Meeting Sociology

I can’t recall when I first heard the word ‘sociology’ but I remember how I first met a sociologist. I believe it was in winter 1964, though it might have been 1965. I was an honours History student at Melbourne, in the days when pass and honours students were segregated from First Year on. There were hardly any graduate students, so the honours undergraduates ran the Historical Society.

That year the Society had gone to Warburton for our annual camp. We stayed in a freezing fibro boarding house called Green Gables (It’s true! I have a photo to prove it!). We went for healthy walks in the upper Yarra valley, drank rough red from glass flagons to show we were intellectuals, gave little papers while we huddled around the radiators, and listened to talks.

Some of us had heard about this newfangled thing called sociology (SAANZ had been founded just the year before, up in Canberra), so we cast around for someone to tell us about it. There were hardly any sociology departments or professors in Australia at the time. But by good fortune the wife of one of our history lecturers, who didn’t have a lectureship herself, knew something about it and was willing to drive up one day to our camp.

She gave us a talk, rather emphasising the work of the Chicago school. I was so interested that after the talk I went up and asked her for a reading list, which she wrote down on a scrap of paper. I wish I still had it, because that was how I met Jean Martin.

Learning to Write

I rather prided myself on having a fine style. I had started to write poetry à la T.S. Eliot in high school, to the considerable amusement of our English teacher. My first academic book (Politics of the Extreme Right) opened with a lyrical description of a harbourside suburb – its angophora trees, affluent houses and social life – that could have been the start of a novel.
TASA Conference 2014
Challenging Identities, Institutions and Communities
24 – 27 November, 2014
University of South Australia, Adelaide

https://twitter.com/AustSoc
Please use hashtag #TASA2014 in your tweets

TASA Conference 2015
Location to be announced Monday November 24

2014 TASA Executive Election Results

2015 - 2016 TASA Executive Committee

- President: Katie Hughes, Victoria University
- Vice-President: Dan Woodman, Melbourne University
- Secretary: Joshua Roose, Australian Catholic University
- Treasurer: Kristin Natalier, University of Tasmania
- Postgraduate Representative: Christina Malatzky, Melbourne University
- Thematic Group Coordinator: Karen Soldatic, Centre for Social Impact, UNSW
- Public Engagement: Sue Malta, National Ageing Research Institute
- Multimedia: Brady Robards, University of Tasmania
- Immediate Past President: Jo Lindsay, Monash University
- Editor in Chief - *Journal of Sociology*: Alphia Possamai-Inesedy
- Editor - *Nexus*: Christopher Baker, Swinburne University
- Executive Officer: Sally Daly, Swinburne University

www.tasa.org.au
As this edition of Nexus goes to press, we are fast approaching the annual national conference to be hosted this year by the University of South Australia. In anticipation of engaging with presentations on social, cultural and political change, we have adopted a largely reflective theme for this edition of the newsletter. At our invitation, the venerable Raewyn Connell has written the first of a two-part series with recollections and reflection on her career as a sociologist. Unsurprisingly, Raewyn’s piece is as entertaining as it is insightful. We commend ‘Unintended Consequences’ to you.

We then present three pieces that focus on ageing. The first, a thoughtful piece from Simon Biggs, looks at the demographic change occurring and the cultural adaptations which may be required to adjust to it. The second, from Sue Malta (yes, that Sue Malta!), reflects on the need for the establishment of TASA’s new Ageing and Sociology Thematic Group. The last piece is from Michael Fine (the co-convenor of the new TG). He provides an entertaining – and thought provoking – reflection on this year’s ISA World Congress, which also highlights the busy world of the RC11 (the Research Committee on Ageing and Sociology).

As this edition of Nexus follows the election for a new TASA Executive, on behalf of all TASA members we congratulate the newly elected and re-elected, and thank those who served in the previous two years. We are delighted to include reflections from some of those whose term finishes this year. Theresa Petray addresses the development nature of her year as Postgraduate Representative while Nick Osbaldiston (Public Engagement) identifies some of the key lessons he learned during his service to TASA. Jo Lindsay (President) adds her reflections to this mix in her final President’s letter. Collectively the insights from Theresa, Nick, and Jo provide members with a set of personal perspectives, some of which you might like to explore further over a beverage at the conference!

To balance matters out we also have contributions from two of the incoming Executive, with Dan Woodman, providing insight into his platform as the Vice-President-elect. He outlines the important role TASA has in supporting new and early career sociologists now and into the future and the challenge of continuing to engage senior sociologists. In addition, he highlights the importance of dance to the ceremony of the TASA conference. Accordingly, we look forward to seeing both him and the incoming President, Katie Hughes take to the floor! The second contribution comes from Christina Malatzky, the incoming Postgraduate Representative. She reflects on her attendance at past TASA conferences; in particular, the Postgraduate Days and the vital intellectual alliances and friendships she has developed as a result, and their importance as a means of continuing support.

Given the potential for us all to learn from the experience of other sociologists, we are also pleased to be able to include in this edition contributions by the editors or authors of three books to be launched at the 2014 conference. In response to our request that they share with you what they have learned through the process of writing, editing and/or publishing their books we have three sets of shared experience:

- Sarah Wendt and Lana Zannettino Domestic violence in Diverse Contexts: Re-examining Gender; Routledge
- Kirsten Harley and Gary Wickham Australian Sociology: Fragility, Survival, Rivalry; Palgrave Pivot
- Meredith Nash Reframing Reproduction: Conceiving Gendered Experiences; Palgrave Macmillan

This edition of Nexus also includes a blog from the UK on the Scottish referendum and the potential implications in the region for how people define their ‘community’; a contribution from Brad West on
Unintended consequences continued from p. 1

By the time I was in my first academic job (a lectureship in Government at Sydney) I had written quite a lot. There was more poetry, a devastatingly long thesis, two short books, half a dozen research papers, and quite a bit of political analysis and polemic. If not exactly Shem the Penman, I was feeling pretty spiffy as a writer.

So I sent off a critical essay about political opinion polls to the literary journal Meanjin. Its founding editor, Clem Christeson, was one of the most influential figures in Australian intellectual life. Christeson was kind enough to accept the essay and it’s in my list of published works for 1972, called ‘Voice of the People’.

What he published, however, was not what I sent in. When I got the edited copy back for approval, I was appalled. Almost every sentence had been altered: punctuation, vocabulary, order of clauses, even the paragraphing. My first reaction was simply anger at the insult to my splendid style.

When I simmered down, I looked more closely at the editing and discovered I had been given a memorable gift. Christeson was not just an assertive editor, he was a very good editor. Almost every change he made to my text was an improvement.

From that time to this, I’ve been glad to have criticism. I’ve worked harder at planning and then revising my texts, and above all I’ve tried to see them from the point of view of a reader. I’ve learnt that writing is not about getting stuff out. It’s about getting stuff read.

The Reprieve
Looking back, I seem to have had a brisk and well-planned career, at least the first half of it. I made a number of moves an academic career advisor would heartily recommend.

To be specific: I got qualifications in multiple disciplines: a first degree in History and Psychology, a higher degree in Government, a post-doc in Sociology. I did a post-doc at an elite U.S. university: a year in the fabled Chicago sociology department. I moved between universities and got promotion: specifically, leaving a lectureship in Sydney for a senior lectureship at Flinders, and leaving that for a chair at Macquarie. I published in prestigious places: Melbourne UP did a book based on my PhD, Cambridge UP did my papers on class, and I had a paper accepted for Public Opinion Quarterly a year after the doctorate was awarded. A role model for the career-conscious!

In cold fact, I didn’t expect to have a career at all. I didn’t expect anyone to have a career. At the time I was making these moves, I expected that we were going to die in a nuclear war before much longer.

Although the fact has been erased from social memory, the year SAANZ was founded was also the final year of a long series of British atom bomb explosions in Australia. The Menzies government had offered the land to the Empire to be abused as the Empire saw fit. So in order to ‘test’ nuclear weapons and scare the Communists, for about ten years our defenders lit atomic fires and sent radioactive dust across the country. God knows what the long-term consequences have been for my generation of Australians. Of course we were told it was completely safe.

Just the year before, 1962, the world had come very close to nuclear disaster. Kennedy and Khruschev, both of them heroes of World War II [surprised? Khruschev was a key figure in the Ukraine and at Stalingrad], faced off with thermonuclear weaponry in the Cuban missile crisis.

In the years following, Johnson’s and Nixon’s wars in Indochina seemed to be heading for the brink again, as the US Air Force tried to repeat its 1950s feat of bombing North Korean society flat [the genocidal back-story to the current Kim dictatorship]. The Americans probably had nuclear weapons in their bases in Vietnam, certainly in their fleet offshore, and some of the generals wanted to use them.

In Australia we couldn’t do much to restrain the madness in the Great Powers, apart from campaigning to stop the war in Indochina. I was at the 1966 demonstration at Hyde Park when the peace movement stopped Johnson’s motorcade on his visit to Australia, and the right-wing Premier of NSW, Robin Askin, called out ‘Ride over the bastards!’ During the year in Chicago, my partner Pam and I joined the March on Washington that protested Nixon’s invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State killings, and got our whiff of American tear gas.

There’s a considerable risk of rationalising, fifty years later; but to the best of my recollection, this was how I reasoned. The chance of avoiding war would rise if there was a strong and widely supported peace movement. The chance of long-term survival would rise if we had a just society rather than one split by inequalities, tensions and hatreds. A progressive intellectual culture was needed for both peace and social justice. And an important component of that was a powerful and sophisticated social science.

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1 There is scholarly dispute about the exact phrase that Askin used, in the limousine with LBJ. Textual variants include ‘Run over the bastards’ and ‘Run over them’, but the most often quoted is ‘Ride over the bastards’, addressed to a police officer.

continued on p. 5
Dear Colleagues,

2014 is continuing to be a high performance year for TASA with lots of activity, new initiatives and progress in a challenging higher education environment.

I am pleased to report more excellent news about the Health Sociology Review (HSR). This week we signed a new agreement with Taylor & Francis to continue our affiliation with HSR. The new agreement will provide a number of benefits to the association including an ongoing relationship between TASA and the Health Sociology Review, a substantial annual goodwill payment to TASA, free online only access to Health Sociology Review for all TASA members and free online access to selected additional Taylor & Francis journals. Sincere thanks to members who sent in feedback about the agreement; I very much appreciated your comments and wise advice.

I am delighted to advise that the TASA Executive has also appointed a new team of editors. The winning bid was from an excellent team with an exciting plan for taking the journal to a new level of success over the next four years. Warm congratulations to Joint Editors-in-Chief Dr Joanne Bryant, Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW and Dr Christy Newman, Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW; Associate Editors Assistant Professor Peter Nugus, McGill University, Canada, Associate Professor Fernando de Maio, DePaul University, USA and Dr Sarah Maclean, University of Melbourne (Book Review Editor); and Senior Editorial Advisors Associate Professor Fran Collyer, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Sydney and Professor Peter Aggleton, Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW.

The new editors will lead the journal for the next four years from January 2015 to December 2018 and transition arrangements will begin in 2014. This is an excellent outcome for TASA and for health sociology in Australia more broadly.

