

The Australian Sociological Association
CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES THEMATIC GROUP

NEWS

Welcome to 2010. As the new convenors for the CDS Group within TASA, we would first like to send a big thank you on behalf of all of the membership to Genee Marks and Michael Bleasdale for all of their hard work throughout 2008 & 2009. We look forward to drawing upon their experience to further develop the CDS group and build the group's profile within the Australian Sociological Association.

In this issue, we will first go over the CDS annual meeting held at the annual TASA conference in December 2009. A number of decisions were taken by the members in attendance and we provide a short summary of the actions taken thus far as a result. A short conference report is also included, along with the list of papers presented both in the CDS stream and within other thematic groups which we hope you will find of interest and relevance to the group.

You will be all pleased to learn that we have had a favourable response from the TASA Executive from our lobbying who have agreed to establish a working group to develop a disability access, participation and inclusion policy along with the redevelopment of their website. We have enclosed the response from Debra King to our requests!

In this newsletter we have added a number of new sections. Some of the achievements of the CDS group during 2009 are outlined, along with some new developments that have emerged as a result of the CDS network. We are also running a small 'personal and research profile' section and are pleased to include personal and research profiles for Kristin Natalier, UTAS, and Susan Harris Rimmer, ANU, who have been working together in the area of disability, immigration and human rights. They recently made a critical intervention into the *Australian Government Inquiry into the Migration Treatment of Disability*.

Finally, our aim is to issue the newsletter quarterly throughout our two year period as convenors. We would like to encourage you all to contribute and we will be asking members to submit a personal profile of their work and research, including any projects that involve working with the disability community.

We hope that you find the discussions and information both useful and interesting. Our goal is to have the second newsletter released sometime in July and we encourage you all to contribute with news, research, and events. We look forward to working with you all over the next two years.

Helen Meekosha and Karen Soldatic

CDS Annual Meeting Report TASA 2009 (ANU, 01 – 04 December 2009)

The CDS group held its annual meeting on the second day of the 2009 annual TASA conference. There were almost 10 members in attendance. Extensive discussions included disability accessibility and participation within TASA and at TASA annual conferences, the future development of the group including increasing its profile both nationally and internationally, follow up on the proposed Australasian Journal as raised at TASA 2008, and future collaborations amongst group members.

CDS Participation at the 2009 Conference:

Disability is finally making its mark on the Australian Sociological Association's Annual Conference. At the last annual conference, a growing number of critical disability scholars participated which is evident by the array of papers engaging with the central theme of the conference, *The Future of Sociology*, alongside areas of critical importance to the field. While abstracts of the main papers presented are included within this newsletter, you may wish to check out the program (available online) as there were a number of papers which implicitly engaged with 'disability'.

1. Felicity Grey (f.grey@unimelb.edu.au)
Mental Health and Identity: Notes from the Borderline
2. Genee Marks (g.marks@ballarat.edu.au)
Paradigms and paradiddles: Creating new directions with co-research with people with intellectual disability.
3. Kristin Natalier (Kristin.natalier@utas.edu.au), and Susan Harris Rimmer (susan.harris-rimmer@anu.edu.au)
Counting the Cost: The social construction and human rights conceptualisation of the disabled migrant child through Australia's migration processes
4. Helen Meekosha (h.meekosha@unsw.edu.au), Russell Shuttleworth (r.shuttleworth@usyd.edu.au), Leanne Dowse (l.dowse@unsw.edu.au) and Karen Soldatic (k.soldatic@curtin.edu.au) (3 separate papers on the following theme):
Is there a sociology of disability in the future of sociology?

Disability Accessibility, Inclusion and Participation within TASA

Again, there were particular concerns about the accessibility of TASA, both within the organisational structure and the actual conferences. Current and past experiences of CDS members provided the impetus for this dialogue. Many CDS members are finding that they have been either unable to access the TASA websites (organisational and conference), denied participation at conferences due to inaccessible venues, or provided incorrect information on disability access particularly in the area of mobility and accommodation. All in attendance agreed that the TASA Executive needed to be contacted urgently to ensure that these issues would finally be resolved and that CDS members could at least attend TASA Annual Conferences with confidence.

