s contributions, the project is developing an Encyclopaedia linking biographical and thematic entries.

Australian sociology is a field in which the influence of women through the twentieth century can be traced via the emergence (or re-emergence) of feminist theories as central to thinking about society. Within TASA, changing patterns of membership, presence in executive roles, and the establishment and eventual decline of the women’s section are all signs of the enormous changes that have occurred in the last half-century.

The conjunction of the online encyclopaedia and TASA’s upcoming 50th birthday celebration is timely; we now have a chance to augment our collective memory, record the achievements of many female sociologists and have the record made available beyond the confines of sociological publications. There is already a thematic entry for the encyclopaedia (written by Lois Bryson) that focuses on the work of Raewyn Connell, and a biographical entry for Jean Martin. Other entries have been written or planned about Cora Baldock, Lois Bryson, Bettina Cass, Katy Richmond and Yoland Wadsworth. TASA members will probably wish to make further nominations for entries and to write them. Go to the website http://www.womenaustralia.info/awal/ to ensure that the contribution of your favourite female Australian sociologist is recorded and start thinking about how you wish to celebrate them in 2013!
She was young. She was 21, and was working with A. P. Elkin at the University of Sydney. The year was 1945. There was no academic field called sociology yet in Australia. She had completed an MA on rural housing and the conditions of everyday life in northern NSW, and a major report on Soldier Settlement under the auspices of Postwar Reconstruction, travelling by horse, train and car. She was doing amazing fieldwork, working with folks doing it tough, and she was thinking all this, like Elkin, in terms derived largely from Durkheim, though she was also already developing her own way of seeing.

Together with her best mate, Florence Harding, she decided to become a sociologist, though like Elkin, and like Lloyd Warner, another significant influence, she viewed sociology and anthropology as connected at the hip. In 1947 they took a liberty steam ship from Sydney to the USA, travelling through Mexico to Chicago. They spent the academic year at the University of Chicago, taking classes with Wirth, Blumer, Redfield, Shils, Warner, Carl Rogers, and Bruno Bettelheim among others. She conducted fieldwork in the southside German-Polish precinct of Hegewisch. She travelled home via London, where she took classes with Firth, Tawney and Shils, and via Scandinavia.

On return to Sydney she taught on industrial sociology, working under the influence of Warner and Mayo, and she conducted a pioneering three-part investigation of women working in the David Jones lingerie factory in Sydney. She was an innovator; professional gatekeepers made sure it was not published. She taught and researched on the periphery of the academic labour market. Then, in 1966, she shot to the top of the tree when she was appointed to the Foundation Chair of Sociology at La Trobe. She became famous for her work on the Henderson Commission, the Karmel Report and for work on girls and schools; and later, she became identified as one of the pioneers of multiculturalism in Australia. She was born Jean Craig, and she died, prematurely, as Jean Martin.

She learned a lot from Elkin, including, apparently, something about seeking and corralling resources, and team building. For this was to be one of her major contributions at La Trobe. She had to build a sociology department without a ready supply of sociologists. She appointed from other fields, like industrial psychology. She appointed surprises, and she encouraged the formation of a whole generation of women sociologists. La Trobe was to grow an international reputation, and a staff of 38 lecturers and above when I arrived in 1988.

Sociologists are sometimes wont to bemoan the great shrinkage of our discipline. What strikes me, looking back on the last thirty years, is rather how exceptional that period of growth was. Propelled by the sixties, the radicalism of social movements and the expansion of free education, sociology blossomed. The transformation of the university system, the arrival of the managerial university model all confirms two of the central tenets of our discipline: the ideas of the rationalization and commodification of the world.

What would Jean Martin have made of this, and what would she think of La Trobe today? It is, of course, impossible to know. La Trobe Sociology has shrunk, and under the pressure of external constraints and imperatives, has regrouped and consolidated. It has generated its own solidarity. For while that earlier tent was capacious, its culture was also libertarian. There were many boutique subjects, and a relative absence of clear or robust core curriculum. That has changed, and I think it has changed for the better.

We have just published the second edition of the first year text, Sociology, earlier subtitled Place, Time and Division, now marked by the subtitle Antipodean Perspectives. Thirty-five new chapters, many by rising scholars, add to its canvas. Whatever has changed, the scope of enquiry and teaching established by Jean Martin lives on.

Peter Beilharz is Professor of Sociology at La Trobe University. Together with Emeritus Professor Sheila Shaver and Dr Trevor Hogan he is working towards completion of the intellectual biography of Jean Martin.

Editorial Note: Peter submitted this piece before the June 2012 announcement of substantial redundancies across the Arts and Social Sciences, including 7 staff from sociology.
About neoliberalism: a very brief introduction

I call this policy logic “neoliberalism”, the commonest term in the international literature (others are “economic rationalism”, “audit culture”, “restructuring”, “market reform”, and sometimes just “reform”). Neoliberalism is best understood not as a single policy but as a meta-policy, i.e. a set of assumptions and practices that underpins policy in specific fields.

Neoliberalism is symbolically associated with Thatcher and Reagan, but as a practical policy regime, it began in the global South: in Chile, Turkey, and other developing countries. Neoliberalism offered local elites a new development strategy, based on trading in global markets – importing capital, exporting goods and services, both on a large scale – rather than attempting to industrialize from local resources. For the new strategy to work, some comparative advantage had to be found (which China found in huge reserves of cheap labour, Australia in huge reserves of iron ore and coal).

This shift in development strategy met a shift in politics, economics and culture in the global North. The combination is what has really changed our world. Established welfare states were shrunk, a new political culture was installed, and already-industrialized economies were re-shaped. The volume of global trade has lifted enormously in the last generation; the humble container is, perhaps, the defining object of the neoliberal world.

There is a large social science and humanities research literature on neoliberalism and its effects. Some scholars identify a second wave of neoliberalism, others speak of a deepening. It is now widely acknowledged that the trend is not uniform: neoliberalism is a family of assumptions and practices, assembled in different ways in different countries. The components are generally drawn from this portfolio:

1. Roll-back measures. The most visible neoliberal measures are intended to shift productive activity from the public to the private sector and reduce the state’s presence in the economy. They include selling public institutions to private owners, relaxing the regulation of markets, reducing welfare state “entitlements”, cutting taxes (especially on the rich), and shifting to user-pays funding of services. The “structural adjustment programmes” of the 1980s, developed by the IMF and World Bank, emphasised these measures.

2. Creating markets. The positive agenda is about expanding the sphere of life in which markets operate. This means, especially, commodifying services previously provided outside the market, whether by government, families, or cooperatives. Neoliberals have been very inventive. School education, unemployment services, aged care, pre-school and insurance are striking examples of increased commodification in Australia; elsewhere, water and carbon credits are dramatic examples.

3. Changing institutions. Neoliberalism isn’t only about the public sphere; it ramifies through all social institutions. Important shifts include reorganization of public sector agencies on the model of competitive firms; growth in managerial prerogative and income; outsourcing, and casual, short-term and contract employment in the name of flexibility. An important, though little-discussed, change is towards “fractal” organization, where sub-units are themselves treated as competitive firms (down to the level of the individual employee).

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Notes on neoliberalism and knowledge (continued from p.11)

4. Changing culture. Changes in people’s outlook or subjectivity are required for a fully-functioning market society. Some ham-fisted attempts were made to promote “enterprise culture” in schools, but most of the shifts are more subtle and perhaps deeper. For instance corporate advertising becomes more pervasive; religion shifts moral emphasis, with the “prosperity gospel”; life coaching, performance management, self-improvement classes become familiar practices. Broadly, competitive individualism is taken for granted (MySchool not OurSchools) while concepts of common interest and democratic deliberation decline.

5. Global re-positioning. With the turn to comparative advantage as the driver of economic growth, and the liberalization of world trade, most economies try to re-position themselves. High-wage economies de-industrialize (producing “rust belts”) and most try to specialize in finance, services and high technology. Export processing zones in poor countries multiply. Export-oriented service industries expand, such as international tourism and higher education. Profit-driven development coalitions reshape urban space, attempting to create world cities, or at least cities where international capital will want to come.

Change on this scale is not easy to produce; it has taken 35 years and the agenda is still continuing. Little of this has come from popular demand. Neoliberalism is mainly introduced top-down, and the usual consequence is increased social and economic inequalities, even where the growth strategy has worked. Some of the largest effects are in the developing world where market forces have undermined subsistence economies, local elites do deals with transnational corporations, and cities are re-shaped by mass migration with few safety nets.

These processes produce social tensions, which have fed into the “water wars” against privatisation, the “pink tide” in South America, the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, the local protest movements in China. These resistances have yet to produce a widely accepted alternative to the neoliberal agenda – certainly not in Australia, where both the ALP and the Coalition offer neoliberal policy agendas, with lightly different flavouring.

Neoliberalism and higher education

When neoliberal policies in Australia began to bite in the sphere of higher education, towards the end of the 1980s, a common reaction among university staff was astonishment and then dismay. To see staff of other universities as opponents rather than colleagues, or to prove the economic value of courses never designed to be sold, seemed bizarre if not mad requirements, and morally offensive too.

Today we can see how the policies brought in by John Dawkins and his advisors, and deepened ever since, made sense in neoliberal terms. Universities were re-defined as competitive firms, rather than branches of a shared higher education enterprise. Deliberative planning was quickly replaced by struggle for advantage, and a scramble for amalgamations produced our current odd collection of universities.

Numbers in higher education were increased, without a major increase in central state funding, by commodifying access: fees were re-introduced, and step-by-step increased. Federal government funding as a proportion of the higher education budget collapsed, from around 90% to under 50%. The national university system, in the 1970s remarkably uniform in quality and resources, became self-consciously unequal. The emergence of the “Group of Eight” crystallized the new stratification, as positional advantage was leveraged.

Higher education was increasingly seen by government as an export service industry in which Australia could find comparative advantage, the cultural equivalent of iron ore. High fees for overseas students monetised this idea, replacing an earlier regime where Australian universities offered modest development aid to South-east Asia for free. De-regulation is currently being deepened to include domestic students.

At the same time, universities have been re-shaped on the model of corporations. Traditional hierarchy (remember the God-Professor?) had been partly broken down from the 1960s to the 1980s. Ironically this opened a space, in new conditions, for growth in managerial power, with Vice-Chancellors and Deans increasingly understood as entrepreneurs, paid like corporate managers, and - together with their officers - actually having more autonomy. The price is greater social distance, and often distrust, between university managers and academic staff. Corporate techniques of personnel management along fractal lines (performance management, auditing regimes) have been introduced. Older forms of collective deliberation, such as the departmental meeting, have declined, and no new ones are created; hence we see a Vice-Chancellor addressing his staff, on a grave issue, by sending them a video.
MyUniversity:
Notes on neoliberalism and knowledge

The nature of work in universities has been changing too. The impact of ICT, the changing character of libraries, and the return to mass teaching are familiar. Significant fractions of non-academic labour are outsourced. Some support functions close to teaching staff are deleted from organization charts (e.g. the departmental secretary), while new ones close to management are added (e.g. marketing).