I am also very pleased indeed to advise that the Journal of Sociology celebrates 50 years of publication this year! To mark the 50-year anniversary the Editor-in-Chief, Alphia Possamai-Inesedy, has put together a special issue of key defining papers. A special plenary exploring the contribution JoS has made to Sociology will be held at this year’s conference and videos are being produced to mark the occasion. Did you know the journal is currently ranked 20/137 of journals in Sociology? Congratulations to all present and past editorial teams, present and past authors and reviewers for your intellectual contribution to our fabulous journal.

Unintended consequences continued from p. 4

Come to think of it, I still think that. At all events, building an intellectual culture and a good social science seemed possible, and was a job I more or less understood. That’s what I (and many others) set about in the 1960s and 1970s, mobilising the resources that could be found and trying to build teams and collectives to do it better. By the end of the 1970s it looked like a career. From inside, it felt like a reprieve. We were still alive.

My official Last Lecture, on the knowledge industry and counter-power, is available at two sites: click here for Vimeo or here for YouTube versions.

President’s letter continued on p. 6

Unintended consequences continued from p. 4
Nominations and elections for the TASA Executive 2015–2016 were held in September. Congratulations to the newly elected Executive members, who will take up their positions on 1 January 2015. The incoming Executive is as follows:

President: Katie Hughes, Victoria University
Immediate Past President: Jo Lindsay, Monash University
Vice-President: Dan Woodman, Melbourne University
Treasurer: Kristin Natalier, University of Tasmania
Secretary: Joshua Roose, Australian Catholic University
Multimedia: Brady Robards, University of Tasmania
Public Engagement: Sue Malta, National Ageing Research Institute
Postgraduate: Christina Malatzky, Melbourne University, Shepparton
Thematic Groups: Karen Soldatic, Centre for Social Impact, UNSW

This is a terrific team with just the right mix of experience and new blood.

As we welcome this new Executive, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank those leaving the Executive at the end of 2014. Deb King will finish her term as Immediate Past President after completing many years of dedicated leadership and service on the Executive. Deb is great at both strategy and implementation and one of her many achievements was the implementation of ongoing professional conference organisers for our annual conference. Sincere thanks to Nick Osbaldiston who has served on the Executive in key roles such as Nexus Editor and, most recently, managing our Public Engagement portfolio, not to mention also being Conference Convenor in 2013. Nick’s laid-back persona conceals his awesome efficiency and he has played a central leadership role on this Executive. Warm thanks to Dina Bowman who has done a sterling job of developing our web and multimedia strategy with a tight budget – there is a buzz about the new TASA website we are about to launch. Warm thanks also to Grazyna Zadjow, who came back to the Executive for a term after several years away to manage our vibrant thematic groups. Sincere thanks to Theresa Petray who began as Postgraduate Representative and moved on to be Secretary just when TASA procedures really came under the spotlight. Theresa’s quiet confidence and intelligence were just what was needed to work through complex issues during her term.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege for me to serve my term as President with such wonderful people on the Executive. Thanks to those who are leaving and to those staying on for another term. As always, sincere thanks to Sally Daly for the excellent work she does as Executive Officer for our association.

I’m looking forward to seeing you at the University of South Australia at our annual conference. Very Best

Jo

PS We are just one member away from beating our record of 726 members, so please invite your colleagues or postgraduate students to join TASA today!

Sociology at the University of South Australia that gives cause for optimism; insights into the activities and directions of a number of TASA’s thematic groups (Risk, Sport, and Teaching Sociology); plus our regular update on recent sociological postgraduate completions, and postgraduate corner.

For those who are attending the conference, we hope to see you there – please come up and say hello. We will be collecting ‘Quotables Quotes,’ with a selection being published in the first edition next year. For those who cannot make it to the conference, the post-conference issue of Nexus will be replete with further content contributed over the week, including acknowledgement of the award winners and with celebrations of the good times to be had by all – particularly a report from the dance floor!

This edition brings to an end our first year as editors, and we hope you have enjoyed the articles we have brought to you. We see the style of Nexus evolving to that of a ‘news’-letter in the true sense of the word and welcome your comments regarding future content and future directions. Please feel free to contact us at any time: Sue at s.malta@nari.unimelb.edu.au and/or Christopher at chbaker@swin.edu.au

The deadline for contributions of articles to the next issue of Nexus is 23 February 2015. Contributions can be sent to the editors (see above). We wish you all a festive holiday season and a safe and happy New Year.
So the results of the Scottish referendum are in, and Scotland has voted to stay part of the United Kingdom. However, it looks like things most definitely won’t be carrying on as normal. Driven by the referendum, we’re likely to see the biggest constitutional change in our country since the Second World War, with even more powers being devolved across the nation. And this means that, in years to come, we may well increasingly have a sense of our national identity as “Welsh”, “Scottish”, “English” or “Irish” rather than “British”.

So what might this changing sense of national identity mean for charitable legacy giving?

Legacy Foresight (2011) have already seen legacy income growth in local organisations outpacing the growth in national brands. My own prediction is that locally-focused legacy giving will increase, alongside legacy giving to devolved arms of national brands, and gifts that are restricted to particular geographic locations.

There is a fascinating psychological theory – terror management – which explains why this might be the case. Terror management theory examines how we cope with the foreknowledge of our own deaths. One of the ways in which we do this is through developing a sense of symbolic immortality: a sense that we will live on through what we leave behind us.

Key to our sense of symbolic immortality is the idea of community – ultimately, it’s our community who will remember us, who will carry on our values and who will benefit from the charitable legacies that we leave behind us. A series of psychological experiments show that, when we are reminded of our own mortality, we cling to our sense of community, from believing that our local football team will beat their rivals, to being more likely to prefer our own country’s brand of cola!

So, who are our communities?

US academic and legacy expert, Russell James, sums up the situation well. He points out that ‘community’ can refer to a range of people, from friends, family and colleagues, to those with similar interests or affiliations. However, the idea of community can vary between individuals. Essentially, he argues, one’s community is those people one personally believes to be important.

As our sense of national identity evolves, then it is likely that so will our sense of community. And as that sense of community changes, so will the communities that we choose to support through our legacy giving.

On the face of it, British life carries on as normal. However, the impact of the referendum may be felt by charities for years to come through the legacy gifts they receive.

- See more at: [this link](#)
Adapting to a long life: The stick or the carrot?

SIMON BIGGS
Brotherhood of St Laurence Professor of Social Policy at Melbourne University

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, by 2050 we expect that nearly 30% of Australians, or 6.1 million people, will be aged 65 years or above. These figures are dramatic, but show only the tip of the iceberg challenging Australian policy makers, and we are not alone. In 2050, the global population aged over 60 will reach 2 billion, making this age group three times larger than it was in 2000. This is a challenge, then, that is facing both mature and emerging economies and will be key to social development in the 21st century. The World Economic Forum Global Risks group has identified population ageing as one of the five top issues facing the world community in terms of material provision.

Everyone wants to live a long life, no-one wants to grow old

Australians are living longer and the numbers of older people relative to younger ones is increasing. We are moving away from the ‘traditional’ demographic triangle with many younger and few older adults, to a column pattern whereby different age groups are becoming more or less equal in size. Compared with emerging economies, the transition in Australia has largely been achieved, at a slower rate and in a less dramatic fashion. As people in Australia age, we are developing lifestyles that reflect a mixture of extended youthful activities and novel mature priorities, but which are also more precarious the older one gets. So in addition to population shifts, the aspirations that Australians have for later life are changing. If one were to try to encapsulate this as a cultural trend it may be possible to say that ‘Everyone wants to live a long life, but no-one wants to grow old’.

Australia, long-lived and free?

Australians who are 55 and older are now entering life after full-time work underprepared and under-funded. In 2011, 15% of those aged 55–64 years were living below the income-poverty line (defined as 50% of the median equivalent household disposable income), and the level of disadvantage increases with age.

People currently aged 65–75 years and those over 75 years are the most deeply socially excluded in our community (scoring on three or more factors on the Brotherhood's Social Exclusion Monitor). When we add housing unaffordability to the mix, the number of people over 65 who will fully own their own home is expected to fall significantly by 2050, completely changing the profile of those with housing assets and security in old age.

Societies wanting to make a successful transition to an older demographic need to engage in a series of tasks: a re-design of our cities, the extension of a healthy life, intergenerational negotiation of age-related roles and a re-evaluation of the contribution of older adults to their societies. It can sound daunting, but in fact we have been here before in adapting both to changing gender roles and to a vibrant multicultural society. This time the challenge is that each generation will be about the same size and we must ensure that the most disadvantaged are not left behind. Openness to different forms of social engagement and personal identity will be key to society over the next twenty years.

The question is, what sort of adaptation should we aim for? What, in other words, might the relationship be between life-course continuity and discontinuity, and how is this reflected in wider social discourse on the purpose of a long life?

Phase one: More of the same?

The work of the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the policy statements of numerous nation states show an emerging international policy consensus. This moves away from holistic approaches around changing lifestyles to a focus on employment as the sole means of filling the years of a long life.
This view has become increasingly entrenched following the global financial crisis, although big questions remain as to whether there are jobs available, while the reduction of ageism in the workplace is another matter. It assumes that the new direction has been found, one based on extending working life and adopting a restricted understanding of active ageing reduced to work, work-like activities and generational competition.

**Phase two: Exploring generational complementarity**

In contrast, other writers have emphasised the discontinuous qualities of longevity. This implies that there is a qualitative distinction to be made as the different generations become more equal in demographic size. From this perspective, current policies are attempting an erasure of transition, replacing recognition of differing life priorities with a view that denies the special qualities a long life brings. There is emerging evidence that while individuals desire continuity of identity, this does not preclude discontinuity of age-related life priorities. A key element of this new perspective draws on a psychosocial understanding of the changing tasks that adults face as they grow older. It raises the issue of the degree to which intergenerational agendas overlap. We should be looking less at how to ensure that different generations can compete for work on the same territory and more on developing complementary roles and relationships that are based on life-course specific priorities.

Evidence is emerging that many assumptions underpinning the competitive solution to population ageing may not stand up. For example, generational transfers tend to travel from older to younger family members, while fiscal generational altruism recognises that contributors may not live long enough to receive the full benefit of investments made.

Further, younger adults do not appear to see their elders as a burden. Studies now indicate that they do not resent caring for older relatives; rather, they want a work–life balance that allows it. Neither may younger adults resent paying for others’ pensions and health care; they just want the same commitment for themselves when their time comes.

If the first phase of cultural adaptation has been to fill a longer life with more of the same and intergenerational competition for work, the second may be to discover the complementary skills that different age groups bring to the table.

**Sticks or carrots in policy**

So what role does government play in this?

If a policy ‘stick’ concerns removing benefits (statutory pension eligibility) to force older people to look for work, then a ‘carrot’ can look to modifying workplaces to make them more age-friendly. Policies to achieve this would include greater time flexibility, identifying where and in which industries different generational skills can be combined, leading to the development of age-neutral workplaces. They may also include modification of workplace design to reduce wear and tear on bodies, such as that undertaken by BMW to increase productivity, and legislating for healthy food and exercise arrangements in workplaces, as occurs in many northern European countries and North American corporations. We could change the way Census data is collected so that wider forms of contribution beyond direct economic productivity can be fed into forward planning in future. Studies have shown that this can be achieved by creating greater choice and flexibility about transitions in and out of work and enhancing the capacity of older workers through training, lifelong learning and anti-discrimination policies, thereby making workplaces more attractive to recruit and retain mature age workers.