As put forth at the meeting, we have written several letters to the TASA Executive and have been advised by Eileen Clarke, TASA Executive, that these will be tabled at the Executive Meeting held this month (March 2010). Letters were sent to the President, Michael Gilding, and to Debra King. The primary concerns raised included participation of disabled scholars and students within the TASA organisational structure especially via the website, along with full conference accessibility.

In response to our letters and requests, we were advised by Debra King on Friday, 19 March 2010, that the TASA Executive has agreed to recognise the increased participation of disability scholars and students within the organisation. The Executive's response to our requests are as follows:

Dear Karen and Helen,

At the TASA Executive meeting earlier today, we established a small working group to formulate a TASA Policy regarding disability access, participation and inclusion. We would really appreciate your input on the development of the policy and invite you to join the working group. The aim is to have a draft policy to take to the next face-to-face meeting in September (this is when most of our big policy decisions are made), and the working group will communicate by email and phone to achieve this. If either one or both of you are happy to join the working group could you please forward me your phone number(s).

In the meantime we have contacted both the professional conference organiser and the local organising committee and forwarded them the documents that you sent us earlier this year. We are currently in the process of redesigning our website, and accessibility and inclusivity have been identified as high priorities. We will monitor these activities throughout the year.

We look forward to working together to achieve the kinds of systemic changes in TASA required to address the issues of access, participation and inclusivity for all sociologists.

regards
Deb

Early Contact with 2010 Organising Committee:

As requested by the group members, we have also made contact with the TASA 2010 Conference Organising Committee. Extensive information outlining accessibility requirements have been provided. We have been reassured on several occasions that this forthcoming conference will be accessible, designed around the principles of 'universal design'. Conference information updates on the website should contain sections relevant to accessibility, mobility and travel, and accommodation. If you find that you are not able to access or find the information you require, please let us know so that we can follow your concerns up directly with the conference organisers.

We are hoping, as a result of all of these negotiations, that disability scholars, students and activists, both nationally and internationally, feel welcomed and supported to participate in Australia's leading sociological association. The general consensus within the meeting was that these issues were an absolute priority for the CDS group to develop and build stronger inter-disciplinary links within sociology, both nationally and internationally.

Additionally, members requested that given the theme for the 2010 conference, *Social Causes, Private Lives*, is central to the field of critical disability studies and sociological understandings of disability, that the convenors approach the Conference Organising

Committee to secure a place for a CDS member on the plenary sessions. To date, Helen Meekosha has had contact with Sheila Watkins, UMACQ to discuss this possibility and will continue to negotiate this with Sheila directly.

Australasian Journal of Disability Studies:

At the 2008 CDS inaugural meeting, Gerard Goggin and Martin Sullivan discussed with the group the possibility of establishing an Australasian Journal of Disability Studies. A number of CDS members agreed to participate on an editorial board and to provide any required support for the journal's establishment. As Gerard and Martin were unable to attend in 2009, a unanimous decision was reached that the convenors contact both Martin and Gerard on behalf of CDS to ascertain progress made and to reconfirm the CDS group's commitment to furthering our support to this project.