The expansion of student numbers has been handled with rising class sizes and a cheaper labour force. Though universities do not care to publicize the issue, and the data are opaque, it seems that about 50% of Australian undergraduate teaching is now done by casual labour (euphemised as “sessional”). Among permanent or tenure-track staff another stratification is emerging, between research-only, research-and-teaching, and teaching-only posts. Embedded here is a division between internationally-mobile and locally-confined careers, an important inequality in a globalizing profession. Though it is difficult to be precise, I believe there is a widespread sense among academic staff that the demands of the job have become more relentless, the benefits more uncertain, and the level of trust lower. (For parallel trends in the UK see Gill 2009.)

Competitive markets require visible metrics of success and failure; this is tricky in education. Neoliberal policymakers have solved their problem in the school sector by means of NAPLAN and MySchool – to the dismay of most educators, aware of the distorting effects of high-stakes competitive testing on the broader curriculum. Powerful metrics are still lacking in the Australian university system, with opaque international league tables an unsatisfactory substitute. But Canberra has launched attempts, clumsy so far, at quality assurance and competitive assessment (witness ERA round I). We can be confident there will be fresh attempts to measure “performance” by universities, and attach rewards and punishments to the measures.

Some implications for knowledge

A first-order effect of the neoliberal turn is to instrumentize research and teaching. Research that benefits a corporate or organizational interest, or fits a politician’s definition of national priorities, is encouraged: the ARC’s Linkage grants embody this. Australian businesses’ dism al interest in research has limited the effects locally, so far as research is concerned. But a strong effect is visible in teaching. Under market logic, degrees that seem to offer economic pay-offs to the student attract higher enrolments and become more important to universities; the distribution of full-fee-paying students across programmes provides one map of this effect. The difficulty that philosophy departments around Australia have in the new regime is worth pondering. Philosophy was central to the idea of a university, but no longer is; we don’t have to be nostalgic to think this a significant shift.

To look more deeply, if anything has replaced philosophical reflection at the heart of university life, it is performance (Lyotard 1984). Showing auditable output within the logic of the system and its measures becomes the requirement; no-one is simply trusted to be doing valuable work. We have proliferated within the university, sometimes with and sometimes without external pressure, many mechanisms of surveillance and reporting under the rubric of accountability. In my view many are Potemkin devices of no substantive worth, but they institutionalize distrust of staff, while adding to the time pressure in academic jobs.

The most striking sign of performativity is the obsessive quantification of research output, both individual and institutional. We are seeing right now a startling proliferation of journals, peer-reviewed so they meet the audit requirements, which exist essentially to lengthen C.V.s. A very large proportion of papers submitted to existing journals are unreflective repetitions of existing research designs. This is also true of many PhD theses, under the pressure of funding-driven time limits and formulaic controls. For researchers to stop and think deeply about what they are doing, perhaps feeling their way towards a new paradigm, would be unwise: if you did that for two or three years in this university, you would become liable for the sack.

In neoliberal theory, competition drives innovation; so market-savvy universities make large claims to be innovative. In fact, in all sectors of education, competition and auditing drives standardization of curricula and pedagogy, a convergence on the market leader. I have been told by a publisher that writers of new textbooks are instructed to have 80% of their content in common with the market-leading book in their field, and looking at texts in my field, I believe it. Standardized curricula are needed with a large casualized workforce to make the job of teaching-on-the-run practicable. Our sessional teachers do not have time or support for serious curriculum innovation. External auditing (e.g. in teacher education, with the new accreditation Institutes) also tends to standardize content. When Canberra develops high-stakes tests of the “effectiveness” of university teaching, as with NAPLAN there will be irresistible pressure to teach-to-the-test. Australian universities are losing control of their curriculum and the logic of neoliberalism is that we will lose more.

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MyUniversity:
Notes on neoliberalism and knowledge (continued from p.13)

Three effects of the neoliberal regime in the realm of knowledge most concern me – and should be considered by anyone concerned with the foundations of the university curriculum in the contemporary system of knowledge.

First is the reproduction of global dependency. We are positioned in global as well as local markets, and the global market leaders are Harvard, Columbia, Cambridge and their peers. Their curricula serve as the gold standard. Australian universities were created as colonial institutions, and Australian academic life remains markedly extraverted (Hountondji 2002). We import our keynote speakers from the USA and UK, we send our bright students to Cambridge and Chicago, we try to publish in the American Journal of Orthology. Neocolonial dependence is built into performativity through international rankings of journals, departments and universities, even in small details such as the “impact factors” (based on citation counts overwhelmingly in metropolitan journals) we now see in job candidates’ publication lists. Local intellectual cultures are undermined, and the potential wealth of global diversity in knowledge formation is shrunk to a single hierarchy of centrality and marginality.

Second is the entrenchment of social hierarchies in knowledge production and circulation. Access to elite education is a very important form of privilege today, available mainly to the children of the privileged, as the “sandstones” in Australia show locally, and the Harvards internationally. Access to the means of producing knowledge is also concentrated – one measure is the institutional distribution of ARC grants, another is the scale of our casual teaching workforce, not resourced for research despite being trained for it. The rise of Intellectual Property regimes under neoliberalism creates fences around knowledge itself.

I don’t doubt the Dawkins-era intention to make university education available to more people; that indeed happened. But it happened through neoliberal mechanisms that undermined the democratic potential of social investment in higher education. Rather than opening out the knowledge system in participatory ways, our power-holders have systematically fenced and stratified the republic of knowledge to the point where there is no popular ownership of science or humane knowledge. It’s a speculation, but I think the dangerous success of the climate-change deniers is partly due to this.

Third, and perhaps most serious, is the impact of market logic on our relation with truth. A university’s responsibility is, ultimately, to be a practitioner of reason and bearer of truth. Research workers in all our fields know how hard it actually is to establish truth. This is not a responsibility one can take lightly, and it is contradicted by the public presentation of a fantasy university. When I walk down Eastern Avenue and see my university hanging up vainglorious banners saying how wonderful we are, my heart sinks. Marketing logic has pushed Australian universities (like others) to invent selling points and halo effects, an imaginary world of breakthroughs and great minds and blue-sky payoffs. To be blunt, it pushes universities into a realm of calculated misrepresentation that is hard to distinguish from lying.

And in conclusion...
The purpose of this paper is to invite a discussion of issues that are fundamental to the future of the university. I don’t have an immediate solution to propose, except discussion itself. To invite this, of course, is to assume that there are alternatives worth talking about.

Neoliberalism is the dominant policy logic in our world. One can of course embrace it, as the Vice-Chancellor at Melbourne has recently done with evident joy. But it is not the only possible logic, and there is more than one way to respond to the neoliberal pressures that exist. Neoliberal policymaking, once brutal, now prefers to govern indirectly, through regimes of incentives and disincentives. The rewards and costs are real, and reckoning with those regimes is inevitable. But in doing so we are not obliged to treat staff ruthlessly, we do not have to construct fantasies about ourselves, we need not defer to Harvard, and we need not pretend to be BHP.

It seems to me that a viable alternative to MyUniversity will have to grow from an understanding of knowledge production and higher education as a distinctive form of work – in my discipline’s jargon, from the intellectual labour process itself. Modern intellectual labour involves complex forms of cooperation requiring trust and reciprocity; it involves both a critical and affirming relationship with existing knowledge, so the process is cumulative and educative; and it is inherently unpredictable and open-ended, therefore in an important sense ungovernable. Shaping institutions to foster and support such labour (by students as well as staff) is not easy, but it is a task worth our intelligence and commitment. It will require some nerve, it will have costs, and it will require confidence in ourselves as a university.

This is an edited version of a paper originally presented to the University of Sydney Academic Board, May 2012. References and further reading are available from the author or editors.
Teaching Sociology: Reflections from the private sector

Prof Carolyn Noble came across to The Jansen Newman Institute (part of Think Education) from Victoria University to take on the Head of College role; I arrived two months before her from UNSW and was running the new bachelor’s degree. We had both worked at UWS and although we had never met, we shared a lot of mutual friends who threw her the birthday party where we met.

‘So how is it?’ she asked. We grinned at each other; immediately sure that working together was going to be a good fit but wondering how it was going to be moving from public education to the private sector. The step across to the Dark Side…

We both love the idea of free public education. But the 1970s Labor Party initiative which gave her free education had become another Labor initiative – HECS – which gave me a HECS debt. For all and sundry, education was commodified, and we were educating people with the added considerations of the shareholders who had created the initial investment.

There are obviously differences when teaching costs are weighed up against the need to generate profit, rather than just operate within a budget negotiated by Vice Chancellors and education ministers, but how is the experience on a day-to-day level? There are aspects to each which I like and dislike. (This essay focuses purely on teaching students and does not consider research, which Think is just starting to conduct.)

I like the ability to move faster. Bureaucracy is smaller and more flexible; access to people is easy to gain. At every university I have worked at, I had close and supportive contact with my immediate manager, and good access to the head of the department – but that was as far as it went. This is understandable when you are talking about a university with 3000 staff. You may be very proud that you have gained your doctorate, but really, you are just one of hundreds who have put themselves through that particular challenge. In a smaller organisation I have more intimate contact and influence with decision makers. There is only my manager between myself and the CEO, and the CEO has an open-door relationship with all managers – indeed with a disproportionate percentage of her staff compared to a VC. I doubt that any VC could have picked me (as a newly-minted PhD) from a police line-up, much less know me by name and have an understanding of my research history.

Think has its own systems to negotiate – particularly around curriculum development – and for good reason. But again, smaller scale means that people with whom you negotiate unit design are people who you work with daily. Having run a business for seven years and being accustomed to making my decisions (and taking responsibility for their outcomes) means that I find that bureaucracies and committees sap my energy. However I intellectually understand the necessity for a range of viewpoints to gain clarity on course structure.

The student experience always has to be paramount though. Personally I loved sitting in a huge lecture theatre with several hundred undergrads (or lecturing to a large audience), but for many that scale is daunting and impersonal. Think aims for a maximum of 24 students to a lecturer – and there are no underpaid postgrads running tutorials. All student contact is with the lecturer, and staff are paid accordingly. While there is pressure to fill classes and hold those with too few enrolments until the next term, as a manager I have the ability to argue for less-profitable specialist units to go ahead when student progression would otherwise be impeded. Again, it is that access to decision makers which gives me more input in how the college operates. Yes, I still need to be cognisant of teaching, marketing, and corporate costs, but learning how to negotiate these has been an illuminating window into the financial realities of education.

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Where have all the flowers- jobs gone? 
Long time ago
When will they ever learn?

Alan Scott

In 1961 Pete Seeger wrote the song “Where have all the flowers gone?”. He could write another song today around the theme: “Where have all the jobs gone?”

A recent article by Greg Bearup (2012) in the Sydney Morning Herald’s Good Weekend featured a Sydney man who is making millions by providing contacts for companies to outsource work done by architects, accountants, lawyers, web designers, analysts, geologists, engineers and computer programmers, other ‘knowledge workers’ and perhaps even sociologists. He can find a qualified person, trained in Australia, Britain or the U.S., who lives in a country where your job can be done for $5 per hour, instead of the $50 per hour it would cost here. Anson Cameron’s (2012) essay, ‘www.yourjob.gone’, published in the same newspaper, features more horror stories about the potential virtual offshoring of ‘thought-work’. We have got used to the situation where Australian manufacturing and call center jobs have gone overseas; but I had not previously had occasion to think about the same fate affecting jobs which require higher degrees of skills and knowledge.