There are broader issues, too, that need to be addressed. It is not that we do not know what to do to save money around demographic change but that the solutions are complex, requiring long-term planning. The list would include a shift to focus on prevention in health care rather than reactive intervention, reducing cumulative disadvantage so that social inequalities are addressed early in the life-course, adopting policies that emphasise community, workplaces designed for age diversity, work and home environments based on universal/age friendly design, and age-friendly products which range from small modifications to existing design to entirely new products such as intelligent eyewear at affordable prices.

**Phase three: rediscovering whole life-course priorities**

The third phase of adaptation may cause us to re-examine the purpose of a long life, the contribution of older adults and a reshaping of the life-course as a whole, including longitudinal work–life balance and intergenerational negotiation. It would challenge us to embrace age-specific contributions rather than fear personal change, and to rediscover generational intelligence and the ability to co-operate across the generational divide.

Taken together, these steps would facilitate the discovery of each age group’s contribution to social well-being, and the development of complementary rather than competitive relations between generations in the workplace, family, policy and civil society. They would provide a meaning in later life that is not solely contingent on economic materialism.
The journey ahead
It is becoming clearer that few people want to grow old as it is currently conceived. If everybody really does want a long life, policy should be less about work continuation versus re-invented retirement, and more about the emergence of life-course-specific contributions for the wider social good. The role of a progressive social policy would be to make available new social spaces in which these novel forms of age-based complementarity can emerge. It would rest on the negotiation of physical space, of temporal relations such as work–life balance across the life course and the meanings attributed to different life phases. Sustainable solutions are needed, ones that can stand the test of time and in which the life priorities of different generational groups are respected as each party recognises their own and other’s specific contributions. True cultural innovation would lie in the facilitation of new roles adapted to a long life, greater attention to generational interconnection, and the discovery of new ways of releasing age-specific potential. The alternative would be a precariat of the long life, with job uncertainty, broken promises on fiscal support and intensified generational rivalry.

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2014 TASA Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Tuesday November 25, 5PM - 7PM
Building H, Room H2 - 16
University of South Australia, Adelaide
Map: click here for link to Map

Proposed Constitutional Changes
There are some places where the wording of the Constitution can be altered to improve clarity and/or allow for flexibility. There are other clauses that the Executive propose to change in order to better meet the needs of the Association. In total, there are changes proposed to 10 clauses that will be discussed at the AGM.

The proposed changes can be downloaded via this link
Held every four years like the Olympics, the World Congress of Sociology is an important opportunity for sociologists from across the globe to come together, meet others with like interests, test out their latest pieces of research or argument by presenting in front of an informed audience, and learn about what the rest of the discipline is up to.

It is also the biggest show on earth, at least in our field, the product of political manoeuvring of the highest order. Representatives of different countries, theoretical and political streams, and individuals with powerful egos and massive self belief all struggle to get more of their stuff on the centre stage, get elected to the Executive Committee, and once there, to get appointed into one of the key positions, such as President or Vice-President.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of ISA 1982–86, went on to become President of Brazil from 1995–2003. While a similar career move is unlikely for Michael Burawoy, ISA President 2010–14, this World Congress was also very much a production that reflected his imprint of an engaged public sociology with a clear concern for social justice and overcoming inequality. It owed much, too, to the Japanese organising committee and to the ISA Program Committee, chaired by Raquel Sosa, and ISA Vice-Presidents, Tina Uys, Robert van Krieken (yes, that one!), Jennifer Platt and the program coordinators of around 60 Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups.

Altogether, over 6,000 people attended the 18th World Congress held in Yokohama in July. The majority were sociologists from the wealthier lands of Europe, North America, East Asia, and Oceania – but with significant numbers also from South America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent. About 10% came from poor and developing countries – not a high proportion, but a number that still well exceeds the total number of participants at TASA annual conferences, and a higher number than at previous ISA congresses.

According to the attendance statistics, 251 delegates attended from Australia, 63% of whom were female. Australia had the 6th highest number of attendees, after Japan, the USA, Germany, United Kingdom and France. I kept bumping into colleagues I knew from here, including many from my own university.

Managing such a huge number of highly opinionated people is clearly a challenge, but the ISA has a great formula. Much of the day is spent in specialised sub-groups – the Research Committees (RCs) and thematic groups that specialise on a particular issue, topic or theoretical concern. For me this involved RC11 – the Research Committee on Ageing. I also attended a number of very interesting sessions in RC19 (Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy), RC15 (Sociology of Health), and a few others. Then there are the Presidential Sessions, as well as the Plenary and Integrative sessions which begin the day or take place at lunch time or after lunch and accommodate much larger numbers of participants. These allow the discussion of big themes, amazing new theories and give the famous and many less famous names an opportunity to say their piece. For the rest of us this is also a chance to see, hear and perhaps meet some of those whose work we read, and a chance to be exposed to others whose work we leave wanting to know more about.
My experience in the Research Committees is of a personal, friendly scale of engagement with famous and not so famous colleagues from across the world. While time for each presentation is limited, there is more of an opportunity for extensive discussion and the development of collegial ties than in the larger sessions.

Internationally, the sociology of ageing is one of the most popular fields and RC11 is consequently quite large, with just over 200 registered attendees at the conference. This meant that the program was full every day, with great session topics and excellent discussions. At any one session there were from 30 to 100 delegates, and the quality of papers and the scope of international coverage was, in my view, almost always exciting. The themes of much of the current work that most interested me involved the emergence of life course and critical intergenerational perspectives. The rise of cultural gerontology was also inspiring. Ageing is no longer seen as a specialised, isolated topic, but as one that reflects and draws upon the full gamut of forces and social processes that shape our lives from childhood.

I attended a number of great plenary sessions, including some on Japanese and Asian themes, looking at development, social movements and politics, and ageing and the Asian economies. Another plenary that was special for me was on Social Inequalities at which both Goran Therborn and Saskia Sassen spoke, along with two other speakers. With only 50 minutes for all four speakers, in the short time they had the two most well-known focused on giving what became a promotional presentation for their new book. The limited time available raises questions about the value of major conference like this, when so many speakers are listed for every session, does anyone have the time they need to speak? For those listening, this is also challenge.

I managed to miss the opening ceremony and the first Presidential Plenary for reasons I won’t go into, but from the accounts I heard the Presidential Plenary on the theme ‘Facing an Unequal World’ was impressive. The speakers included Michael Burawoy, Guy Standing and Luc Boltanski.

The final Presidential Plenary was something else. In front of a huge hall, with perhaps 3,000 people attending, Erik Olin Wright gave a short but engaging presentation on ‘A sociology of real utopias’. Then the stage was given to Ngai Pun, a Chinese academic from Hong Kong who provided a ‘third world perspective’ and praised the Chinese revolution with glorious PowerPoint slides and made memorable revolutionary statements including that Mao’s major failing was that he was too weak with his opponents. Many in the audience left in protest. I remained to hear the final speaker from the Philippines and to see the Presidential handover, in which Michael Burawoy theatrically used a samurai sword to hand power to the new president, Margaret Abraham.

This dramatised some of the problems of the World Congress and perhaps of sociology. Each speaker, even major speakers, at sessions such as this can present for only a few minutes. And while sociology eagerly researches inequality, when it comes to doing something about it, Burawoy’s approach sees the need for real world political programs, not just theory and more research. In this his stance and imprint was quite different from a number of previous ISA presidents. Sociology as I understand it, cannot avoid the political. But I left the World Congress asking, what politics can sociology contribute?

Best Paper in Journal of Sociology - 2014
An author will be presented with this Prize at the conference dinner on Wednesday November 26th, 2014. The prize will be awarded to the paper judged by the panel to be the best published during 2012 and 2013.
Ageing & Sociology – The timely (and long overdue) development of a new Thematic Group?

SUE MALTA, Co-Convenor
National Ageing Research Institute (NARI)

Ageing research is my ‘thing’. It is the area of sociology that stirs, inspires and motivates me the most. My interest in researching ageing issues began early in my academic career, when I was accepted to do a social research internship at Swinburne University in the last semester of my undergraduate degree in 2004. During the internship I worked in a local government authority looking at a program designed to increase social connection opportunities for socially isolated older adults. I enjoyed the research so much and collected so much data that the topic morphed into my Honours project. The following year I was lucky enough to be accepted to do a PhD and was able to further pursue my burgeoning interest in ageing. This time my research focused on older adults and their new late life romantic relationships, both online and offline – a topic I found engaging, insightful and life-affirming. Towards the end of my PhD, I was fortunate enough to begin working at the National Ageing Research Institute where we regularly contribute to the health and wellbeing of older adults through our translational research projects.

At the end of Honours I joined TASA and attended my first conference (Tasmania 2005). A content analysis of the titles of the 109 refereed paper presentations that year revealed there were only two papers addressing ageing topics: my own 'Social connectedness and health amongst older adults' and Robyn Sheppard’s ‘Appearance concern and self presentation in older women’. Nine years later at the 2013 TASA conference, rather than an increase in papers focused on ageing issues – which you would expect given the rhetoric surrounding population ageing and the discourses of perceived dependency and later retirement – there were again only two papers out of 111 refereed presentations. Once again, it was my own 'Why go online? Older adults and their reasons for online dating' and Robin Harvey and Helen Masterman-Smith's 'Aged care workforce needs and the under-development of gerontology education in Australia.'

In stark contrast, the International Sociological Association (ISA) has its own “Research Committee on Sociology of Aging (RC11)” which was established in 1975. The main objective of the RC11 is to ‘encourage research of high quality on aging within and between countries’. As observed in Michael Fine's report of the ISA World Forum in Japan this year (Nexus, this edition), the sociology of ageing is 'one of the most popular fields' internationally. So much so, there were over 150 papers accepted for this stream at ISA. In addition, many well-known faces of Australian sociology have held positions on the RC11, beginning with Victor Minichiello in 1994, Michael Fine in 1998 and again in 2002 when he became Vice-President, Susan Feldman, Cherry Russell, Elizabeth (Libby) Brooke, Diane Gibson and Janece Mathers.

Why the difference in how ageing is represented within TASA and ISA? One can only speculate. Certainly there is no shortage of research groups and centres in the ageing arena embedded within or associated with our universities:

- **Ageing & Health Research Team**, The University of Sydney, [click for link]
- **Centre for Ageing Studies**, Flinders University [click for link]
- **ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR)**, The University of New South Wales, The University of Sydney and the Australian National University, [click for link]
- **Centre for Education and Research on Ageing**, The University of Sydney, [click for link]
- **Centre for Research on Ageing, Health & Wellbeing**, Australian National University, [click for link]
- **Healthy Ageing Research Unit (HARU)**, School of Primary Health Care, Monash University, [click for link]
While this list is by no means exhaustive, it highlights that ageing is a topic of intense research focus across Australia. Given this, why the silence at TASA conferences? Is it because in Australian sociology we do not consider it a topic of importance? This is clearly not the case, given this country’s past representation on ISA’s RC11 and, further, that 36 TASA members have nominated ageing as one of their research interests (as at August 2014).