In January 2010, we wrote to both Gerard and Martin. In response to our letter, Martin has provided the following information:

Practically all of last year was spent negotiating with publishing companies over the possibility of their taking on the proposed journal, Disability Studies: Aotearoa & Australia. These were slow and fitful given changes of personal in the companies. However, in late December Gerard finally got a meeting with Cuan Webster of Taylor-Francis Journals who offered advice on how to strengthen our proposal. This included:

- First he was impressed that we are starting with an existing journal - i.e. NZJDS but thought we needed to emphasize this point more in the proposal.
- More info on NZJDS subscription base
- Demonstrate more forcibly how content would differ from existing disability journals
- while T-F was mostly interested in marketing international journals, it would back more local journals with quality content from one or two countries, he suggested that the journal would be more marketable if we included the Asia-Pacific region from the start – we are not opposed to this and Gerard, Fiona and myself will apply our minds to this shortly
- In terms of content, Cuan suggested 4 issues a year
- If our reworked proposal is acceptable T-F would probably offer us 5-7 yr contract

We are about to begin reworking the proposal. It's a long and tedious job finding a publisher, but we hope to have more promising news for you in the next couple of months.

We will maintain contact with Gerard and Martin to follow the journal's progress and continue to offer CDS support for its development.

CDS ACHIEVEMENTS 2009

Australian Journal of Human Rights: Special Edition (2009)

At the 2008 inaugural CDS meeting, Leanne Dowse agreed to propose to the editors of the Australian Journal of Human Rights a special edition on 'disability' drawing on the papers presented in the CDS stream at the 2008 TASA conference. These negotiations were successful and thanks to Leanne and the AJHR editors, CDS members secured a special edition of AJHR (15.1) released in late 2009. As a result, many of the papers presented in 2008 were published in November 2009 and are now readily available in the journal.

Raewyn Connell Prize: CDS Convenor Helen Meekosha to Chair

Helen Meekosha, has been approached by Michael Gilding, President of TASA to be the Chair of the Raewyn Connell Prize for the best first book by an author in Australian Sociology.

Helen has agreed and will assemble the panel, coordinate the assessment process and announce the winner at the TASA conference in 2011. Entries will be called for in the next few months.

Third World Quarterly: Special Edition (2011)

In late 2009, Helen Meekosha and Karen Soldatic submitted a proposal to the editors of Third World Quarterly on Disability in the Global South: Beyond Northern Epistemologies. We have received confirmation from the editor, Shahid Qadir, for publication in late 2011 (vol 32, no. 8). As part of the contribution, Raewyn Connell, *Southern Theory (2007)*, has agreed to write the introduction for the edition. A call for papers has been included in this newsletter. We hope that some of you will consider submitting an abstract.

RESEARCH PROFILES: Dr Susan Harris Rimmer and Dr Kristin Natalier

Dr Susan Harris Rimmer is an academic in the Centre for International Governance and Justice at the Australian National University, currently assisting Professor Hilary Charlesworth on the ARC research project 'Building Justice and Democracy After Conflict'. She graduated from the University of Queensland in 1997 with a BA (Hons)/LLB (Hons) and received a University Medal in 1996. Susan received a Doctor of Juridical Science degree from the ANU College of Law in December 2008 for her thesis "Gender and Transitional Justice: the Women of East Timor", which will be published by Routledge in 2010.

Sue's interest in disability rights began with volunteer work with the UN refugee agency UNHCR in Kenya in 1995, helping Somali refugees with protection issues. Disability, both physical and mental was highly visible in the camps, partly as a result of war injuries, and partly as a result of inadequate health care, especially maternal health. However, people with disabilities were rarely heard in protection debates and there was no forum for these persons to raise any concerns with UNHCR or NGOs. When working for UNHCR in Australia on resettlement issues in 2000, Susan became aware of the highly discriminatory effect of the health requirement in the *Migration Act 1958* in preventing vulnerable refugees with disabilities (including 'acquired disabilities' such as HIV/AIDS) from being accepted by Australia. Part of her SJD studies included learning about disability rights with Professor Andrew Byrnes, now at UNSW.

Dr Kristin Natalier is also a graduate of University of Queensland. She began her law studies at UQ before happily discovering sociology; it soon became obvious that sociology, not law, offered the conceptual tools she was searching for. Kris graduated with a BA in 1995, an Honours degree in Sociology from University of Tasmania in 1996, and a PhD from the School of Social Science, University of Queensland in 2002. She currently works in the School of Sociology and Social, University of Tasmania.