So I started to look at the research. Professor Alan S. Blinder (2007) of Princeton University, expected “that between 22% and 29% of all U.S. jobs are or will be potentially ‘offshorable’ within a decade or two”. He notes that the criteria are not the job’s skill or its educational requirements, but rather whether the service “can be delivered to its end user electronically over long distances with little or no degradation in quality”. In Australia, Associate Professor Stephen Chen and Hassan Kharroubi (2010) from Macquarie University found in their 2010 Australian business survey that 36% of respondents are currently offshoring, with a further 21% in the process of moving activities offshore and 12% discussing it. Of those who were currently offshoring, the most common function offshored was finance/accounting (36%) followed by procurement (31%). So this is not some future dream, it is already happening. As one architect quoted by Bearup has said, “the conceptual work will still be done in Australia, but the detailed drawings and plans are beginning to be done overseas because it is cheaper and this change is moving at a staggering pace”. Bearup comments, “The offshoring tsunami rising off the coast of the First World – when it hits, it will profoundly change our economy and wash away [many] careers … There is a tectonic shift to society that is under way … it is going to change the way that we live our lives, and the way we do business. It is going to change everything.” Associate Professor Julie Cogin, of the Australian School of Business (UNSW) adds, “This is really, really scary. You think of the next generation. There is going to be far less job security, maybe reduced conditions and pay and a

Pay is equivalent to public; workload is just as daunting. And yet there is the sense that ability and effort is reflected in the possibility to be promoted faster to more prestigious positions. I’ve seen people in sandstone universities on the same level for years, whereas I have been able to move from lecturer to senior academic in three years. Would I go back to public? Sure – the status and intellectual excellence is attractive. But there is also excellence here in the vision of management, and the drive and quality of lecturers I employ. I miss the scale of universities; but I’m loving the intimacy of a private college.

Editorial Note: Since the submission of Pol’s article, he has been appointed Head of Academic Services at JNI after the departure of Prof Carolyn Noble.
casualisation of the workplace. This has huge implications for our children and even for us now.”

Sociology is a discipline ‘characterised by empirically based social research’ and concerned with the ‘analysis of the structure of social relationships as constituted by social interaction’ (Penguin 2006). But what is sociology, doing to make the community and governments aware of the social consequences of offshoring, or any of the many other issues that have the potential to change the structure of Australian life?

Sociologists for well over a hundred years have identified the consequences of profit-driven social change. In 1776 Adam Smith (a pre-sociologist) wrote: ‘A merchant is not necessarily the citizen of any particular country’ (Smith 1776). In 1887 Tönnies, concerned about the growing power of the merchants, wrote:

Trade tends, finally, to concentrate in one main market, the world market, upon which all other markets become dependent. The larger the area, the more evident the truth becomes that the leaders and creators of trade do everything that they do for the sake of their own profit. … from their point of view the land and labour of the country, like those of all other countries with which they deal, are actual or possible objects for investment and circulation of their capital, which is for them a means for augmenting their capital. (Tonnies 1957[1887], p.79).

And so on up to the present day. We know that merchants, traders, big business multinationals – call them what you will – have as their motivator the increase of their profits. Indeed the company that publishes our *Health Sociology Review* has moved some of its production activities, including proofreading, to India in order to reduce costs. We also know that any technological development that will aid in this process will be used. However, because something can be done should not mean that it must be done. Robertson et al. (2010) contend that “investors use different moral paradigms compared with consumer stakeholders, as a result the stakeholder role an individual occupies significantly influences their ethical evaluation of offshoring and outsourcing decisions.” Most of the offshoring papers that I found were from business schools, none were from a sociology department. Yet if the “tsunami” will “profoundly change our economy and wash away careers”, it ought to be in the sociologists’ court to confront the community with the consequences, before they happen.

I know it is hard to motivate the community to see it has the power to change what is happening. From the papers and research reports I have produced over the years, I can point to quite a few where I effected change in an organisation or an educational approach and some that actually induced legislative change shaping how the community dealt with particular issues. To me, this is one area where applied sociology ought to be active. Applied Sociology takes the theoretical work and the accumulated data to actively demonstrate to the community what continuing down a particular path will mean and offer alternative solutions.

References available from author.

Alan Scott is convener of the Applied Sociology Thematic Group.

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**TASA Executive Elections - Call for Nominations**

Nominations are now open for all positions on the TASA Executive for 2013–2014. Details of positions can be found at:


Candidates and nominators must be members of TASA. All election procedures take place on line, and candidate forms, nomination forms and further information are available at http://www.tasa.org.au/tasa-members/election-guidelines/

Nominations close at 5 pm on Friday 24 August and the election will be held in September.

Please contact Eileen Clark, TASA Secretary, if you need further information:
elclark@westnet.com.au
Fads and Foibles: A Few Thoughts on Social Science Theory

Eduardo de la Fuente – Flinders University

Readers with a keen interest in social science esoterica may recognize the allusion in my title: namely, to Pitirim Sorokin’s (1956) *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology and Related Sciences*. This book is not well known. One commentator suggests its publication was met with ‘hostility’ and vitriolic book reviews bordering on ‘anti-intellectualism’ (Sperber 1990: 142). Clearly, Sorokin had struck a nerve. The central hypothesis of *Fads and Foibles* was that sociology and the social sciences more generally were floundering from a mixture of ‘relativism, eclecticism, cynicism, dehumanization, egoism, sensualism, and scientism’ (Sperber 1990: 143).

Like his contemporary C. Wright Mills (1959), who only three years after *Fads and Foibles* would publish the much more successful (and still widely read) *Sociological Imagination*, Sorokin worried that the professionalization of the social sciences would lead to a bifurcation of ‘theory’ and ‘method’. But it is the characterization of social science fads that interests me here. Interestingly, the fad that worried Sorokin most in 1956 was something he termed ‘quantophrenia’ – the obsession with numbers and statistical methods. How things have changed. ‘Quantophrenia’ is not a widespread malady in contemporary sociology departments.

So what might qualify as a fad in contemporary social science? I would like to propose that, for the last 30 years, the predominant malaise has been ‘theoreticism’. A content analysis of TASA conference programs over this period would probably reveal a dizzying succession of theories and theorists who were popular for a short period of time. Terms such as ‘discourse analysis’, ‘ideological interpellation’ and ‘the politics of subjectivity’ dominated Australian sociology in the 1980s; ‘risk society’, ‘govern-mentality’, ‘embodiment’ and ‘globalization’ in the 1990s. Most of these once fashionable theoretical terms now look rather tired. They acted as rhetorical devices or conceptual ‘gestalts’ that, at first, may have seemed illuminating. But, as these terms were imposed upon a wider range of social phenomena (e.g. risk shifted to being not just about the environment and technology but also about terrorism, food and diet, young people, reflexive identities) such terms lost much of their shine. This is not to say that theory-fads are new in the social sciences. If you go into a secondhand bookshop in any large city you will unfortunately be faced by shelves of old sociology books, gathering dust, attesting to ideas or authors who were once fashionable but are no longer so.

Are social science fads inherently bad? Possibly their most positive aspect is that they generate a genuine ‘intellectual buzz’ and attract some gifted individuals to their cause. In short, fads create the type of energy associated with what Max Weber termed charisma. Murray S. Davis (1999) has argued that in the realm of ideas, and their communication, there is something we might call ‘conceptual charisma’. But, like personal charisma, it is doubtful that it leads to anything long-lasting. Once the energies and ‘aura’ surrounding the charismatic ideas dissipate we are left with what Weber terms routinization or ‘business as usual’. Thus, a central question facing intellectual fads is: once the dust has settled (metaphorically and – in the case of old sociology books – literally) how can we tell if any real conceptual innovation has taken place?

The original suggestion for writing this essay came from TASA President Deb King, who has the misfortune of having an office just down the corridor from mine and therefore periodically has to endure rants about the state of the world and sociology in particular. I would also like to thank Riaz Hassan, Nik Taylor, Nick Osbaldiston, Wayne Cristaudo and Peter Murphy for their feedback on a draft version. Needless to say the author takes full responsibility for any remaining kinks, and other shortcomings, in the argument.

Davis’ own work, little known outside the micro-academic worlds of Simmel scholarship and phenomenological sociology in the US, attests to how celebrity distorts the academic field. In addition to his wonderful analysis of ‘aphorisms’ and ‘clichés’ as instances of the generation and dissipation of ‘conceptual charisma’, Davis (1971, 1986, 1999) wrote fascinating accounts of why some theories are considered ‘interesting’ and how some become ‘classics’. He also published books on the roles of ‘smut’ and ‘humour’ in social life and human consciousness (Davis 1983, 1993).
In the field of social science theory, a good example of faddism was the adoption of continental ‘Theory’ in Australian sociology during the 1980s. In the United States, there was less widespread adoption of French theory in mainstream sociology and, interestingly, there were also attempts to understand the French theory-fad as a sociological phenomenon (see Lamont 1987). The reverse was the case in Australia – continental social theory quickly edged out mainstream sociological traditions such as Weberianism, symbolic interactionism and conflict theory. In his entry on ‘Sociological Theory’ in the *Cambridge Handbook of Social Sciences in Australia*, Peter Beilharz (2003: 658) astutely observes that continental social theory triumphed in Australia due to the weaker institutionalization of disciplines like sociology. In the United States, sociological theory – for better or for worse – had its own constantly evolving ‘canon’ (e.g., Parsons, the Chicago School and symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, the ‘new institutionalism’ and more recently the ‘syntheses’ of authors such as Alexander and Randall Collins). Therefore, in the United States, the field of ‘theory’ proved much more resistant to a wholesale takeover by European social theory.

Furthermore, as Beilharz suggests, the impact of continental Grand Theory in Australia was strongest outside the professional social science ‘mainstream’, occurring in journals such as *Arena, Thesis Eleven, Australian Feminist Studies* and, until recently, *Political Theory Newsletter* (Beilharz 2003: 658). Of course, being outside the ‘mainstream’ did not mean people went untenured. As Bourdieu (1988) suggests in *Homo Academicus*, competition over ideas often bifurcates into competition between orthodox and heterodox positions. And the outsiders often win a larger piece of the academic pie than one might imagine. However, what these competitions also serve to institutionalize is particular modes of doing things. Thus, Beilharz describes how the social organization of theory in Australia during the 1980s left us with a damaging disconnect between ‘avant-garde sites’ and the ‘mainstream’ of professional associations and their journals:

Dedicated journals…in some ways serve[d] to reinforce the problem they initially react[ed] against: an indifference to theory in the mainstream. There seems to be no evident solution to this paradox…Yet the problem remains that through this process there [has been] generated a distinction between avant-garde theory sites and the mainstream, which draws only hesitantly on innovations that occur upstream. (Beilharz 2003: 658)

I would go further: I am not sure that innovations in ‘avant-garde theory sites’ can be deployed in the routinized work of ‘mainstream’ academia. Sure, the non-mainstream generates excitement. For example, in the 1970s and 80s, many aspiring Aussie theorists studied French or German (in some cases both!) and made the pilgrimage to Europe to study with Althusser, Kristeva, Foucault, Deleuze, Habermas and so on. But how many Deleuzian sociologists do you know? And I’m not referring to scholars who undertake Deleuzean ‘readings’ of stuff. A ‘reading’ is not an ‘explanation’. Explanation requires more than the ability to associate freely between disconnected elements. Explanations require systematicity and the ability to differentiate between explanation and the object being explained.