Suffice to say, this lack of engagement motivated me (and the eminently qualified Michael Fine) to set up the new TASA Ageing and Sociology thematic group. The aim of the group is to create a supportive network for sociologists working in or researching ageing issues – as well as those who have an interest in this important topic – across a range of academic and non-academic institutions. It also aims to provide a means to foster collaborative endeavours and to develop and disseminate knowledge – particularly in the area of theory, where sociology has largely been silent. As Janet Askham, a British medical sociologist whose research was a great influence on British government policy for the treatment of older adults once wrote: perhaps older adults represent a population that is socially insignificant and therefore outside the remit of ‘major sociological explanatory framework’ (Askham 1995: 88)?

Whatever the reasons for the lack of engagement thus far, we in this new thematic group look forward to our future endeavours promoting ageing and sociology within Australia. So far, we have expressions of interest from 20+ TASA members and have attracted new members who have joined TASA specifically so that they can be engaged with this group. It is a great start. Our TG meeting at the TASA conference will be a chance to meet face to face for the first time and to concentrate on planning for the next two years, in particular, a forum exploring the (parlous?) state of sociology and ageing within the Australian landscape. We are also looking at forging links and collaborative networks between TASA and other organisations. We have already tentatively begun such a collaboration with the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) which has a number of members who are also sociologists and members of TASA (myself, Michael, Briony Dow and Simon Biggs to name just a few). Simon has also contributed to this edition of Nexus with an article exploring some of the policy related issues associated with ageing and sociology (see Simon’s article in this edition of Nexus). This year AAG is also holding its National conference in Adelaide, back-to-back with the TASA conference. Call it serendipity, but it presents a good chance for members from both organisations to get together and hopefully consolidate the group further. Accordingly, we will host two meetings: on Monday 24th and Thursday 27th at 2.45–3.30 pm (location to be confirmed).

Next year we will have our own stream within the TASA conference and hopefully a chance to redress the imbalance in papers received to date. All those interested in finding out more about this new group are welcome to attend one or both of our meetings. Alternatively, please contact the co-convenors: Sue Malta s.malta@nari.unimelb.edu.au or Michael Fine michael.fine@uq.edu.au.

The aim of the group is to create a supportive network for sociologists working in or researching ageing issues across a range of academic and non-academic institutions.  

Subscribe to TASA’s YouTube Channel

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The story of writing a story about the history of Australian Sociology

Gary Wickham and Kirsten Harley

In accepting the kind invitation of the Nexus editors to deliver a short piece about the various stages involved in the production of our recently released history of Australian sociology (Australian Sociology: Fragility, Survival, Rivalry London: Palgrave) we’ve decided it’s best if we each use our own voice.

GW: I wish to start at the Law and Society conference in Wollongong in 2002. I’d met Kirsten only once before then, having had a fruitful but very brief discussion with her at the previous year’s TASA conference in Sydney. At Wollongong we set in train an arrangement whereby I ended up co-supervising Kirsten’s PhD (with Rob van Krieken) (an arrangement which soon developed into a friendship). The thesis was to be on the history of the use of theory in sociology, primarily in Australia, Britain, and America.

Already confident about Kirsten’s abilities, I soon became impressed; she gathered historical resources together with a sure hand and formulated compelling arguments from them. Even more impressive was her capacity to present her arguments at national and international conferences, a capacity which saw her make good contacts with important people, including the leading British historian of sociology, Jennifer Platt. The thesis was completed in very good time and won not only rich praise from the examiners but also Sydney University’s alumni award for PhD achievement.

Across this period we had occasionally discussed the possibility of writing a book together. I was a little reticent because my historical knowledge of sociology was, and still is, nowhere near as deep as Kirsten’s but she kept insisting my broader arguments about the direction of the discipline and my experience in book-writing would make me a good co-author. Fortunately in late 2012 the possibility became an opportunity when we were approached by John Holmwood and Stephen Turner, the editors of ‘Sociology Transformed’, a new Palgrave series which aims to trace the way sociology in a variety of countries has changed since 1945 (Stephen’s book on American sociology and ours on Australia are the first two published). I’ve known John and Stephen for many years and I was aware they’d recently become familiar with (and impressed by) Kirsten’s work so we treated their approach very seriously.

We were asked to send them a formal proposal. We decided that three narrative themes – fragility, survival, and rivalry – could usefully be developed to bring together the wealth of detail which Kirsten had built up in the course of her PhD studies and her postdoctoral research. This worked a treat and we were offered a contract.

The writing of the book took place in the second half of 2013. It was of course deeply affected by the fact that in January of that year Kirsten was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease, something she will tell you about in her section of this piece. While the illness is extremely debilitating, Kirsten was amazing, tirelessly providing mountains of evidence and a pleasure to work with at all times. With regular help and guidance from our editors we were able to deliver a manuscript early this year. We were asked to make a few minor changes, which we did promptly, and we were soon sent the proofs for checking (yes, Palgrave was incredibly quick in the production stage, as well as being thorough and helpful).

However, the gremlin every proofreading author fears did make one especially regrettable appearance: we inadvertently left Sharyn Roach-Anleu out of our ‘Acknowledgements’, despite us both being sure we’d included her, as someone we’ve both admired and learned from for many years. As my last comment I’m pleased to say Sharyn was not only not offended, she’s readily agreed to join John Germov (another longstanding friend and supporter to us both) to formally launch the book at this year’s TASA conference. You’re all most welcome to come along.
KH: By the time Gary and I met up in Wollongong, in late 2002, I had good reasons to be confident he would be an excellent supervisor and (though this wasn’t yet on my radar) an excellent co-author. I had read a number of his books and articles, and loved his writing style as well as his scholarship. And in our email exchange during that year, where we tossed around thesis ideas and possible supervisory and institutional arrangements and shared and commented on each other’s writing, it became clear that Gary would be generous, supportive, encouraging and helpful as a supervisor and that we could comfortably manage intellectual disagreements. What clinched the decision, when I met Gary and his family in Wollongong, was his response to my favourite joke (Knock knock; Who’s there?; Europe; Europe who?; I am not a poo!); He laughed but also fired back another possible punch-line: “European down my leg”.

Gary’s suggestion that I work with Robert van Krieken as primary supervisor at Sydney University also turned out to be a great decision (becoming friends with not only my supervisors but also their lovely families was an unexpected benefit of the PhD – how lucky am I! – and Gary’s wife Jo Goodie played a big role in helping map out the direction for the book).

Gary’s supervision was as good as I expected. Our discussion continued by email, supplemented by face-to-face meetings at conferences or when either of us visited the other in Sydney or Perth. Gary’s comment above that I completed my thesis in good time says much more about his supervisory generosity than it does about the length of my candidature! Both Gary and Rob were generous in many ways, including in introducing me (and my work) to their networks. Thus Stephen Turner, whose work on the history of sociology I had long admired, became one of my thesis examiners. If I have one tip for getting your thesis published as a book it is to have your supervisors choose an examiner likely to edit a series of books in your area!

I was very excited when, in 2012, Stephen and John Holmwood invited Gary and me to contribute a book on the history of Australian sociology to their Palgrave series, ‘Sociology Transformed’. My enthusiasm wasn’t dampened by our discussions during my visit to Fremantle and at the TASA conference in Brisbane that November (Gary was the first person to comment on my changed gait when he saw me approaching in Freo). My diagnosis with Motor Neurone Disease in January 2013 brought the certainty that I would progressively lose the ability to move, to speak, to swallow, to breathe, to live; the knowledge that median life expectancy was two to three years; and uncertainty about the order and timing of loss in my own individual trajectory with the disease. On that day, amidst the crazy uncertainty about so many things, I was still certain that this was a project I wanted to continue with, but I wasn’t sure it would be possible.

Shortly afterwards, on a beautifully sunny Sydney day, Gary and I and our families caught up over drinks in the Customs House courtyard near Circular Quay. We hugged, talked, laughed and cried. Our conversation was wide-ranging – life, death, sustaining reading, faith, work, friends, sociology – but we also talked through flexible ways we could collaborate to finish the book regardless of likely changes in what I’d be able to do, and how to make that an enjoyable process.

Had I attempted to write the book myself it would not have been finished. In part that is because increasing fatigue and muscle weakness, along with the multitude of healthcare appointments, significantly slowed my writing pace. But it is also because, compared to Gary, I am more inclined to procrastinate, prioritising my anxiety about the limits of my evidence over the meeting of deadlines. While Gary was efficiently and beautifully crafting narratives and arguments, I was slowly analyzing data and collecting examples. By myself, I would have found the (very constructive) suggestions of our editors overwhelming; as can be seen in his comments above, Gary took them in his stride. Gary was patient with me as I let deadlines slide, and in our working together I was able to accept that our book could make a worthwhile contribution without being comprehensive or perfect.

Thanks to that Customs House meeting, the book was finished as quickly as I could have hoped and the process was genuinely enjoyable. As Gary and I exchanged different incarnations of the manuscript, I think we both enjoyed watching it develop, and enjoyed our discussions about word choice and punctuation and about the goings-on of Australian sociology. This enjoyment, and the completion of the book, relied upon our different strengths and contributions to the project, but also upon our shared trust, respect, friendship, humour, and support for Australian sociology.

Stephen Crook Memorial Award - 2014
A TASA member will be presented with this Award at the conference dinner on Wednesday November 26th, 2014.
Sociology, TASA and the ceremonial importance of dance

Dan Woodman
TASA Vice-President Elect

The TASA community are my people. Like Durkheim’s ecstatic rituals, TASA events help me feel part of something bigger. While I appreciate the intellectual pleasures of hearing a good paper at the conference, more valuable is sharing the suspenseful anticipation and feeling the ritual significance at the conference dinner as we wait for the new President to take to the dance floor! The TASA community has been particularly important over my past four years in a very small sociology program at the University of Melbourne, in a larger school dominated by political scientists. To be fair, only a handful of my colleagues in political science are active practitioners of Machiavelli’s methods, and all the social sciences face growing challenges just to hold on to the resources we have, and new demands to constantly justify the value of what we do. This is true even at Melbourne, one Australia’s most well-resourced universities.

While making a difference to the world, on many registers, is exactly what the social sciences should be about, we have increasingly little say over how this is measured. To continue the theme, as an Association we need to dance the fine line between supporting each other to manage and even excel in this audit culture while at the same time resisting its absurdities and trying to imagine new, and retain old, alternative visions of academic life. Collective support will be particularly important for early career scholars trying to get a foothold as a meaningful career as a sociologist, inside or outside the academy, in these precarious conditions.

As Vice President my aim in the coming two years is to work with the Executive to find new allies in the pursuit and defence of sociology. One way we can do this, which the Executive is already pursuing, is to better engage with sociologists in the region as we attempt to come to terms with what it means to live in the Asian Century. Another is by building on TASA’s recent gains in community engagement and public sociology. It is heartening to see my friends in sociology more regularly appearing in public debate and media commentary to challenge narrowly economic or individualistic viewpoints.

Finally, I want to support the President and the Executive in pursuing new ways to maintain the engagement of senior sociologists in TASA. While TASA membership is very healthy, not enough sociologists continue their involvement as they progress their careers. Senior scholars bring a wealth of knowledge and also have political clout within our institutions. The direction is not one way. While senior scholars can give advice to junior colleagues, the experience of being a level A or B academic is very different today than it was even 20 years ago. Those who have recently completed PhDs, or with years of sessional contracts under their belt, can give their academic ‘elders’ particularly sharp insights into how academic life is changing. Karl Mannheim, the famous (at least in the right circles) sociologist of generations saw intergenerational solidarity at times of rapid change as possible because ‘not only does the teacher educate his pupil, but the pupil educates his teacher too’. In other words, there is much to be gained as well as given by the professoriate if they continue their engagement in TASA.