Kris works primarily in the area of families and households. She is particularly interested in how families are constructed and managed by the State, and how people respond to this. Her recent work merges into Critical Disability Studies, a response to the de-valuing of children and ordering of families evident in the *health requirement* described above.

So having known each other for almost 20 years, Sue and Kris are excited to have developed chance to work together. They undertook intensive research from their disciplinary perspectives of sociology and law, leading to various lectures and a paper which focused on children, entitled 'Counting the cost: the social construction and human rights conceptualisation of the disabled child migrant through Australia's migration processes'. This became a refereed TASA conference paper in 2009. The paper drew on work by Helen Meekosha, Karen Soldatic and Lucy Fiske.

This research has a strong advocacy focus. Kris and Sue also made a personal submission to the current Parliamentary inquiry into migration treatment of disability, and wrote an opinion piece ['Migration health requirement locks out kids', Online Opinion, 3 November 2009](#). Australian Lawyers for Human Rights also wrote a submission to the inquiry, and Sue gave evidence in her capacity as President on 18 November. Kristin's sociological analysis of quantification processes and her ability to unpack the methods by which child applicants are constructed by the legislation added depth and power to the legal argument that Australia's current processes breach human rights obligations and are not objective. Kris and Sue are continuing to work on the issue, and are analysing submissions to the inquiry.

RECENT AUSTRALIAN PUBLICATIONS

Within the field of disability studies, there has been a growing body of work emerging from Australian scholars. Not to mention the long list of journal articles, some recent book publications include:

Bigby, C. and Frawley, P. (2009) *Social work practice and intellectual disability: Working to support change*, Palgrave Macmillan, Melbourne.

Clement, T. And Bigby, C. (2009) *Group homes for people with intellectual disability: Encouraging inclusion and participation*, Jessica Kingsley, London.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Disability in the global south: beyond northern epistemologies ***Third World Quarterly* volume 32 (8) 2011**

We are pleased to announce that we have secured a special edition on *Disability in the Global South* with the prestigious Southern Journal, ***Third World Quarterly (TWQ)***, for publication in late 2011. ***TWQ*** is the leading journal of scholarship and policy in the field of international studies and for three decades has set the agenda on development discourses of the global debate. As the most influential academic journal covering the emerging worlds, ***TWQ*** is at the forefront of analysis and commentary on fundamental issues of global concern.

Disability in the global South is of central concern to the emerging worlds but has largely been under-represented in global development debates, discourses and negotiations. Disability studies was constructed as a field of knowledge without reference to the theorists, or the social experience, of the global South. There has been a one-way transfer of ideas

and knowledge from the North to the South in this field. This special edition seeks to redress the processes of scholarly colonialism by drawing together a diverse set of understandings, theorizing and experiences. The purpose of the special edition is to situate disability within the Southern context and to support the work of Southern disabled scholars and activists seeking to decolonize Southern experiences, knowledges and absences in the field while simultaneously attempting to make a radical intervention into able-bodied (mainstream) development discourses, practices and politics.

The special edition therefore intends to feature the ecologies of knowledges that emerge from the embodied reality of living with impairment in the global South. The edition will also have a section dedicated to the experiences of local practitioners and activists working in the global South and those intervening in the international policy environment.

Possibly areas of interest include:

- Gender
- Aid and development
- Sexuality
- Colonialism and post colonialism
- Disability studies as a Northern /Western phenomenon
- Local studies of disability
- Role of CBR/ rehabilitation
- Alternative discourses of disability
- Academic dependency by Southern theorists on Northern/Western frameworks and literature
- Role of anthropology in GS with disabled people
- Southern Indigenous knowledges and practices of disability
- WHO
- Arms trade, landmines and the militarisation of North-South aid relations
- War and conflict
- Cultural contexts of disability
- UNCRPD

Professor Raewyn Connell, author of *Southern Theory (2007)*, has agreed to write an introductory piece for the edition.