I suspect that theoretical fads also have the unintended side-effect of weakening long-term ‘inter’ and ‘intra’ disciplinary conversations. What happens once the excitement of reading Foucault or Agamben wears off? We have nothing left to discuss with each other. Stephen Turner (2004: 145) has written eloquently of how devotion to certain social theorists can lead to a ‘kind of nondisciplinarity’ where ‘Marxists, Critical Theorists, Foucauldians, Weberians, Lacanians, and so forth’ function like ‘sects’ unable to engage with the ‘issues raised by the other side’

“…rather than advocate for something called ‘sociological theory’, I would advocate for its close cousin in ‘social science theory’.”

Of course, some developments may seem like a fad but, upon closer reflection, turn out to be something more interesting and enduring. An important example concerns the 1970s and 80s arrival of émigré scholars such as Heller, Feher, Szelenyi, Markus and Arnason, who brought to Australian social science some of the intellectual sensibilities of Central Europe. This particular development strikes me as less prone to the logic of what Sorokin termed fads and their cultural diffusion. These people arrived in Australia as ‘teachers’ and were less prone to casting themselves as intellectual ‘prophets’ (Friedrichs 1970). Teaching has the advantage of inspiring without necessarily producing disciples or proselytizers of an ‘ism’. The arrival of Heller et al. also provided local students (some of whom are now full professors!) with an interesting piece of intellectual serendipity: Australian students of the Budapest School were indirectly students of Lukacs! This meant that they absorbed some of the ideas and ways of thinking about society and culture that Lukacs acquired during his Berlin and Heidelberg days directly from his interactions with Max and Alfred Weber, Simmel, Mannheim, Sombart and other turn-of-the-last-century Central European figures. It is noteworthy that at a meeting of the influential La Trobe Seminar on the Sociology of Culture, Heller (1982: 13) strongly advocated a ‘holistic’ study of cultures and civilizations that was ‘comparative and historical’. This would not have displeased Sorokin!

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Fads and Foibles:
A Few Thoughts on Social Science Theory

Is more disciplinarity the answer to the malaise associated with theory-fads? Yes, to the extent that theory-faddism has been most corrosive when it has managed to convince us that there is no difference between sociology and literature, psychoanalysis, philosophy or linguistics. And recent forays into fields such as complexity or chaos theory do not necessarily fill one with confidence.

However, the answer is a definite ‘No’ to the extent that sociologists probably need to engage more, rather than less, with the writings of anthropologists, historians, geographers, economic historians, social psychologists and even management theorists/students of organization. Sociologists have many fellow-travelers and it is one of the drawbacks of ‘professionalization’ that we do not speak to our disciplinary cousins more often. Additionally, the ‘canon’ of great theorists would of necessity include many social scientists who were never employed as academic sociologists. Several illustrious authors readily spring to mind: Marx, Weber, Mead, Simmel, Veblen, Mauss, Schumpeter, Toynbee, Mumford, Victor and Edith Turner, Geertz, Mary Douglas, Gellner, Sahlins, and so forth. We might also point to fields of study that are not ‘owned’ by sociology but which sociologists are likely to be very interested in, such as material culture studies, science and technology studies, and mobility studies.

As such, rather than advocate for something called ‘sociological theory’, I would advocate for its close cousin ‘social science theory’. It suggests a commitment to the precepts of systematic explanation and the locating of appropriate evidence; and a willingness to talk to other scholars and researchers facing similar puzzles. In fact, one reason for pursuing social science theory is that there are research questions that require an all-at-once approach. For example, Fernand Braudel (1993: 9) suggests ‘The study of civilization’ must involve ‘all the social sciences’. There are spatial, historical, economic and psychological dimensions to the problem; and disciplines like sociology, Braudel (1993: 15) adds, have a role to play in determining whether civilization is ‘merely a synonym for society’ or much more is implied. If my intuition is correct that non-faddish theoretical concepts have a greater staying power, and felt applicability, then the job of debating and discussing issues across disciplines is greatly assisted by the presence of what Turner terms ‘mature’ rather than merely ‘innovative’ theoretical concepts.

A broad commitment to the ethos of social science is, in my view, probably more important than anything else. Again, there are multiple instances in the history of the social sciences where wide-ranging social inquiry produced significant dividends. One of my favorite examples occurred at the University of Chicago between 1945 and 1960. Many people see the ‘Golden Era’ of Chicago sociology as the 1920s, which produced the classic ethnographies of slums, dance halls, and a distinctive approach to urban sociology. By 1945, Robert Park had retired and many of his successors were in open warfare: Hughes and Reisman did not get on with Burgess and Wirth; Blumer and Foote did not get on with Warner and Hauser; and Shils, it seems, fought with everybody (Abbott 1993). Undeterred by stories of ‘decline’ (i.e., by the 1940s Chicago was thought to have ceded its status as the premiere American sociology department to Harvard and Columbia), the visionary President of the University, one R. M. Hutchins, created several new organizational outfits for his troublesome social science geniuses.

Hutchins oversaw the creation of the famous Committee for Social Thought, the College of Social Sciences, a Department of Anthropology separate to Sociology, and also the Committee for Human Development. Personnel in these programs included (in addition to those listed above): Becker, Bell, Coser, Csikszenmtihalyi, Geertz, Goffman, Graña, Gusfield, Horton, Katz, Gladys and Kurt Lang, Levine, Benjamin Nelson, Redfield, Rieff, Strauss, Ralph Turner and Victor Turner. The literary author, Saul Bellow was a long-time member of the Committee for Social Thought (as is now, South African novelist, Coetzee). But, more impressive than the names, is the number of conceptual innovations produced. Between 1945 and 1960, the social sciences at the University of Chicago gave us such innovative theoretical terms as: ‘labelling theory’; the concept of the ‘other-directed’ personality; ‘therapeutic culture’; ‘para-social interaction’; ‘role-distance’; ‘flow’; and the consolidation of ‘collective behaviour’ theory. (See Fine (1995) on this era constituting a type of loosely held together ‘Second Chicago School’).

‘My view is that if social scientists wish to import concepts from other fields – say mathematics or theology – then it is incumbent on them to be extra-clear and ultra-careful about how these concepts translate into the logic of the social sciences. “Something sounds like something else” is a recipe for the embarrassing situation associated with the Sokal affair, where a Professor of Physics’ nonsensical essay full of trendy mathematical/scientific clichés was accepted for publication by the journal Social Text, whose editor/reviewers clearly had no basic understanding of the terms in question nor how they were been distorted. Peter Berger, by contrast, has spent much of his academic career borrowing concepts from philosophy and theology but one is in very little doubt that he is a sociologist showing, as clearly as he can, what applicability a term such as ‘theodicy’ has for the study of social worlds.

NEXUS: July 2012
Newsletter of The Australian Sociological Association 20
On 13 June, a leading world scholar of ethnic minorities and multiculturalism, Professor Tariq Modood (Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy at the University of Bristol and founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship), spoke in Sydney on one of the most engaging issues in multiculturalism scholarship – the emerging discourse of interculturalism. In the well-attended lecture, organized by the Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Research Centre at UTS, Professor Modood addressed the question of whether interculturalism represents an advance on multiculturalism, in the context of the backlash against multiculturalism in Europe. Drawing on current debates in Europe and Canada, he expanded on his article with Nasar Meer (April 2012, Intercultural Studies) which argued that interculturalism does not represent a newer, better version of multiculturalism but is largely based on essentialist and often erroneous critiques of multiculturalism. Professor Modood’s lecture identified some of the major differences between multiculturalism and interculturalism upon which theories of interculturalism are founded. He argued that much of what is posited as ‘new’ in interculturalism – such as an emphasis on dialogue or ‘convivial openness’ – is in fact part of the original formulations of multiculturalism, as expounded by scholars such as Charles Taylor and Bhikhu Parekh. He conceded that there have been some problems in the practical and political implementation of multiculturalism, for example, a tendency to privilege dialogue with groups or ‘cultures’ rather than potentially marginalized people within these groups, and insufficient emphasis on genuinely mutual processes of integration involving both host societies and ethnic minorities (‘multiculturalism for everyone’). And, at times multiculturalism has been too open-ended, which could be linked with the illiberal backlash that accuses multiculturalism of being ‘too tolerant’. However, Professor Modood also criticised intercultural theory for purporting to commit to ‘a stronger sense of the whole’ beyond national unity or identity, without defining what is meant by the ‘whole’. Moreover, he argued that interculturalism highlights the dangers of essentialised versions of multiculturalism in the political realm, but fails to provide an alternative politics that could reshape national public debate or translate into practical policy. Professor Modood argued interculturalism can add to multiculturalism, but does not offer an adequate alternative. Instead, he advocated for critically engaging with existing discourses of national identity and integration, as a part of multiculturalism, which remain central in European public policy. This latter point stimulated questions from the audience, and several responses focused on the applicability of these ideas to multiculturalism in Australia.

The event was sponsored by UTS (Centre for Civil Societies, Institute for Cultural Diversity), Macquarie University Department of Sociology, Australian Human Rights Commission, Diversity Council Australia, and ANZ.
Refereed journals in virtual reality: it is a jungle out there!

Val Colic-Peisker, RMIT

Only once in my 16 years of academic publishing have I received a referee report stating: ‘Accept the paper in its current format – no changes required.’ This was not a case of me sending in a perfect submission: there is no such thing. Rather this was a case of a lazy referee. The other three reviewers did a proper job and I had quite a bit of rewriting to do – and this is how it should be.

Having an article published in a respectable journal takes considerable effort. A thorough peer review is a pillar on which the whole edifice of academic scientific publishing rests. So when my research student recently received an editorial decision based on two ‘no changes required’ reviews, only 2-3 weeks after she submitted her first ever article based on a literature review, my alarm bells rang. Too good to be true! This was in November 2011, and the journal was International Journal of Business and Social Science, at that time listed by ARC on the ERA 2012 journal list. The reviews read:

R1: “The research is informative and based on sound concepts. There is a good consistency in the paper. It follows the basic principles of a good research. No mentionable flaw has been found in the paper. I would like to recommend this paper to publish in IJBSS.”

R2: “The most important side of this paper is the critical analysis of the research topic. A well match was found between objectives and analysis of the study. The methods applied in the study are praiseworthy. The attempt to specify the findings of the study is notable. The paper may be published without significant revision.”