Sociology is a discipline of multiple, sometimes opposed, approaches, but the contemporary academic environment demands new solidarities more than ever before, precisely because it pushes towards atomisation. TASA has an important role to play in supporting these solidarities and advocating for sociology in Australian public life. To best play this role we must encourage sociologists to get involved and stay involved as they build their careers so that early, mid, and late career sociologists can support each other.

It is an honour to serve as Vice President of TASA. I look forward to working with the President and the rest of the 2015–16 TASA Executive on these and other issues over the coming two years. I also look forward to the even more significant ceremonial duties of dancing at the conference dinner, as long as President Hughes leads the way.

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A haven in a heartless bureaucratic machine?
Reflections on serving in TASA

Nick Osbaldiston
Federation University Australia

When I was approached to present my reflections on the past four or so years that I have worked in and around the TASA Executive and beyond (such as the conference last year), I felt underwhelmed with my ability to say anything meaningful at all. As the immortal Homer would say, ‘Lord help me, I’m just not that bright.’ But during my exceptionally lucky time that I have spent serving in TASA I have learned a number of things that will stay with me throughout my career about the discipline, its strengths and weaknesses and how it will, in my view, continue to thrive for a very long time in Australia.

While significant pressures will undoubtedly continue to build on all of us as the neoliberal university machine continues to churn out new methods of rationalising our academic lives, I have learned that the discipline as a community can act as a salve to the bruises we may well receive daily, inside and out of the academy.

This might seem overly dramatic (even I wonder about it after writing it!) but the quest in academia to find a place within an increasingly individualised sphere is becoming a lonesome task. We are becoming increasingly exposed as individuals to metrics and other measures that isolate our own outputs (such as the h-index), match us against other academics and then spit us out again at job applications and promotions panels. While I think that at times we can be too pessimistic about all of this (conveniently forgetting life inside other very precarious occupations), I have learned the value of finding a collective home among colleagues within the discipline and I continue to enjoy celebrating good quality sociological research in this country.

I am increasingly in awe, for instance, of the work people are doing to advance sociological thinking in this country and it has been through my involvement in TASA (especially with Nexus) that my awareness of them has increased. Furthermore, I am becoming increasingly aware of the passion that sociologists in this country have for the discipline and how they identify strongly with it. This was perhaps no more apparent than at the conference last year, which I was very fortunate to co-convene with Helen Forbes-Mewett and Catherine Strong. Here we were able to come together, debate and perhaps disagree at times on the uses of sociological theory, methods and so on, but nevertheless we still come together to enjoy the discipline's home. This is why I’m always a little sceptical about the virtues of constructing a wholly multidisciplinary system where disciplinary boundaries are no longer relevant. In a recent Twitter conversation, I asked ‘when can someone define him or herself as an academic?’ One response that drew support was that the person preferred to define him/herself as a sociologist – which I think speaks to the collective and individual importance of the disciplinary identity.

Some of the lessons I have learned during my service to TASA revolve around this overarching thought about the ability for the discipline to produce feelings of collective identification. While these are numerous, I will restrict my discussion here to just three (in no particular order) – and I beg your indulgence in considering them!

1. **Having good strong networks provides opportunities.**

I have been asked a few times whether service really enhances your career. It is a difficult question to answer (and one I’m probably very unqualified to do). As an early career researcher (ECR) working in Australia, it seems to me that at an institutional level, service is low on the priority list of measurable qualities that a board of any kind will examine. Nevertheless, despite my feeling that service should not be thought of entirely as ‘enhancing’ one’s CV, there are a number of unmeasurable opportunities it brings. I think the most important of these is the opportunity to network with a host of quality academics across Australia. As you get to know these people more, you come to realise that there is a wealth of knowledge and a willingness to help ECRs within the sociological community. I have been extremely lucky to have
had opportunity to tap into these at times when writing grants, publications and just in general support for my work. I think developing mentoring networks (outside of the university you are in) can be an underappreciated activity at times.

2. **Building and contributing to the discipline's visibility.**

   In Australia, there is, I think, a very vague understanding of what sociology is and where it contributes to knowledge. Anyone who has taken a first-year sociology class as a lecturer or tutor has had to face the inevitable question of how it relates to psychology and other related behavioural sciences. Perhaps worse still is the dreaded question, 'what can I do with this degree?' I have been fortunate during my time with Nexus and Public Engagement to form relationships with and work with institutions that will enable sociology to gain some traction publicly. One institution in particular, Social Education Victoria, has been instrumental in the development of sociology at the secondary school level in Victoria. We have recently begun working more closely with them so that we can start to enhance the profile of the discipline at ground level. However, it’s exciting to see that a number of sociologists are taking up the responsibility themselves by publishing in newspapers, blogs and other spaces that increase our visibility. I do think that through these acts we can begin to turn the tide a little.

3. **Developing a care for the future and finding comfort among friends.**

   A number of good quality mid- and late-career sociologists continue to impress upon me their willingness (as above) to mentor, assist and work with younger academics like myself. It seems that many take this responsibility very seriously and do astounding work caring for future sociological leaders. Working inside TASA I’m able to see these acts of service to the younger cohorts first hand and it does provide a certain inspiration to emulate this later in life myself. But beyond these moments of collegiality and mentoring, it’s the simple act of coming together as a group that at times can re-energise the enthusiasm for the discipline. As I have suggested, I thoroughly enjoy conferences and other workshops and events. Being able to come together and talk ‘shop’ as it were while enjoying the company of like-minded people is very energising. Through my work in TASA I have been able to make many new friends, which I am certain many members experience. I think the stronger the social networks between us are, then the more likely it is the discipline's success will grow in the future.

These are by no means all I have learned with my work in TASA, but they represent what I have felt as a very strong influence on my daily practice as an academic and sociologist. I am very grateful for the time I have had to work with TASA and for its membership. I see the amount of effort that people put in for no reward almost daily, and with that enthusiasm I do feel optimistic about the future of sociology in Australia.

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**Conference Scholarship for TASA Members with Disabilities**

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

**Congratulations to the 2014 recipient**

**Catherine Kowalski**

Deakin University

Catherine will be presenting her paper

‘Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Dr Google and the Rise of Cyberchondria’

during the 4PM - 5:30PM session on Wednesday November 26.
As an early career sociologist in a regional university, sitting on the Executive Committee of TASA has been a great way to become part of the Australian sociology community. While we have several sociologists at James Cook University, we are physically and departmentally dispersed. As a result, I have one other sociologist in my building. Without TASA, it would be easy for me to feel isolated – because I am! But being on the TASA Executive has linked me in to broad networks and given me lots of great opportunities. It wasn’t always easy, but it was worth the effort.

I would like to say that when I originally nominated for the Executive I was seeking the benefits outlined above, and maybe on some level I did, but mostly it was because I have trouble saying ‘no’. In 2010, Eileen Clark emailed recent recipients of TASA Postgraduate Scholarships to suggest that we nominate for Postgraduate Representative … so I did. And I was elected.

The start of my experience on the Executive was a little rocky. I missed the first meeting I was to attend as a ‘shadow’ because my appendix burst and I was in hospital. The member serving as Postgraduate Representative before me then went overseas, so I never really had a handover. I had never sat on committees or boards for anything previously, so I was unsure of myself in terms of procedure and general behaviour. But the other members of the Exec were very generous with me, and I adopted a strategy of keeping quiet when I didn’t know what was going on – a sort of ‘fake it ’til you make it’ approach.

It worked, and in 2012 when Eileen decided to step down as TASA Secretary, she suggested to me that I might nominate for the position. This time I thought about it more deliberately. I was more aware of the amount of work that went into the role, but also more aware of the benefits of being on the Executive. I had learned a lot about how to be on a board, how to engage at meetings, and how to get jobs done through my two years as the Postgraduate Representative. So I nominated for Secretary and again I was elected.

I am really glad I sat on the Executive Committee during TASA’s 50th anniversary year in 2013. We ran lots of exciting initiatives and it was great to engage with members through those events and programs. These positive interactions have made the rockier moments worthwhile. Through my work on the TASA Executive I have had a good excuse to get to know a lot of sociologists at all levels of Australian sociology and beyond. I have developed research partnerships through my work, have been invited to publish, and have built up important networks.

Aside from being just a line on my CV, serving on the TASA Executive has given me skills. It was a huge part of my transition from a student to a grown-up academic with capabilities beyond just teaching and research. It has emboldened me to take on new challenges. I have made good friends. I am stepping down from the TASA Executive for now because I have a big project to work on next year, but I will miss being a part of it.

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(click here)
Earlier this year the TASA Risk Societies thematic group received funding from TASA to organise a seminar with an internationally highly recognised risk society sociologist. The intention was to engage a leading risk society researcher and to stream a seminar presentation to risk society members and to the wider TASA membership, using sophisticated internet technology to deliver an interactive seminar. Hence, the presenter could deliver the presentation from anywhere in the world and it would be possible for the audience to listen and ask questions. The resulting interactive seminar session would only be a distance in space, not in communication. The co-conveners of the group (Dr Charlotte Fabiansson and Dr Anna Anderson) saw this as a great opportunity for members.

As with most projects, flexibility was the key to delivery and good outcomes, and being in the right place at the right time helped. We approached Professor Nikolas Rose and we were fortunate that he was visiting Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand during August, and Sydney University and the Australian National University in Canberra on his way back to the UK. We asked Professor Rose if he was prepared to extend his stay by one day. Geographical distance worked in our favour because Professor Rose noted that he would be unlikely to return to Australia in the near future. Luck was on our side, and he came to Melbourne in person on 28 August 2014 to deliver a thought provoking public lecture entitled ‘From risk to resilience: responsible citizens for uncertain times’ at Melbourne University. Nearly 200 people attended, with about the same number of people in Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and Europe tuning into the live streaming. An edited version can be found on YouTube at this link.

The lecture was highly inspirational and thought provoking. Professor Rose focused on the obligations of responsibility and resilience, and the aspiration of almost all who hope to govern human beings and who seek to implant technologies of ‘self-mastery’ in each individual, who can then live their lives in a condition of freedom rather than of domination. Rose located this theme of responsibility within the genealogy of ‘ethopolitics’ – the ways in which sentiments, values and beliefs are deployed as a medium through which the self-government of the individual can be linked with the imperatives of good government; the configurations for the ‘conduct of conduct’ from the mid-19th century to the present in which responsibility has been central. Professor Rose examined the rise of the term ‘resilience’ in contemporary ethopolitics, suggesting that the ethic of responsibility is being reworked in the context of a concern with managing individuals and collective conduct in the face of the pervasive insecurity and uncertainty concerning the future.

O’Malley (2010:488) notes that resilience has become part of the risk and preparedness security assemblage, where probabilistic risk has the specific aim of harm minimisation while preparedness relates to developing routines and strategies to meet anticipated or imaginable future risks. Resilience, thus, demonstrates the capabilities of how people manage everyday and overwhelming risks, their engagement and level of preparedness:

… resilience implies a systematic, widespread, organizational, structural and personal strengthening of subjective and material arrangements so as to be better able to anticipate and tolerate disturbances in complex worlds without collapse, to withstand shocks, and to rebuild as necessary. . . . a logic of resiliency would aspire to create a subjective and systematic state to enable each and all to live freely and with confidence in a world of potential risks. (Lentzos & Rose, 2009:243)

How this can be achieved is not a given, because it depends on the risk situation, available resources, power, preparedness, social networks and individual resilience. While some see the rise of resilience strategies as a neoliberal apotheosis of reactionary individualism, Professor Rose explored whether, and
in what ways, new strategies and the technologies of citizenship to which they are linked might provide opportunities for more progressive politics.

