



# A symposium on the life and work of Stephen Crook: introduction

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The TASA 2003 Presidential Address is dedicated to the life-work of Stephen Crook (1950–2002). Steve was a prominent figure in Australian sociology and made a significant contribution to the profession over many years. The three symposium papers presented by Germov, Waters and Pakulski celebrate Steve's achievements and pay tribute to his work by discussing some of his key sociological interests and insights. The first paper, by Germov, provides an overview of Steve's scholarly and professional work, reiterating his plea for an engaged sociology that promotes its utility beyond the walls of the academy.

In order to gain a fuller appreciation of Steve's scholarly work, there are no two people better placed to comment than his close friends and colleagues Malcolm Waters and Jan Pakulski. At one stage, all three were in the Department of Sociology at the University of Tasmania, where they co-edited TASA's (then named) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* and co-authored the internationally acclaimed book *Postmodernization* (1992).

The second paper, by Waters, traces the pathway of Steve's intellectual development through three life phases, from Steve's early days in York, to Hobart and then finally to Townsville, explaining the development of his post-foundational approach and highlighting the great promise of Steve's later (unfinished) work on social differentiation and 'orderings'. In the final paper, Pakulski and Tranter discuss research findings on environmentalism as homage to Steve's influence and earlier collaborative work in this field. As the paper notes, it was 'the main area where his key interests converged

into a consistent analytic vision of sociological endeavour, and where his philosophical interests found the best “applied” articulation’.

All three contributions to this symposium can only provide a glimpse into Steve’s life-work, though each in their own way highlights the importance of what Steve termed his post-foundational radicalist approach to the study of everyday life. Cumulatively, the papers offer an insight into the lasting significance of Stephen Crook’s contribution to the sociological enterprise.