“*The virtual reality of Internet is a fantastic playground for scams of all sorts.*”

The letter from the editor also asked for a ‘publication fee’ of US$200. Upon some research, I found out that the journal’s publisher (a ‘Centre for Promoting Ideas’ in Radford, Virginia) and the undersigned editor were parts of an elaborate, but fairly obvious, hoax. The alleged editor, an academic from Radford University, promptly replied to my email inquiry stating he had nothing to do with the journal, which is a scam using his name without his permission. IJBSS, sending ‘calls for papers’ tirelessly, did well, however, since its appearance in 2009: its first 2012 issue contained no less than 35 refereed articles! On 10 May 2012 another dodgy ‘call for papers’ landed in my inbox: *International Journal of Business and Social Research* – likely the same people extending a successful business venture. I sent an inquiry to a Stanford University academic who was named an editor on their decidedly dodgy website. He replied ‘No way!’ He didn’t know his identity and scholarly reputation were used by scammers.

It’s a jungle out there! The virtual reality of Internet is a fantastic playground for scams of all sorts. Although a fake refereed journal, *IJBSS* is a clever business model, based on the increasing pressure on Western academics to churn out refereed publications. Earlier this year, Sydney University based its redundancy list on (lack of) refereed publications. $US200 would be a small price to pay to keep one’s job! Many academics from all over the world published in *IJBSS* over the past 3 years—we may say they are complicit in the scam. It is hard to believe anyone with some experience in refereed publishing would take the above quoted referee reports seriously. But the key issue here is that this journal was legitimised by finding a place on the list of recognised journals put together by the peak national research body, the ARC. *IJBSS* was removed from the list in June 2012. Is *IJBSS* the only scam journal around? Not likely.
New academic journals pop up faster than ever before. Our inboxes are flooded by ‘calls for papers’. This is a legitimate ‘market’ response to the fact that there are more universities and academics who need to publish every year. There is also a new breed of academic journals, the ‘open access’ journals, who bypass the traditional academic publishers and journal databases. There is nothing inherently wrong with the open access model – not even with the fact that most of them charge publishing fees. Refereeing and publishing have associated costs – although academics volunteer their time as reviewers and often also as editors, or their universities pay for it indirectly. The International Scholarly Research Network (ISRN) publishes over 100 open access titles from Agronomy to Zoology at $500 per article, while the Scientific Research Publishers (SCRIP) have about 250 titles, including those ‘coming shortly’, at $600 per article. Both are very recent ventures. Some older (over a decade old) prestigious open access journals charge even more: you’d need to fork out over $1000 to get published in New Journal of Physics coming out of Germany. The issue on which academic publishing stands or falls is not the fees but the quality of the refereeing process: a combination of editors’ and reviewers’ effort in producing a high quality publication. Inevitably, with the quantity of refereed publishing increasing, quality has declined, and many refereed journals let dodgy research through their refereeing filters. Many senior academics pass their requests to referee to junior colleagues, even research students. But this is still miles away from the situation where referee reports are simply made up – fake!

What is at stake is the meaning of academic publishing as knowledge production, and consequently, the status of the academic profession. The success of research grant applications, academic promotions and careers depends on refereed publishing. This is also an important variable in increasingly influential national and international university rankings. These days the ARC (and the commonwealth DIISRTE) have a tough job to separate the wheat from the chaff of academic publishing, and need to have quick reflexes – especially given that they are keen to measure the quality of our individual and university research output through ERA.

The Game of Publishing: Thoughts from Sociologists

By Nick Osbaldiston and Kirsten Harley.

The phrase ‘publish or perish’ is often heard in academia. It implies that unless one ‘plays the game’ of publishing, one risks damaging future prospects of progression in academia, including obtaining the elusive first academic post, research grants and academic promotion. There is clear anecdotal evidence that selection panels for commencing academic positions want candidates with strong publication records (however see the final response, below, for a contrary opinion).

Level A social science lecturing positions, which once allowed an entry level pathway for final year PhD students and recent graduates, have all but dried up in the past five years, with Level B positions now providing the more typical pathway into an ongoing sociology lecturing role. Anyone who has traced the appointments of these ‘Level Bs’ over the last year realises that those selected usually have substantial track records in publishing, amongst other things. And the game of credentialing through ‘academic capital’ is becoming increasingly competitive. This is particularly evident with the increasing number of applications for Australian positions from overseas, in particular America and Britain – a contentious issue for domestic early career researchers. There are of course other avenues into the academic scene. Postdoctoral research fellowships, research assistant positions and even professional appointments allow opportunity to build one’s ‘capital’. Once inside the system though, the ‘pressure’ to continue building an impressive CV through research, publications, quality teaching and service only intensifies (Burawoy 2005; van Krieken 2012). As Burawoy (2005, p.5) has argued about American systems ‘progress becomes a battery of disciplinary techniques’ that include standardisation of outputs (see also Connell in this issue). Most Australian universities measure academic performance with a particular focus on grants, publications and teaching (including HDR loads). These are used for promotion and, sadly – as we have seen in the Sydney case this year – can also be used as a tool for staff rationalisation. In the past, such standards have been managerial weapons to rationalise whole majors or even degrees (for instance QUT’s closure of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Bachelor of Social Science/Bachelor of Arts programs).

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We do not wish here to advocate pessimism over the state of our discipline. We can of course swim against the strong tide of “neoliberal” tendencies in our academies through public discourse and debate (including through Nexus commentaries – see those on ERA published last year – Osbaldiston and Cook 2011; Travers 2011; Connell 2011 – and in this issue). However, we must also be mindful of the reality of institutional expectations. While publishing for early career academics should not be simply a matter of expanding one’s credentials but a natural result of PhD and other research; there is no denying that it plays a significant role in the establishment and enactment of a strong and prosperous academic career. Simply put, many of us are in anxiety-rich situations which mean we cannot afford to thrash too violently against the waves of performance standards that now wash over us daily. However, we would add that publishing for quantity’s sake is something to be critiqued and actively countered.

In response to this increasing standardisation of academic life, we have organised a quasi-panel of expertise on publishing through this editorial piece. We approached nine academics from across the career spectrum – two early career (ECA, ECB); two mid-career (MCA, MCB); four late career (LCA, LCB, LCC, LCD) and one senior North American (US) – and asked them to divulge their opinions on publishing. Each person was sent a questionnaire designed by the authors that touches upon categories related to a variety of publishing areas (see below). The respondents’ experience produced a surprising consensus in many areas, but also a wealth of divergent attitudes in others. We decided to keep the respondents anonymous to allow a level of freedom in response without fear of censure – a particularly important issue for early career researchers. A selection of the responses is displayed below. We hope that this provokes some discussion amongst the members. We note with interest the organisation of a panel on publishing at this year’s postgraduate day and encourage postgrads to attend. While publishing is only one part of the PhD and academic experience, it is an increasingly important part.

BOOK PUBLISHING

What has been your experience with book publishing in the past? How long did it take to get your first book contract?

“My first book was a collection that I co-edited with a colleague on a topic that had not really had much exposure within the discipline. As it was my first book publishing experience, it was really great to co-edit with someone who had a little more familiarity with the process. Since then I’ve worked on a number of edited book projects. These are incredibly exciting as they provide an opportunity to bring people and ideas together in new ways.” (MCA)

“I wouldn’t recommend young scholars taking on edited collections early in their careers (the benefits they deliver are too small for young scholars to be taking them on, though they might well help to build a network)” (LCB)

“My first book was more or less suggested by a senior academic who was co-editor of the book series, so acceptance was instantaneous and I was lucky. I have had book proposals or MSS turned down by publishers on several occasions but have usually found other publishers without great difficulty. I think this is changing and that it is harder for young authors now” (LCA)

“My experience has been relatively positive; but my sense is that it is getting more and more difficult to find publishers interested in academic monographs. I was lucky enough to get a contract with Routledge first up for my first book. My second book I decided to send to six publishers all at once and two rose to the bait/occasion; the other 4 said no thanks!” (MCB)

“It’s hard to get a first contract without an ambassador who can open doors with a publisher. This is typically the editor of a series who is a senior figure in academia who has encountered your work, perhaps as a thesis examiner or at a conference. The editors at major presses are bombarded with manuscripts that they don’t have time to read. The ambassador can move yours to the top of the pile.” (US)

What factors are important in finding/choosing a book publisher?

“One of the most important decisions is to identify a publisher that has a book series appropriate to your topic. This means that the editor of the series is probably more likely to be familiar with your work, making it easier to pitch the book idea to them. The publisher will also be keen to hear how your ideas will be of interest to multiple disciplines, so being able to identify how your topic speaks to different areas of thought is important. Whilst this often feels like a crude profit maximisation strategy on the part of publishers, speaking to an audience outside of your disciplinary subfield is really important as it means that your ideas will be picked up and circulated more widely.” (MCA)
“Two factors: whether the publisher has a chance of getting the text to the audience you want to reach; and whether the publisher is interested in the subject-matter. If you get a good editor that’s even better, but you usually don’t know that in advance.” (LCA)

“Prestige of publisher is the main thing. Next consideration is whether they will put out a paperback version, because that will increase visibility. U.S. university publishers and U.K. university and others (Palgrave, Routledge, Sage) are the ones to aim for. I wouldn’t bother with non-English or non-American presses, because the visibility is so small” (LCC).

“A good publisher should be credible intellectually and pay at least some attention to helping your book to sell. You will find they can’t do this for long as they have so many books to promote, with very limited staff and resources. In many ways the promotion of the book will be left up to you and/or chance. On this last, luck plays quite a part; one must be offering something which the publisher is, at that time, convinced will sell (remember, while publishers are interested in scholarship, they are also commercial operations; they need to make money or they will stop publishing books, which would be good for none of us)” (LCB).

“You need to think about … the level of status you need for your particular career track and aspirations relative to the time you have available to do really top work. At the world’s elite universities very close attention is given to the status of the publisher. At the top are Chicago, Cambridge, Oxford, California, Harvard… the university presses that are the most selective. The gold standard is an original research monograph (not a textbook or edited collection) with one of these. Below these are weaker but still good university presses (eg. NYU, Minnesota) and the more rigorous commercial publishers (eg. Polity). Then come Sage, Routledge and Blackwell – the people who publish high-end textbooks and extended field surveys. Bottom of the heap are Ashgate and other publishers with low production quality and low volumes that seem to have been photocopied. They seem to take more or less anything if they think they can sell enough copies to libraries … Having said this my general sense is that in Australia – and to a lesser extent the UK – the relative prestige of publishers is not something that counts for a lot. In the UK a lot of senior figures (the Rojeks and Featherstones for example) publish a great deal with Sage and Routledge and nobody complains …” (US).

“Choosing one that suits the area that you are writing on. I only sent my proposal to [the] one publisher … best known for putting out books in my field. In my case this was a well-known international publisher, but if you find that a smaller or local publisher is the one that is most likely to be interested in your book, target them first! As long as it’s not some dodgy company where you pay them to print your book don’t waste time being rejected by ‘prestigious’ publishers when you could get your book out quickly and move on to something else.” (ECB).

What would be your advice to a PhD student/EC academic contemplating publishing their thesis as a book and do you think this is important for entry into the academic field today?

“I don’t think that a book is an important entry into the academic field. Most of the academics who most inspire me today didn’t publish their PhDs as books. In fact, for many, their first monograph came about ten years after. Whilst finishing a PhD is an incredible achievement, it is just the start of the journey. Give your ideas the time that they need to develop.” (MCA).