Professor Rose concluded:

… nonetheless I think there are some positive ways forward that are indicated or at least potential, possible to be affirmed within resilience. It is not a question, as others have argued, of being governed or not governed but it is a question of how we are governed; of governing ourselves and others differently. And I believe resilience can offer individuals and collectiveness a greater space of action. It does open new possibilities for legitimate contestations in the name of resilience. It does authorise arguments concerning the distributed resources and capacities, and solidarities that are necessary to produce resilient subjects. And it can recognise and enhance, can recognise contingency and enhance creativity. So perhaps, just perhaps, there is something here we are confirming. The fight not against resilience, not to proclaim our nobility of resilience or to indulge in critique, but to see what there is also the territory of resilience that we might work for: Who should be resilient for what? Who should be held accountable? What power is required to make resilience a reality? What are the collective conditions for resilience? And, I think possibly if we began to analyse in those ways we might find something helpful for our progressive politics in the new language of resilience. Thank you.

This project was an excellent outcome of a collaboration between TASA, the Risk Societies thematic group, Victoria University, Melbourne University, and especially Professor Nikolas Rose.

References

Distinguished Service to Australian Sociology Award - 2014
A TASA member will be presented with this prestigious Award at the conference dinner on Wednesday November 26th, 2014.

2014 TASA Jerzy Zubrzycki Postgraduate Scholarship
This is an annual prize awarded as one of the TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarships for the best paper in the research areas of migration or cultural pluralism, or with the potential for contribution to public policy.

Congratulations to the 2014 recipient
‘Fiona Proudfoot’
University of Tasmania

Fiona will be presenting her conference paper ‘Understanding Cultural Differences at the Frontline of Social Housing’ on Tuesday November 25 during the 11:AM - 12:30PM session.
The critical study of sport in Australia has developed over the past 30 years. The pioneering works of McKay, Lawrence, Rowe, Goldlust and Connell have been followed by Hallinan, Tatz, Miller, Hughson and others. However, despite this work, it seems paradoxical that for a nation so enamoured with sport, there has not been a thematic group dedicated to the topic within TASA (although sport was a theme in the now defunct Mobilities TG).

Sport is more than just entertainment. It is simultaneously a multi-billion dollar global industry and a local space where girls and boys, women and men, experience movement and meaningful experiences that help shape their identity. In 21st century Australia, sport is used by government and civil society in many ways: a vehicle for achieving multiculturalism, social cohesion and harmony; a solution to public health crises such as the ‘obesity epidemic’ and sedentary lifestyles; an intervention strategy for ‘at risk’ youth; a standard of national identity and a format through which to narrate and ‘sell’ the nation. Major sporting organisations take it upon themselves to advocate for various causes and forms of social justice, and indeed sport has provided a very public forum where conversations about racism, sexism and homophobia have initially been held.

On the other hand, sport is highly problematic. While being an exemplar of neoliberal meritocracy, espousing literally and metaphorically a ‘level playing field’, sport in Australia and elsewhere is undoubtedly classed, gendered, and racialised. As such, sport offers multiple sites for sociological research and there is now a critical mass of sociologists working in this field across Australia.

Important research is being carried out at Australian universities in areas such as technologies of regulation in sport, global media sport, the politics of race and ethnicity, belonging and identity within the context of migration and refugee settlement, gender and sexuality, and fandom and spectatorship, to name but a few. This body of research not only advances intellectual and policy understandings of Australian sport but can also inform key questions that guide Australian and international sociology more broadly, especially with regard to inequality, social cohesion, social change, culture and identity.

In light of this, the launch of the Sport Thematic Group acknowledges this work and aims to enhance the profile and position of Australian sociology of sport both domestically and internationally. The Sport Thematic Group aims to build and promote research and scholarship in the sociology of sport across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. To achieve this aim, the Thematic Group will:
- support and encourage innovative research and teaching in the sociology of sport;
- foster the development of critical sociological insights and perspectives on sport, leisure and physical activity;
- provide a forum for communication and collaboration of sociologists working in the field;
- raise the profile of sociological voices in public and policy debates on sport and physical activity;
- generate links and collaboration with national and international groups with complementary scholarly interests.

The TG will be officially launched during the 2014 TASA Annual Conference at the University of South Australia. Senior and early career researchers, postgraduate students and those working outside of academia with an interest in the sociology of sport are kindly invited to join our new group.
Converting our innovative teaching and learning into publications

A report on the Teaching Sociology Thematic Group event

PETA S. COOK
University of Tasmania

On 27 June 2014, seven sociologists gathered on a rather chilly morning for a Teaching Sociology Thematic Group event in Launceston, Tasmania. The aim of the event was simple – to give sociologists the opportunity to come together in a collaborative environment and concentrate on writing articles about teaching and learning for publication.

The idea for this event came from an Australian Learning and Teaching Council workshop ‘In the Beginning: Revitalising the First Year Curriculum in Sociology’, held at the Australian Catholic University (Sydney) on 30 October 2013. At that time, some attendees identified that there were few opportunities for face-to-face and cross-university collaboration to explore teaching and learning matters in sociology. Following this, the idea of a teaching and learning research workshop was raised with members of the Teaching Sociology thematic group at the 2013 TASA conference, followed by an email to the group in December 2013. From the feedback received, there was strong interest in an activity that would support the development of teaching and learning publications.

The event itself involved considerable discussion and writing. From this, three different research articles were conceived and are currently under development. These are about exploring innovative ways of teaching sociology through the use of popular culture, objects, visual imagery and music (non-textual approaches to teaching and learning sociology); discussion on the role of graduate attributes in Australian universities; and providing support and pathways for sociology students with low literacy levels. In other words, this opportunity directly led to the writing of three articles, one of which is in the final stages of preparation before submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Two of the articles built on publications in Nexus from the Teaching Sociology group (see Hookway [Nexus 25 (1) pp. 10–11] and Cook [Nexus 25 (2) pp. 22–24], and this shows how Nexus can provide a valuable pathway to discussions and publication opportunities. Some participants from the event are also in discussion regarding applying for an Office of Learning and Teaching grant. These outcomes were only made possible by the opportunity to come together in Launceston, and we thank TASA for their support. Furthermore, at the 2014 TASA Conference, three attendees will present their contributions to a collaborative article stemming from this event at a Teaching Sociology session:

- Sarah James, ‘Sociological songs: using non-textual media to promote active online learning’
- Nick Osbaldiston, ‘Using material culture to teach Sociology’
- Peta Cook, ‘Visual methods for assessment in Sociology’

Consequently, this one-day event has resulted in many fruitful collaborations and outcomes that are ongoing. The support of TASA will be acknowledged in our published manuscripts. We thank TASA for making this event possible and assisting us to develop these significant collaborative opportunities. This event was also supported by Faculty of Arts, University of Tasmania, who covered the costs of our pre-workshop dinner and catering for the workshop, and whom we thank for keeping us well and truly fed.

Raewyn Connell Prize - 2014

A TASA member will be presented with this Prize at the conference dinner in Adelaide on Wednesday November 26th, 2014.
Professoriate and Heads of Department Annual Meeting

Tuesday November 25th
12:30PM - 1:30PM
University of South Australia

TASA Thematic Groups Annual Meeting

Tuesday November 25th
12:30PM - 1:30PM
University of South Australia
Reflections on my term on the TASA Executive

Dina Bowman
Brotherhood of St Laurence
2013 - 2014 TASA Multimedia editor

In 2012, I put myself forward for a position on the TASA Executive. I had been an active member since first attending a TASA conference at Beechworth in 2004. That first conference was a very strange experience. I felt very much the outsider. I remember my presentation vividly – somehow the slides were set on automatic and they whizzed past me as I attempted to discuss my research. I valiantly soldiered on, most audience members were polite and I particularly remember Karen Farquharson’s kind words afterwards (and I try to emulate her generosity whenever I witness a disastrous presentation. It makes a difference!). But one audience member was out to prove that she was cleverer than everyone else or maybe she was having a bad day. ‘It’s all been said before’, she said, and proceeded to try and demolish me. Actually, I can’t remember what she said, because when you are in shock, you turn off. Anyway she flounced off and I never did find out what the main criticisms were. Perhaps if I could have spoken with her, I might have learned something.

Since then I have attended almost every TASA conference (I missed 2011 because I’d been to ISA). I’ve presented and done much better most of the time. I’ve been active in the Economic Sociology thematic group (now Sociology of Economic Life) and the Applied Sociology group.

So, in 2012 I thought it would be a good idea to put my hand up to be part of the Executive. I didn’t think it through but thought I’d give it a crack. To my surprise, I was elected. I think it may have surprised other members of the Executive also. Despite having been part of TASA, my first Executive meeting in November 2012 was slightly reminiscent of my first encounter with TASA. Okay, I wasn’t insulted and didn’t humiliate myself (at least I don’t think I did) but I felt an outsider. As a researcher who works outside the university system I am an outsider. Indeed, in 2010 I was awarded a Sociologist Outside Academe Scholarship to attend the TASA conference. I’ve been a board member of NGOs and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Why had I forgotten what committees were like? Why did it seem a good idea to nominate?

It always takes time to understand the rules of the game. They vary between fields and from organisation to organisation. Over the past two years, there have been great opportunities to contribute and provide a different perspective. I’ve participated in discussions about the future of TASA, how we can best serve members and promote sociology, and in and amongst that I have promoted the interests and perspectives of sociologists outside academia. I have reflected on the role that sociology can – and should – play in public debate of social, economic and environmental policy. My fellow Executive members have demonstrated commitment in promoting sociology and serving members under the leadership of Jo Lindsay as President, with the sage guidance of Deb King as Past President.

Over the past few years, I have had the privilege of participating in the Postgraduate Day in 2013 and the Future of Social Science workforce symposium in 2014, both of which were organised by the fabulous Karen Soldatic. I’ve had the opportunity of reading some wonderful and very different books as part of the panel for the Stephen Crooks Award for best authored book in Australian Sociology. The TASA conference in Brisbane in 2012 was memorable, not least due to the dancing – Loic Wacquant rocks! Other notable mentions on the dance floor that year must go Karen Farquharson, Deb Dempsey, Sonia Martin, Raewyn Connell, and me! The 2013 conference was held at Monash and because it was in Melbourne workaday commitments were hard to escape so I missed out on the dinner and dancing, but by all accounts it was just as memorable.

There have been challenges. Somehow, I had ended up with the multimedia portfolio and redeveloping the website was a key task. There were false starts and it has been a long and tedious process, as anyone who has ever been involved in redeveloping a website will understand. My sincere thanks must go to Sally Daly who is one of the most patient, competent and committed people I have encountered. She keeps on going and picks up the pieces when others drop them. Like me, she is an early riser. There have been many emails changed well before 7am. Thanks also should go to Nick Osbaldiston, a voice of quiet reason. As the Executive member responsible for Public Relations, Nick has been a great colleague and has worked with Sally and me in the redevelopment of the website.
Other Executive members also deserve mention. Kristin Natalier is notable for her diligence as Treasurer, always bringing discussions back to what is reasonable and in the best interests of the members. The quiet competence of Theresa Petray as Secretary and Alphia Possamai-Inesedy as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Sociology* also deserve acknowledgment. Grazyna Zadjow brought enthusiasm to her role as thematic groups organiser, and Katie Hughes pioneered international links with the Asia-Pacific Sociological Association and the International Sociological Association.