“I know colleagues who transformed their PhD thesis into five or six journal articles. For this reason, publishing a PhD thesis as a book might not be the best or most productive use of a person’s time. Other factors come into play such as their employment, influence and assistance their mentor or supervisor can or will offer. … Personally it was a great joy to see an edited version of my PhD thesis in book form and to find it on library shelves, already underlined by students.” (ECA).

“Very important and well worth doing. Australian universities don’t value this enough, but books are far more important for your reputation than articles or grants. All the times I have had invites, etc, have come from people who know me from my books. When you travel overseas, no-one ever asks about grants, and no-one remembers your journal articles, but they will remember your books. But you’ll need to rewrite your thesis. No-one wants to read theory, method and literature review parts of your thesis, so you’ll first need to compress it and then expand the most original parts.” (LCC).

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"PhD students should first of all rack up three refereed publications, preferably single authored and in different journals. This gives selection committees confidence that you meet the bar and can crank out material regularly. You should go for the book contract after completing your thesis. My own reading is that a book is important somewhere down the line rather than at the entry point. It shows a capacity to really drive an idea in depth and to build a substantial argument. I would be suspicious of anyone who applied for level D or E and who claims to be a 'major scholar in the field' or with pretentions to being an 'intellectual' without a monograph. This is especially the case for theorists and qualitative researchers. ... With [quantitative sociologists] I'd be looking more strongly for evidence they can publish regularly in the top ranked journals. Given that those journals generally have a bias towards positivism they don't have any excuses on that front." (US).

“I would say think carefully about whether your thesis is seriously book material – some aren’t – but if you think it is then make publishing it your priority. I have found that I have been treated much more seriously as an academic since the publication of my book, and having the book out there has raised my profile in a way that I could never have accomplished through journal articles or other forms of publication.” (ECB).

In recent times, there has been an increase of offers via email from VDM Verlag (print-on-demand) or other so-called vanity presses (author pays) offering to publish recent PhD graduates’ theses as books. What is your view on these (vanity and print-on-demand publishers) and what would be your advice to graduates who receive these?

“Vanity publishers are for vanity publishing, i.e. things like family histories for circulation in the family. They are not taken seriously academically, and they will not give you any distribution at all, so the chances are, your work won’t get read. Don’t waste your money.” (LCA).

“My advice is: anyone that comes to you, while you are a supervisor/peers believe your thesis is truly ground breaking (in which case you’ll probably get an offer anyway) I’d avoid vanity presses for now. However you approach it, there is a big difference and a lot of work between a thesis and a readable book.” (LCD).

“I wouldn’t touch these deals. You might be asked to pay the production costs of your book and even if you’re not you’ll probably be dealing with a publisher without an established reputation.” (LCB).

“These are a complete waste of time for building your career as they signal desperation rather than quality. Selection committees are lazy. They see journals and publishers as doing much of their filtering (work) for them and as providing signals of quality (I am drawing here on economic theory on signalling in recruitment) that give them short cuts to a short list. They’ll read your stuff once you make the last four or five. If you have been knocked back by kosher publishers and still think your work is truly important and needs to be kept complete then you might want to go for this. However I’d look instead to publish the work in parts in journals.” (US).

“I can’t see the point. If you are going to put the work in, why not get a proper publisher? Find someone who can help you do that – supervisor, examiner, person you met at a conference.” (LCC).

“It’s always nice to be able to give a book with your name on to family and friends. But that’s exactly what these publishers exist for, and not a lot else. Your book will be over-priced, it won’t be marketed, its availability on library shelves will be poor and your ideas will not be picked up by colleagues. Better to not have a monograph at all than to go with one of these publishers.” (MCA).

JOURNAL PUBLISHING

What factors are important in choosing a journal to publish in? For instance, you may wish to comment on whether impact factor, (2010) ERA ranking, whether or not it is open access or charges authors, FoR (field of research) code, publisher (Elsevier?) and/or its audience (or who else it publishes) make a difference.

“The big one is whether the journal will reach the audience you want to reach with this paper. Publication is about communication. Everything else is secondary.” (LCA).
perhaps the most important thing to think about in terms of journal choice is: where are the people whose work you most admire publishing? go to their websites and have a look! you might have written a fantastic, cutting-edge article, but if you submit it to a journal whose editorial board are not familiar with the field, then it has a higher chance of falling flat. as maligned as they are by academics, metrics are an important part of how universities evaluate our performance. therefore getting things published in flagship disciplinary journals that have good impact factors is often a good thing. but have a think about whether these journals are publishing the sort of work that interests and excites you. flagship journals also have high rejection rates too, so it's really important have a plan b up your sleeve for where to send it to if you receive a 'thanks but no thanks' reply. remember, you're always writing for an audience, and that audience will be very different depending on the journal.” (mca).

"i know that the 'smart money' says choose a journal with a high impact factor, era ranking etc. but i tend to go where colleagues have gone or to journals whose work i admire or seems a nice fit with what and how i write. until one has established oneself, it is simply a matter of trying to find a home for one's work.” (eca).

"unfortunately, you probably need to find a journal with a high ranking if you are ambitious for promotion, tenure, etc. but make sure it has articles relevant to your work. after finishing your thesis, you should know 3 or 4 best journals for your work. if nothing else, your bibliography will give you clues. given how random and subjective the refereeing process is, there is no harm in going for the best journals – even if rejected, they give better feedback than the worse ones” (lcc).

"while the era rankings are officially dead, they undoubtedly live on informally. besides, they reflected what has gone on since journals first became a crucial part of academic life (in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century). in other words, journals have always been ‘ranked’ by university selection committees, professional associations, citation bodies, and so on. of course this means you are likely to find very few journals that everyone agrees are 'top-notch' (including the era), but you will find some.” (lcb).

"you should aim to publish in the journals where the articles that you have found useful or inspiring are themselves published. impact factor is nonsense. another thing to think about is to make an honest assessment of your work. if you and your peers feel it is really strong, then aim high. if it is weak, you are sick of it, and it is starting to smell after multiple rejections then pull the ripcord and dump it somewhere weak so you can get on with your life and move on to another project. there are plenty of semi-marginal journals out there that are looking for academically accountable but not necessarily strong content. take advantage of these to simplify your life. they exist for a reason.” (us).

what would be your advice to phd students about publishing journal articles?

"remember that a journal article is a distinct genre. don't send a chapter of a thesis to a journal, thinking it's about the right length. a journal article should relate to an existing body of knowledge and problem area, and briefly describe that; should succinctly present some new material and your thinking about it; should explain the significance of this material for the problem area; and should not call for further research. readers usually take away only one or two points from a journal article. don't load it with complexity. and don't be thrown when you get a rejection. everybody gets rejections, even the professors. just move right along to the journal next door.” (lca).

"publishing journal articles during your phd is an excellent way to get your ideas out there and start developing a cv that looks attractive to prospective employers. the peer-review process is a great way of getting feedback on your ideas from the big names in the field – and you'll start to be noticed by them too! i published a few articles when i was writing my thesis, some of which were on a rather different topic so it's not only really helpful for developing your thesis ideas, but it can also provide a much-needed space to develop ideas that you're excited about but are perhaps tangential to your thesis.” (mca).

"at first, … rejections by journal[s] seem very, very brutal. … also, bad reviews range from the idiosyncratic (i.e., the reviewer says 'why haven't you quoted the people i like!') to the useful and constructive where the reviewer points to genuine gaps in the argument. i am also glad that some of my early stuff was rejected. even some of the stuff that was accepted embarrasses me from time to time.” (mcb).

"follow the journal's 'instructions to authors' to the letter. make sure your article is the right length, formatted properly, uses one of uk/us/australian english spelling consistently and as requested by the journal, correct referencing style, grammatically correct, perfect spelling. yes, this is tedious but without it your article will be rejected before even reaching referees.

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The Game of Publishing: Thoughts from Sociologists
(continued from p. 27)

Be humble when you get comments back from referees. Their suggestions are generally useful. If you disagree, do so politely and provide evidence to back up your claims. Try to revise the article and reply quickly. If you receive a rejection, read comments then revise the article and send to your second-choice journal (taking note of previous paragraphs; it will need revising!).

As soon as you have something published, join CAL (Copyright Agency Ltd) to make sure you get royalties if the article is reproduced, if you are the copyright holder. It costs nothing to join, they produce a useful newsletter, and one day you might get a pleasant monetary surprise (I got all of $9.45 one year!). (LCD).

“Try the best journals first, but make sure you give yourself a good opportunity when you do. Find out the sort of pieces the journal has been publishing and make an effort to address the concerns raised. Stick to the word limits, be careful with your expression (if a piece is a delight to read it stands a much greater chance of success), and try to achieve the right mix of respectful scholarship of what has preceded you and the originality of what you are saying. Again, never mention that the piece is related to your PhD.

If you are asked to revise and resubmit your piece, try to address as many of the suggested changes you can (it’s unlikely you’ll be able to address all of them as some will contradict the others) and make sure your resubmission is accompanied by a careful email setting out what changes you have made, how they have helped improve your piece, and maybe a note on why you have not addressed some suggestions (not too many of these).” (LCB).

“Aim for a mix of specialist journals in your field (eg. Gender and Society, Sociology of Sport Journal) and generalist ones (eg. Journal of Sociology). This shows you can talk both to your own ‘in crowd’ and to a wider audience who might not particularly care about your own “pet issues”. After you have a first draft, re-write for a particular journal. Most specialist journals publish a particular kind of work in a particular style. Know your target journal and push the right buttons, not only intellectually but also in terms of emotional bias, normative twists and authorial persona.” (US).

What would be your advice to a PhD student/EC academic who receives a form-letter email inviting them to submit an article to a “fast track peer-reviewed and open access academic journal”?

“Beware of emails inviting you to submit your work to a “fast track peer-reviewed and open access academic journal”. Don’t confuse these with genuine peer-reviewed open-access journals though! There are many fabulous open access journals out there that have excellent reputations and are publishing great work, often by leading names in the field. If in doubt, have a look at the editorial board and see whether you recognise any names. Have a look at who is publishing there and what sort of debates are going on. You’ll realise pretty quickly if it’s a dubious outlet!” (MCA).

“Ignore it. Your article if published will not get read. Pick your journal according to what you know about its readership.” (LCA).

“Don’t give in to flattery. Send it where you will get maximum exposure and prestige” (LCC).

“I would treat this very suspiciously and do a lot of research into it before taking them up on their offer.” (ECB).

“First, make sure that it counts as a refereed journal for DEST[DIISRTE]/ERA. Don’t just take the publisher’s word but check with your university. Next, see how much money they want and consider whether this is good value. Look through recent articles in the journal and see who is publishing. Do you know of them? Are the articles worth reading? If you are happy with all of these points and the journal fits in with your publishing strategy then go ahead. (LCD).

PUBLISHING AND ACADEMIA

Do you have any further comments on the current state of academic publishing in sociology (or related disciplines) and/or the imperative to publish?

“The big thing is quality, not quantity. Don’t be taken in by the neoliberal management fetish for numbers, that’s bad for sociology and indeed bad for every discipline. A carefully thought out paper that really moves a problem area along is much more likely to be read and cited, than two or three pieces of hack work. And in building a career in the long run, it’s people taking note of your work that matters, more than the raw numbers of publications.” (LCA).
“While monographs should still be the holy grail of academic publishing, I am starting to rethink my stance on textbooks and books written for the lay public. There are lots of really bad textbooks and lots of really bad pop sociology books; but, why not try to write better ones, if you think you have something to say? Perhaps, not too early in your career; but, once you have tenure, experimenting with different genres of writing could be good both for your research and for your teaching. I guess both of these book genres have the merit of forcing you to explain your ideas to non-specialists. Academics talking to academics, all the time, is boring; and can make one intellectually stale.” (MCB).

“What everyone knows is that the quality is going down on average, because things that aren't ready are published, and too many people are playing the game of maximising their publications at the expense of quality. It’s up to you whether you play this game. I confess I did to a certain extent, but at some point, as you get more senior, you have a duty to stop, think about why you want to publish, rather than submitting to a compulsion to see your name in print” (LCC).

“It seems that the ‘bar has been raised’ considerably in the last five years and it is getting much harder to get journal articles accepted. Perhaps this is a consequence of ERA, RAE and the like. Publishing in prestigious journals still seems to be very important for academic purposes. It is easy to count and less open to challenge than other important criteria such as ‘community involvement’. (LCD).

“It's tough, but not hopeless. One needs to learn to not take knockbacks personally. Don’t give up on any book proposal or any journal piece until you have tried at least three publishers/journals (or even four, five, or more). And even then it's probably best that you completely rework what you have been doing rather than ditching it altogether. The key things are patience and resilience.” (LCB).

“The research assessment activities in Australia are worrying as they worship objective measures. For me this is just another symptom of the cultural cringe – in this case the side of it that is related to a national inferiority complex. It suggests a lack of confidence in our capacity to evaluate ourselves. It also shows a desperation for global ranking that we also see with the silly medals table in the Olympic Games. Let’s grow up, please. In addition these activities encourage people to perform repeatedly to benchmarks they know they can hit – this leading to what I call salami-slicing and cloning. Such papers (often from multi-author teams working on large data sets who pick a different variable each time, but also sometimes from theorists who write the same paper multiple times on a topic like governmentality or habitus or reflexivity), are rarely interesting. Sometimes it is important to slow down and think in order to do something original. My observations at the world’s best universities is that when it comes to tenure and promotions the quality of the work counts for a lot, regardless of where it is published or how much of it there is. People read things and form an opinion. In some cases this work does not even have many citations. However when readers agree that it is non-standard, innovative, non-boring, unpredictable, erudite or counter-intuitive then the candidate gets up. Work does not even have to be brilliant. It can simply be neat, nifty, creative, clean or different.” (US).

“I think it's also really important to let ECRs know that sometimes you hear the most dire stories about how you need dozens of journal articles and books to even score a job interview, and you have to have a publications list as long as your arm to even get started in academia. This just isn't true, and it isn't as bad out there as some people make it out to be. In my experience, we are assessed on what we have done relative to opportunity, quite often, so ECRs aren't expected to have some vast amount of publications – just enough to show that they know how to publish and will keep publishing. I got a job at a regional university on the back of 2 papers in conference proceedings and – importantly – a whole lot of teaching experience. Don’t concentrate on publishing to the exclusion of everything else! You might hear that no one cares about anything but what you’ve published, but in job applications and interviews teaching is often just as important.”

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Editorial Note: We would like to thank our participants for responding to this questionnaire. We invite TASA members to consider responding in the form of a commentary for Issue 3 (due to nick.osbaldiston@monash.edu or kirsten.harley@sydney.edu.au by 10 September). References are available from the authors.
For the past month I have been acting as “fieldwork supervisor” for two Danish sociology students working on their Masters degrees. Helene and Christina are in Townsville doing research on Aboriginal human rights mechanisms. It’s a great opportunity for so many reasons: we are both learning the ins and outs of postgraduate study in different countries, learning from each other about the process and content of our research, and they are just lovely and brighten up the halls. As an early career researcher, it is also a good step up for my career, even though the arrangement is informal – it still makes me look good within the school! It is a bit of a jump, though, from Denmark to Townsville, and although my colleagues and bosses are happy to have another international partnership, they were very curious how I managed to convince these two Danes to choose Townsville, of all the possible options.

The connection came, of course, through TASA, and more specifically, the TASA Postgraduate Day. I met Helene last year over afternoon tea and we found some shared research interests. This is further evidence for my assertion that the social opportunities at the Postgrad Day are just as important as the formal program. The upcoming Postgraduate Day, 26 November at the University of Queensland, we have tried to balance the all-important socialising with informative and interesting sessions. We always have a lot of ideas for things to include, but don’t want to overfill the day and tire everyone out before the conference. This year I think we have achieved a nice balance. In the morning, we will start with some “Research Speed Dating”. This is a structured networking opportunity, and a bit of fun, so that even introverts (like me) can meet a few new people. We then have a session with Professor Zlatko Skribis on making the most out of your PhD experience. This year the Postgraduate Day will also feature a panel of sociologists, all from different stages in their careers, talking about publishing your PhD. They all have different experiences of publishing, and there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion about articles versus books, finding publishers, and other important things to think about. The afternoon will feature an intensive workshop with Professor Raewyn Connell on “Writing for Research”, with practical activities and discussions. This is a great opportunity for mentorship from some of Australia’s leading and rising scholars, and one that no postgrad student should miss. And, of course, we’ve scheduled plenty of time for socialising with each other, with presenters, and with the TASA Executive Committee. The people you meet and the connections you make will surely come back to help you out in unexpected ways as you progress through your career.

Don’t forget that TASA has conference scholarships to help with some of the costs. Check the TASA website for details.

Dr Theresa Petray – Postgraduate Representative
James Cook University

To join the Postgrad email list visit
https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/tasa-postgrads

All you need to do is tell us where you’re studying, or if you’re not studying, why you want to join – that’s to keep the spamming to a minimum.

If you have completed a thesis recently, please email the details to Theresa.Petray@jcu.edu.au. Send in your name, the department and university where you studied, the title of your thesis, completion month and year, and your supervisors, along with a 100–150 word summary of your thesis.
Recent PhD Completions

**Dr Clare Bartholomaeus.** “Rethinking Masculinities and Young Age: Primary school students constructing gender.” Supervised by Associate Professor Chris Beasley, Professor Emerita Chilla Bulbeck, and Dr Susan Oakley, Gender, Work & Social Inquiry and Politics, The University of Adelaide, May 2012.

This thesis examines the interaction of young age and gender, with a focus on theorising young masculinities. Empirical research was conducted with students (aged 6-7 and 11-13), teachers, and parents in two co-educational primary schools in South Australia. These students endorsed particular gender practices, although hierarchies based on these were often permeable and lacked strength. Indeed, a considerable degree of fluidity and incoherence in students’ gender constructions was evident. A combination of theoretical frameworks drawn from Connell and Foucault was employed to account for this gender fluidity, while retaining the ability to examine the influence of socially privileged gender practices.

**Dr Angela Higginson.** “Fraud against the Commonwealth: An analysis of serious and complex economic fraud investigated by the Australian Federal Police.” Supervised by Associate Professor Michele Haynes, Professor Mark Western, Dr Rebecca Wickers and Dr Michael McFadden, School of Social Science, The University of Queensland, May 2012.

Fraud against Australian Commonwealth government agencies generates significant economic burden to society, yet limited empirical research examines the characteristics of fraudsters and the outcomes of fraud investigations. Using data from the Australian Federal Police, this thesis develops a statistical framework to analyse serious and complex Commonwealth fraud. Four key studies are conducted: Commonwealth fraud offenders are compared to offenders in two major samples of Australian serious fraud; a typology of Commonwealth fraud suspects is developed; prosecution outcomes are analysed; and automated statistical process control charts are developed to monitor the prevalence of fraud and aid evaluation of fraud control policy.

**Dr Katharina Freund.** “Veni, Vidi, Vids! Audience, Gender, and Community in Fan Vidding.” Supervised by Dr Philip Kitley, Dr Graham Barwell, and Dr Andrew Whelan, School of Social Science, Media and Communication, University of Wollongong, February 2012.

This thesis documents and analyses the contemporary community of (mostly) female fan video editors, known as vidders, through an ethnographic study. It provides historical and contextual background for the development of the vidding community, and explores the role of agency among this specialised audience community. Utilising semiotic theory, it offers a theoretical language for understanding the structure and function of remix videos. This thesis explores the role of gender in this female-dominated community, and argues that vids are socially constructed as women’s responses to popular culture along paradigmatic lines. It also supplements academic research into copyright issues by providing ethnographic insight into how fears of legal action for infringing copyright have affected and shaped a particular community. This study has implications for larger debates of method, meaning, and agency in fan studies, and supplements existing theoretical and textual research into vidding by highlighting tensions among the community through ethnographic inquiry.

**Dr Xiaoying Qi.** “Paradoxical Integration: Globalised Knowledge Flows and Chinese Concepts in Social Theory.” Supervised by Associate Professor Greg Noble and Professor Peter Hutchings, Institute for Culture and Society, the University of Western Sydney, October 2011.

The thesis explores the interplay of knowledge flows and conceptual change under conditions of globalisation. Employing textual analysis, historical investigation and conceptual interpretation the thesis shows that the intensification of globalisation over the last century promotes both the spread of Western social science concepts at the expense of local concepts and approaches, and at the same time provides opportunities for the incorporation of local concepts into mainstream social theory. After providing an empirical examination of patterns of global knowledge flows, and developing a theoretical analysis of related processes, the thesis goes on to examine the phenomenon of cultural diffusion and the social processes involved in conceptual change. The agentic role of ‘intellectual entrepreneurs’ is identified in the thesis, and its significance is demonstrated in a number of chapters. The thesis shows that incorporation in social theory of particular Chinese concepts will expand its explanatory competence.

*continued p. 32*
Recent PhD Completions

Dr Lyndel Spence. “A God of One's Own?: Modernizing Durkheim and the Sociological Theory of Religion.” Supervised by Dr Jennifer Wilkinson and Dr Alec Pemberton, Department of Sociology, University of Sydney, November 2011.

Central to sociological accounts of religion is the work of classical social theorist Emile Durkheim, who expounded the integrative function of religion in its ability to generate social solidarity. However, given persistent critiques of Durkheimian functionalist theories of religion, compounded by the modern shift to the highly individuated milieu of organic social solidarity, it is imperative to revisit Durkheim’s theory on religion within a contemporary context. This small, exploratory study was conducted through twenty semi-structured interviews with self-identified Roman Catholic believers. The findings of this qualitative study emphasized that faith in the contemporary era must be understood as an inherently ‘personalized and privatized’ (Luxmann: 1963) experience, founded on Beck’s paradigm of a ‘God of One’s own’ (Beck:2010). In light of these findings, Durkheim’s conception of religion as a communal conduit to social cohesion must be supplanted by an individualized view of religion which engenders precarious forms of ‘elusive togetherness’ (Lichterman: 2005) in contemporary, organic society.