Overall, my time on the TASA Executive has been a wonderful experience and I am very happy to hand over the responsibility of the website and multimedia to Brady Robards. I hope that I’ll be able to continue to contribute to TASA and promote the views and interests of the increasing number of sociologists who are outside of the academy, or as I like to put it, those who are based in public, community or private sectors. It is wonderful that Sue Malta will be joining the Executive in 2015 as someone who is employed in a university affiliated research institute.

Concluding thoughts: I have met and worked with some wonderful people, learnt a lot and had some fun. So, if you can, give it a crack. You might just be elected, make a difference and contribute to an inclusive and relevant association.

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**Outstanding Service to TASA Award - 2014**

A TASA member will be presented with this Award at the conference dinner on Wednesday November 26th, 2014.

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**2014 TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarships**

*New to 2014: additional funding for travel*

The scholarships aim to support postgraduate participation at TASA annual conferences. The TASA Executive encourages postgraduate members to apply. It also encourages academic supervisors to promote the scholarships to their postgraduate students.

**Congratulations to the 2014 recipients:**

- Melissa-Jane Belle, University of Tasmania
- Maria Davidenko, La Trobe University
- Mousumi Mukherjee, Melbourne University
- Joy Townsend, University of New South Wales

[Click here for information](#)
Thank You: This is my last piece as the National Post-Graduate Representative (2013 – 2014). I really want to thank you all for your ongoing support throughout the two year period and your continuing suggestion of ideas, thoughts and strategies on how to move the role forward. It was been a wonderful two year period working with you all and I hope that the new supports we have put in place, such as the Post Grad Sub-Committee and the extended Scholarships to incorporate travel to/from the annual conference, will be of benefit to TASA post grads for the coming years.

New Representative (2015-2016): On that note, I would like to welcome and introduce Christina Malatzky, Murdoch University, WA, who will be taking over as National Post-Graduate Representative from January 2015.

I joined TASA in 2011 and since then, I have attended and presented at every annual conference. I graduated from my doctoral studies in 2013 from Murdoch University, Western Australia where I currently teach. In November, I take up a new position, Research Fellow in Culture and Rural Health at the University of Melbourne, Shepparton campus. My thesis is entitled ‘Devoted Mum, Professional Woman and Sexy to Boot: An Investigation into Competing Discourses of Motherhood’. In the regional area of Western Australia where I conducted my doctoral research, there were few opportunities for postgraduate students to exchange ideas, share experiences and work-in-progress, and gain peer support and guidance.

In response, I established and coordinated a Postgraduate and Professional Development Network for postgraduates in the region. Thus, I have experience mentoring postgraduate students and am I truly excited to represent postgraduate members of TASA. TASA has for me, always been a friendly and supportive organisation, providing intellectual stimulation and a valued sense of collegiality and as the Postgraduate Representative, I will do my utmost to ensure this is every postgraduate member’s experience. I will work diligently to represent and promote the interests of postgraduate members to the Executive to the fullest of my abilities.

PG Day, National Conference: 25 November 2014: Thanks to Brad West, from the University of South Australia conference organising committee, arrangements for the Post Grad day, immediately prior to the TASA annual conference, are now finalised. This year’s Post Grad day will draw together key themes of interest to the Post Grad community including academic publishing with international editors from a range of publishing sites and research methodology. Associate Prof Lia Bryant, a leading Australian sociologist will be running the methodology workshop entitled: Fragmented and Situational Memory Work: It’s a great program and will provide opportunities for networking, discussion and insight into some key areas of academic labour. Click here for information

Conference Scholarships: Scholarships are now finalised for 2014. Come along to the TASA Post Grad day to meet each of the recipients and learn about their rich scholarship.

PG New Sub-Committee: Don’t forget attendance at the Post Grad Day will also provide an opportunity for you all to meet many of your Sub-Committee Reps.

Thanks again to you all of a great two years. It really has been a wonderful experience and I am looking forward hanging out with you all at the TASA annual conference in the years to come.
PhD/Masters Completions

If you have completed your postgraduate qualification, why not celebrate it with Nexus? On completion please forward information to Christina Malatzky (christina.malatzky@unimelb.edu.au) for inclusion. Our congratulations go to the following people on their achievements.

Ben Gook

The Past that Outlived Itself: German Re-unification and Its Discontents
The University of Melbourne

Supervisors: Dr John Cash (Social Theory) and Assoc. Prof. Chris Healy (Cultural Studies)

Summary: The PhD thesis took East and West Germany as a case study in debates about social change—about borders, social ties, memory and subjectivity. The thoroughgoing material, social, cultural and psychic effects of re-unification on the lives of Germans since 1989 all demand that we again ask fundamental questions about history, social change and ideology. The thesis explains how psychological walls came to replace physical boundaries, how a national ideology masks division, how memory challenges official history, how re-unification has remade places and lives. Drawing on sociologies of affect, it puts affective life at the centre of social change, both in its role mobilising East Germans to overthrow their regime, and as a sign of disappointment after formal re-unification. The thesis records, then, subjective experiences of objective change: the epoch-making shift from eastern bloc socialism to EU-capitalism and its effects on Germans. Empirically, then, this research is ‘about Germany’ in the most basic sense, but it is also a model of applying cultural and social theory to an empirical ‘archive’ or case study. Therefore, if the German example is a case study in extremis of the ways in which society is divided and marked by discontents, this case study is useful in that it may show us all the more clearly the ordinary functioning of contemporary ideologies. A revised version of the thesis will be published by Rowman & Littlefield International (London) in mid-2015.

Archana Preeti Voola

Beyond the economics of gender inequalities in microfinance: Comparing problem representations in India and Australia.
The University of Sydney

Supervisors: Dr. Susan Goodwin (Primary) and Dr. Jude Irwin (Associate)

Summary: The central goal of the thesis is to critically scrutinise representations of gender inequalities as they emerge in the practices of microfinance consumption in India and Australia. By examining longstanding gendered microfinance programs in India, the study seeks to draw out lessons to inform the emerging sector in Australia. The methodology developed in this study provides an alternative to conventional approaches examining the relationship between microfinance and gender inequalities. That is, rather than begin with an a priori notion of what gender inequality is, and how microfinance addresses or does not address it, this study begins with the inquiry of what gender inequalities are (or are represented to be) through the narratives of microfinance program consumers. Therefore the study compared the problem representations, that is, how gender inequalities were problematised in the policy and practice of microfinance in two contexts. Despite differences in historical trajectories, sociocultural norms and geopolitical configurations between the countries, the study reveals certain commonalities in the normative structuring of gender inequalities.

Addendum:
We announced last issue that Gerd Lederbauer had completed his PhD [Nexus 26(2) p. 28]. His thesis can now be viewed or downloaded at this link.
The idea for my recently published edited collection, *Reframing Reproduction: Conceiving Gendered Experiences*, emerged out of an undergraduate class that I taught for the first time in 2012 at the University of Tasmania where I am a Lecturer in Sociology. When I started to develop the materials for *Sociology of Reproduction*, I was unable to find a book to use in teaching that offered a framework for thinking about reproduction in postmodernity as well as cutting edge case studies and examples. The only solution seemed to be to edit a collection on the topic myself – what turned out to be an ambitious undertaking.

Choosing a publisher and submitting a proposal is one of the most important hurdles to clear. Everyone will tell you that you should choose an international publisher with a great reputation. This is obviously important but it’s also critical that you do some research, get to know the market, and find a publisher that suits your work. In other words, don’t pitch a book to Routledge simply because they are well-known. Edited books can sometimes be a harder ‘sell’ to publishers in a crowded market – an edited book needs to be ‘tight’, with a clear rationale and market. I published my first book (*Making ‘Postmodern’ Mothers: Pregnant Embodiment, Baby Bumps, and Body Image*) in 2012 with Palgrave Macmillan in the *Genders and Sexualities in the Social Sciences* series so I had an existing relationship with a publisher when I was planning my edited book. Publishing a book as part of a series can be a savvy move because it means the book gets an extra promotional push through any marketing that is done for the series as well as marketing for the book as an individual title. Thus I planned to have *Reframing Reproduction* as a title in the same series.

Before I prepared my full proposal, I contacted my publisher directly and gave her a one paragraph pitch. This is important – write a pitch that is engaging. Publishers are extremely busy and get a lot of emails. Capture their attention in the first line. You also do not want to waste your time. A one paragraph pitch gives the publisher a sense of what you want to do, but it also gives the publisher an opportunity to tell you what they want. You can adjust your focus on the basis of this information to ensure you get a contract. Upon receiving my pitch, my publisher was immediately interested and asked for a full proposal with a complete list of contributors.

I made a number of strategic decisions in preparing my proposal to ensure that the book would be contracted. Curating a list of contributors is challenging but very important in terms of how your edited book takes shape and you must take a considered approach. For most editors, the first move is to put out a call for papers on a range of academic forums (e.g. H-Net, Academia.edu) and via social media. This was a hit-or-miss approach for me. I received some fantastic expressions of interest from the general call out, but it also meant that most proposals came from one country. It was much easier to develop the themes in the book by contacting leading scholars directly and asking them to contribute on a particular topic. Being able to say that Professor X from Prestigious University is contributing a chapter is also really important. To differentiate my book from the crowd, I curated a list of collaborative chapters between early career and leading senior researchers in the field, as well as social scientists with scientists. I tried to ensure diversity in the contributors’ disciplines, country of origin, gender, and research interests. I also proposed that the book would be used as a required text in my *Sociology of Reproduction* unit, guaranteeing sales.

As an early career researcher (Level B) with some editorial experience, I intended to have a more experienced co-editor for the project. Adding a co-editor at a more advanced career stage can be a useful way to bring attention to an edited book in a crowded marketplace for academic books. Unfortunately, my senior co-editor withdrew from the project at the last minute before the proposal was submitted. I decided to forge ahead on my own. My publisher supported this decision because I had recently demonstrated my ability to manage the production of a book and to meet relevant timelines as a sole author. Nevertheless,
Publishers are extremely busy and get a lot of emails. Capture their attention in the first line. You also do not want to waste your time.

TASA Postgraduate Day
24 November

The Local Organising Committee at the University of South Australia is pleased to host the 2014 TASA Conference Postgraduate Day on the 24th November. This year the activities focus will be on activities and workshops that create social capital as well as advance participants’ academic and vocational skills. The day will begin with an interactive networking exercise that should help address any alienation that postgraduates can encounter at such large professional meetings, while also establishing personal ties with fellow postgraduates and senior academics that will aid their future careers.

Dr Brad West will hold a workshop on the process of getting published, discussing everything from selecting a journal/publisher to copy editing proofs. Another insider perspective into academic publishing will be attained through a session providing personal insights from journal editors and a commissioning editor from the publishing industry.