Dr Christine Siokou. “‘This is not a rave’: An ethnography of changes in the Melbourne rave/dance party scene, 1996-2006.” Supervised by Professor David Moore and Associate Professor Helen Lee, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University, November 2011.

The increase in ‘recreational’ or ‘normalised’ party drug use by young Australians, particularly at raves/dance parties and clubs, has led to party drug use becoming a research, policy and practice issue: however, there has been little ethnographic research on the social contexts and cultural meanings of party drug use. This thesis explores some of the changes associated with the commercialisation of the Melbourne rave/dance party scene between 1996 and 2006 before examining the representations of past and present raves/dance parties articulated by a group of long-term rave/dance party attendees. My ethnography reveals that raves/dance parties and clubs are constituted by complex and changing forms of party drug use, social relationships and cultural practices. I explore some of the changes associated with the commercialisation of the Melbourne rave/dance party scene focusing on four changes: the location, marketing and size of rave/dance party events; the composition of attendees; drug-related practices; and the ‘vibe’ or atmosphere. I argue that these changes have produced a set of nostalgic representations about past rave forms but that they can also be read as claims to “subcultural capital” - that is, to the possession of an ‘authentic’ rave identity.
Title: Cities of Signs: learning the logic of urban spaces  
Author: Andrew Hickey  
Publisher: Peter Lang  
ISBN: 978-1-4331-1119-8  
Published: 2012

Signs exist as fundamental markers of the urban landscape. Whether in the form of street signs offering directions, the airbrushed promises of advertising media or the vandalized détournements of street art, signs pervade urban spaces and provide a tangible ‘text’ upon which the logics of both cities and ourselves are written. Cities of Signs charts the way that signs exist as key elements of contemporary urban space, and explores what it means to live within these spaces, amongst cities of signs. This refreshing take on the way that urban space is lived and experienced is a timely contribution to the literature in urban studies, sociology and education alike. In decoding the cultural production at play in urban environments, Cities of Signs presents a dynamic approach to understanding how culture is produced and consumed within the cityscape.

(from publisher page).

Title: Mapping the Sociology of Health and Medicine: America, Britain and Australia Compared  
Author: Fran Collyer  
Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan  
ISBN: 9780230320444  
Published: May 2012

This book is a study of disciplines and their specialities. It poses sociological questions about the formation of intellectual fields and their social relations, and offers an in-depth, historical study of one of the largest specialities of the discipline of sociology - the sociology of health and medicine - across three countries: the United States of America, Britain and Australia. Employing a radical new theory of disciplines, this book reveals unexpected connections between the ideas of sociologists and the context they work within. It answers questions about where they work, who they cite and collaborate with, and highlights distinct differences in the practice of sociology from one country to the next. In doing so, this book offers evidence of the effects of sweeping changes to the university sector and the global publishing industry on the working lives of sociologists, not least the impact of commercial research sponsorship on the knowledge they produce.

(from publisher).

More new books, by TASA members, can be viewed on TASAweb at:  
**Books of note**

(continued from p. 33)

**Title:** Cultural Sociology: an introduction  
**Authors:** Les Back, Andy Bennet, Laura Edles, Margaret Gibson, David Inglis, Ron Jacobs and Ian Woodward  
**Publisher:** Wiley-Blackwell  
**ISBN:** 978-1-4051-8984-2  
**Published:** February 2012

*Cultural Sociology: An Introduction* is the first dedicated student textbook to address cultural sociology as a legitimate model for sociological thinking and research. Highly renowned authors present a rich overview of major sociological themes and the various empirical applications of cultural sociology.

- A timely introductory overview to this increasingly significant field which provides invaluable summaries of key studies and approaches within cultural sociology.  
- Clearly written and designed, with accessible summaries of thematic topics, covering race, class, politics, religion, media, fashion, and music.  
- International experts contribute chapters in their field of research, including a chapter by David Chaney, a founder of cultural sociology.  
- Offers a unified set of theoretical and methodological tools for those wishing to apply a cultural sociological approach in their work.  

(from Publisher).

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**Promote your new book**

TASA is offering members the opportunity to promote their new books in the Publication section of TASAweb, found at:  

At least one of the authors or editors (named on the cover) must be a member of TASA and the content needs to be about some aspect of Australian sociology (broadly defined), including textbooks. To keep the site up-to-date, books must have been published in the current year.

Please forward details of the book, including a brief outline, picture of the cover and a link to the publisher’s website to Sally at:  
admin@tasa.org.au

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**Information can be accessed on TASAweb about TASA Award & Prizes and many other factors about the sociological community:**  

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Authors or Publishers who would like to have their books listed in the Books of Note section of Nexus are encouraged to email the editors:  
nick.osbaldiston@monash.edu  
or  
kirsten.harley@sydney.edu.au  
That commuters in Australia are stressed is a well-documented fact, played out recently in countless newspaper columns and quantitative surveys. The question of why the commute might be painful invites some generic answers ranging from the tedium of traffic jams to the discomfort of overcrowding on public transport. Whilst such reasons gesture towards specific remedial responses and appropriate infrastructural investment this is only part of the story, for beyond generalised accounts of commuter dissatisfaction, little is known about the significance of the commute in everyday life and the extent to which the pains and pleasures generated by the daily commute spill-over and transform life beyond the commute, at work, home and play, and at a range of different time scales.

In the context of commuting in Sydney, this project aims to identify precisely how, why and where affects such as stress emerge then circulate, and then become channelled and vented in different ways during the commute itself. At the time scale of the working day, the research aims to enhance our understanding of the temporal dynamics of affect and emotion in city life by exploring the extent to which different affects, including stress and frustration, but also uplift and pleasure, might linger and sustain in different ways and bring about different effects. At the time scale of a working lifetime, the research aims to broaden our understanding of the extent to which commuting is sustainable in the long term, by considering how repeated commuting impacts on the well-being of city-workers over the life-course and the type of bodies that longer-term histories of commuting create.

Whilst it might be tempting to apprehend the mundanity of the commute as signalling its insignificance, understanding this quotidian practice and appreciating its embeddedness within histories of social and cultural transformation is vital for making sense of contemporary urban life, it is crucial that we develop our understanding of the commute through the way that it joins the quotidian with the broader forces of global capital, anxieties about work-life balance and questions of productivity. Given the significance of affective labour within contemporary urban economies, where productivity and value is increasingly derived from the affective and emotional labour of workers, together with increased concerns about the well-being and mental health of increasingly time-harried city-workers, it is imperative that we develop a better understanding of the ways in which routine commuting impacts on and transforms bodies. The data and ideas provided by this research will therefore provide a more robust way of staging and judging the competing calls, possibilities and pitfalls of engineering commuting spaces, durations, technologies and experiences.

Dr Anna Halafoff has taken a position as a research fellow at the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation (A University Strategic Research Centre) in the Faculty of Arts and Education at Deakin University. Dr Roger Patulny has taken a position as lecturer in sociology in the School of Social Sciences, Media and Communication in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Wollongong.

If you have news of successful or upcoming research projects or any other news or movements please email the editors for inclusion in the next issue of Nexus (due to nick.osbaldiston@monash.edu or kirsten.harley@sydney.edu.au by 10 September).
The TASA Executive seeks to appoint a new editorial team for the Journal of Sociology for the four-year term 2013–2016.

The term of the current editors expires at the end of 2012, although copy for the first issue of 2013 will be organised.

The journal receives financial and administrative assistance from TASA and from the publisher, Sage. Manuscript submission is done on-line through Manuscript Central.

All members of the editorial team must be TASA members and ideally will be located within a department of sociology or a School/unit that offers a major sequence of sociology, including doctoral studies. In the past, the editorial team has been based at a single university; the Executive is now willing to consider applications from consortia of staff at two or more universities. Such consortia will be required to demonstrate that they have the capability to work effectively across locations.

Applicants are also required to show that they have institutional support for the management of the journal, and to specify the nature of this support.

Selection protocols and application instructions are available from the TASA Office: admin@tasa.org.au

Further information is available from the TASA President, Dr Debra King (deb.king@flinders.edu.au), or from Professor Andy Bennett (a.bennett@griffith.edu.au) on behalf of the current editors.

The TASA Best Paper Award for the Journal of Sociology (JoS) is a biennial process that uses academic peer review to select papers of outstanding quality published in JoS. The prize is awarded to the paper judged by the panel to be the best published in the previous two years of the Journal of Sociology.

The next presentation of the TASA Prize for Best Paper in the Journal of Sociology will take place this year during the TASA conference dinner.

Further details of the Prize can be found on TASAw eb at http://www.tasa.org.au/about-tasa/tasa-awards-prizes/best-paper-in-jos/

Formed in 1963, TASA will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2013

Issue 3
Contributor deadline: September 10th
Publication date: October, 2012
All inquiries should be made to the 2012 Nexus editors;
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TASA Membership

**Membership**

TASA is a vibrant and dynamic association and membership provides many practical benefits, including the *Journal of Sociology*, the *Nexus* Newsletter, Conference discounts, eligibility for prestigious Awards, and access to the TASA e-list and members-only section of TASAWeb. TASA encourages student membership, with discounted rates, and is particularly attuned to the interests of postgraduate members by regularly advertising scholarship and early career positions. TASA membership provides an avenue to network with sociologists and keep in touch with sociological developments in Australia and across the globe.

TASA membership is open to anyone with an interest in sociological research. There are no registration or qualification requirements, except for the completion of the membership form and the payment of the membership fee. TASA membership is based on a calendar year (January 1st – December 31st), back issues of the *Journal of Sociology* and *Nexus* are supplied to members who join later in the year. TASA members are expected to act according to the Ethical Guidelines of the Association and abide by its Constitution.

**Membership Benefits**

TASA membership offers sociologists numerous ways to enhance their careers through professional activities, scholarly information exchange and networking opportunities. Member benefits include:

- The *Journal of Sociology (JoS)* - four issues per year published by SAGE (not available for $0-$24,999 income category - $50 membership)
- *Nexus* - TASA's Newsletter - three issues per year
- Thematic Group membership
- Member conference registration discount of over $100
- TASA reciprocal agreements: members can attend conferences of the British Sociological Association and the Sociological Association of Aotearoa of New Zealand at discounted rates
- Annual PhD Workshop, and Postgraduate representation on the TASA Executive Committee
- Substantial discount rates for student membership
- Online TASA Directory listing members’ research interests and contact details. The directory is a real-time, fully searchable and updatable database that is particularly useful for locating potential supervisors and examiners as well as for networking
- Members-only TASA e-list: access to the latest information on new jobs, scholarships, publications and conferences
- Members-only section of TASAWeb: access to TASA publications such as Refereed Conference Proceedings and the Online TASA Directory
- Members can choose to add their details to the new Directory of Research Expertise, which can be searched by the media etc
- Promote your new books on TASAWeb
- Eligibility for TASA Awards: Jean Martin Award, Raewyn Connell Prize, Distinguished Service to Australian Sociology, Best Paper in the Journal of Sociology, Stephen Crook Memorial Prize, TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarship, Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities, Jerzy Zubrzycki Postgraduate Conference Scholarship, TASA Conference Scholarship for Sociologists Outside Academe, and The Outstanding Service to TASA Award
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