Prior to moving onto the official welcome and opening keynote address for the conference that evening, postgraduates will also engage in a workshop with Associate Professor Lia Bryant on analysing the fragmented and situational through using memory. The session will familiarise postgraduates with the method of autoethnography, allowing them to use it either to reflect upon and extend their existing research practice or to apply it as a method in its own right.

10:00 - 10:10 Welcome and Introduction to the day
10:10 - 11:00 Networking
11:00 - 11:15 Morning Tea (provided)
11:15 - 12:15 Getting Published: Joshua Pitt (Taylor & Francis)
12:15 - 13:15 Lunch (The Caf - provided)
13:15 - 14:30 Introduction to Realist Methods: A Consultant’s view, Gill Westhorp (Community Matters)
14:30 - 15:30 Methodology Workshop: Fragmented and Situational Memory Work (Assoc Prof Lia Bryant)
15:30 - 16:00 Afternoon Tea with TASA Executive, Senior staff and the presentation of TASA scholarships

this was a decision that ultimately made the project more challenging (but also more rewarding). The key challenge for me was the peer review process. As a Level B, I felt uncomfortable giving feedback to Level D and E academics, a number of whom I regarded as academic ‘gods’. To negotiate this challenge, I established a blind peer review process and sent out each chapter to two external reviewers. I also provided feedback and editorial advice on each chapter. Thus each contributing author received three sets of feedback. This was the perfect way to alleviate my feelings of insecurity and, overall, it made for a much better book as each chapter was rigorously reviewed and revised. This is a lot of work but it can also be strategic. For instance, I made important contacts in my field by approaching academics to review chapters. Field-leading researchers knew my name and my research interests by the end of the peer review process I was also able to generate interest in the forthcoming book. I’ve followed up with a few of these academics by sending them complimentary copies – a great way to boost your citations!

Would I do it again? Absolutely (in fact, I’m already writing my next proposal – with a co-editor!). Editing my first book was a steep learning curve but it’s an important step in an academic career. Armed with a good spreadsheet and lots of colour coding, anything is possible.
Our reflections on the writing and publishing of a co-authored book

Domestic violence in diverse contexts: Re-examining gender

By Sarah Wendt and Lana Zannettino

Introduction
It may sound simple, but the first important element in writing a book is to have an original idea on a topic that you are passionate about. The second is that if you want to co-author; write with someone who is like-minded and who has a working style you know well. It was these two ingredients that started our journey as co-authors and kept us on track throughout the whole process.

Getting a contract
Being active researchers in the field of domestic violence, having co-authored together previously, and with each of us having an established publication record, we decided to aim for a reputable international publisher in the social sciences and Routledge was the first that came to mind for us.

We spent one day together sitting in an office and wrote the proposal, taking care to follow Routledge’s instructions and supplied template. This task was an important milestone because during this process we developed the originality of our book. For example, this was where we identified that there is almost nothing in the literature that theorised domestic violence using feminist post-structuralist ideas. In addition, with the current focus on the diversity of women’s lives we thought it timely to re-examine gender in the context of domestic violence. During the writing of the proposal we also documented our strengths and previous research in the areas to be covered in the book, and identified where we needed more data for particular chapters.

What we learned from writing the proposal is the importance of being really clear about our theoretical framework, how our book is different to other books on domestic violence, and what our central argument was going to be. Writing the proposal also allowed us to articulate a timeframe for the book and the opportunity to identify who would write particular chapters.

We had three reviewers who provided extensive feedback on our proposal and Routledge asked us to respond to this feedback. Whilst we did not agree with all the reviewers’ comments, we found most to be thoughtful and constructive. The reviewers’ feedback again pushed us to think in greater detail about our argument and the purpose of the book.

On reflection, we believe that our dialogue with Routledge about the reviewers’ comments was pivotal at this point. We provided a formal written response to all reviewers’ comments, highlighting where points were helpful and how we would adopt them, and also politely pointing out where we disagreed and why.

We negotiated a two year timeline with Routledge to which they agreed and on reflection we would encourage anyone writing a book to be honest and realistic about their capacity to meet the proposed timeline. Negotiating our timeline with the publisher and providing a strong rationale for it, allowed us to successfully complete the book on time.

Planning ahead
Our planning involved two critical components. First, we developed our own GANTT chart plotting the points of our two year journey. Second, we made decisions about who would write what and when and these decisions were based on the strength of previous research we had each undertaken as well as which chapters required new data to be collected and therefore additional ethics approvals and research time.

On reflection, early planning for the two years ahead gave us ample opportunity to apply for and secure research leave from our Universities. We both took this leave at the same time, six months before the book was due to be submitted to the publisher. This allowed us to use our leave for intense writing,
that is, all literature reviews, research, and the structure of each chapter had been completed prior to us taking this leave.

Writing
On reflection, writing intensively together in the final 6 months of our two year timeline was integral to the finished product. During this time we were in continuous contact to ensure that our argument was consistent and threaded throughout the chapters we were writing. Throughout this process we developed a rhythm which involved each of us leading particular chapters and providing feedback to each other on each of those chapters. This rhythm developed from our accountability to each other but at the same time it created a momentum and excitement about the progress of the work.

For particular chapters that incorporated newly developed ideas, we sought out academics who are known experts on such topics and asked for their critical feedback. Whilst this was a daunting experience, the feedback provided was reassuring and helped with our momentum and argument.

We also built in time to actually sit down and write together, which was important for the development of the introduction, theoretical, and conclusion chapters. Furthermore, it also allowed us to develop a book that had coherence and continuity throughout.

Editing
Our planning and sticking to timelines, on reflection, enabled us set up time to engage with a professional editor to ensure the book followed Routledge guidelines, that all references were accounted for, and that general grammar and spelling was correct. The editor also compiled the index for us.

We have to admit, reading the book in its entirety numerous times was exhausting but necessary as the editor and publisher required multiple reads by us – the authors. On reflection, we under-estimated the reading involved after handing the book over to the editor and the publisher. In addition, we were also required to check proofs and complete marketing surveys.

Final reflections
In summary, when reflecting back on the journey taken to write this book, our low points were experienced in the sometimes ‘drudgery’ of long days in front of a computer writing. Another low point to overcome was the occasional self-doubt that crept into our thoughts about how the book would be eventually received within our field. This self-doubt also found its way into our conversations with each other about how to represent women’s experiences as respectfully as possible. We understand that such self-doubt is part and parcel of writing a book, particularly on such a serious and sensitive topic as domestic violence in which women’s stories are inter-woven throughout. We have to admit, however, that these low points were far outweighed by the sense of achievement, satisfaction and joy we experienced in the process of writing. We also derived a great deal of intellectual and emotional support from each other, which we believe is one of the greatest benefits of co-authorship.

TASA Members are welcome to have their published works, such as new books and articles in The Conversation, for example, promoted using TASA’s e-list, Twitter handle, website and Nexus. If you would like to promote your published works, please email the details to Sally in the TASA Office (admin@tasa.org.au).

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Sociology at the University of South Australia

BRAD WEST
University of South Australia
TASA 2014 LOC Convener

Sociology has been taught at the University of South Australia and its previous institutional incarnations since 1975, when Emeritus Professor of Sociology and long serving TASA member, Suzanne Franzway, was first employed at the Magill campus. Soon afterwards, Suzanne established one of first sociology of gender courses in the country, and this has remained a popular sub-major. Rodney Fopp has guided this course for much of the time and continues to do so and it has been greatly enriched by others such as Bev Beasley and Bob Ellis.

The University of South Australia is a technology university with a rich interdisciplinary tradition, so sociology has also appeared in various guises in the teaching of cultural and post-colonial studies, education, gender studies, Indigenous studies, international relations, languages and social policy research. This disciplinary fluidity is evident in the 2014 TASA Conference, co-hosted by the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages (in which the sociology major sits) and the School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy. Several sociologists are based in the social work program, including Sarah Wendt, who is a member of the Conference Organising Committee, and Lia Bryant, who will be sharing her expertise in innovative research methods with participants in the Postgraduate Day at the Conference. Another Conference Organising Committee member, Peter Gale, is located in the David Uniaison School of Indigenous Education and Research, and this shows the breadth of sociology in the University. TASA members are also found in the Business School, the School of Art, Architecture and Design and in the University of South Australia College.

Sociology is not only strong in its interdisciplinary form but its future looks bright as a particular disciplinary area at the University of South Australia. The TASA Conference in November occurs on the eve of the launch of a new Bachelor of Arts program in which sociology sits alongside six other majors representing core fields within the humanities and social sciences. This major was designed with the new Threshold Learning Outcomes for sociology as a reference point. It also benefited from the establishment of an industry advisory group, including leading figures from the Australian Services Union, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science & Technology, McGregor Tan market research, Premier's Council for Women, Uniting Communities and Women's & Children's Health Network.

The growth of sociology as a teaching area at the University of South Australia should provide the discipline with optimism about the future of the discipline, following the loss of courses elsewhere in recent years including at Queensland University of Technology, another Australian Technology Network member. In this context, it should be noted that the decision to include sociology within the University of South Australia’s new Bachelor of Arts program was not simply based on its enduring popularity at this institution but also because of extensive market research carried out by the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages with employers and students. Equally significant were findings from the Bachelor of Arts (BA) Scoping Project, commissioned by the Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, which showed that sociology is the second most popular major nationally.

Sociology is also a prominent discipline within the research centres and institutes at the University of South Australia. Sociologists are in abundance in the Directorate team and the various Centres of the Hawke Research Institute (HRI). The HRI Director, Anthony Elliott and the Director of the Hawke EU Centre for Mobilities, Migrations and Cultural Transformations, Jennifer Rutherford, have strong backgrounds and research profiles in sociology. The Director of the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim understanding, Abdou Maliq Simone, is also leading international figure in the sociology discipline.

On behalf of all the sociologists mentioned above, I would like to extend an invitation for you to attend the 2014 TASA Conference and to visit the University of South Australia in the coming years as sociology strengthens its profile within the institution.
This award recognizes contributions to the practice of sociology outside of academic settings. It is conferred on a TASA member who has made an outstanding contribution to sociological practice in Australia.

In this context, outstanding contributions to sociology in action highlight the value and impact of sociological methods and theories to society. This includes both broad social issues, as well as more focused issues for industry, government, business or community sectors.

Nominations for the award will be judged against the following criteria:

- The application of sociology knowledge, methods and expertise to contribute to solving social problems
- The applicant's role in the use of sociology for addressing social issues
- Recognised impact on a practical sociological problem, whether broad or focused in nature. Impact may be demonstrated through references from relevant stakeholders, and/or presentations, media, and publications (peer-reviewed, policy and general).

Click here for information

This award celebrates outstanding contributions to enhancing the pedagogy, practice or outcomes of teaching and learning sociology in Australia. It recognises contributions at the disciplinary level (rather than acknowledging excellence in teaching within the classroom or institutions). Examples of disciplinary-level contributions include innovations in teaching that increase the impact of sociology teaching beyond university contexts, improve student access, experience and outcomes, or inform disciplinary approaches to learning and teaching. Evidence of these achievements may be demonstrated through feedback from students or peers, and/or through publications (peer-reviewed, policy or general), presentations, media, or other relevant indicators.

In this context, outstanding contributions to the teaching of sociology may be made within or beyond teaching activities in universities.

Nominations for the award will be judged against the criterion of significant impact on teaching within the discipline of sociology.

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