Research papers, including theoretical discussions, are approximately 8,000 words in length including bibliography, tables and graphs.

Practice papers are expected to be around no more than 3,000 words.

PLEASE CLEARLY INDICATE WHETHER YOUR ABSTRACT RELATES TO A PRACTICE PAPER OR A THEORY/RESEARCH PAPER

The journal style guide for *TWQ* will be provided to authors upon acceptance of abstracts.

Publication Timeline

In discussions with the editors of *TWQ*, we have been able to secure a publication date in late 2011. All papers, however, will be required to undergo a refereeing process and therefore, the timeline developed has been adjusted accordingly to ensure that authors are given enough time to make any required changes.

Abstract submissions:	30 April 2010
Notification of acceptance:	30 May 2010
Full papers submitted:	30 September 2010
Reviewers' comments returned:	30 Jan 2011
Reviewed papers back for final publication:	30 March 2011
Copy edits returned to authors:	30 April 2011
Publication:	November 2011

Submission Details:

Please forward a 300 word abstract to both Helen Meekosha at h.meekosha@unsw.edu.au and Karen Soldatic at k.soldatic@curtin.edu.au by 30 April 2010. Please stipulate if the paper is either a practice or research piece.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INQUIRIES: NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The Australian disability services sector has been lobbying hard for the development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme to address the inadequate disability support system. As many of you have experienced, trying to get in-home supports is almost impossible in some areas of Australia, and many disabled people are excluded as they are not deemed 'critical' enough to warrant support. After intense lobbying campaigns, the Rudd Labor Government mounted an inquiry to further investigate these proposals. The Productivity Commission has released the Terms of Reference and public consultations have begun.

There is a growing disquiet among disability activists and we are seeing an increasing number of people publicly challenge the limited Terms of Reference and the way in which 'disability' is defined. The proposed NDIS scheme is a radical reform that seeks to merge together all disability services, such as Home and Community Care and the National Disability Agreement, along with the Disability Support Pensions. It is unclear how such a proposal will guarantee access to services as espoused. Nor is it clear about the kind of criteria to assess 'need' and if this will further entrench the medicalisation of disability.

Given its importance to disabled people across Australia we have posted the weblink here to encourage you to write a submission to the inquiry:

<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/disability-support/terms-of-reference>

DISABILITY CONFERENCES AND STREAMS IN 2010

Both nationally and internationally, there are a number of disability conferences held in addition to new disability streams emerging as part of broader fields of study.

Critical Disability Studies Conference: Theorizing Normalcy and the Mundane

Manchester Metropolitan is hosting a free two-day conference on the above theme in collaboration with the University of Chester, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Iceland. The conference, held on Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th May 2010, offers an extensive program from established, new and emerging scholars in the field of Critical Disability Studies. The program, along with abstracts, is available online at:

http://www.rihsc.mmu.ac.uk/event_news/news.php?id=80

Disability Studies Conference, Lancaster, UK

The University of Lancaster is holding the 5th biennial disability studies conference in the UK from Tuesday 7th - Thursday 9th September 2010. The central themes covered by the conference include: Political change - global, national and local; war, conflict and the construction of disability; access to health care; debates about eugenics and assisted dying; independent living, rights and citizenship; culture, history and arts; and theoretical and methodological ideas and debates. A call for papers is now open with a closing date of 30 April 2010. Full conference information is available at the following link:

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/events/disabilityconference/>.

Society for Disability Studies Annual Conference: Disability in the Geo-Political Imagination

The SDS 2010 annual conference, hosted by Temple University, Philadelphia, has an extensive program running over four days, from 17 June to 20 June 2010. The full program is available on the SDS conference website, covering a broad range of themes from disability representations, processes of embodiment through to global locations. It's a great program and even if you are unable to attend you may wish to purview the program out of interest at: <http://www.disstudies.org/conference/2009/program/schedule#d4>.

NEW APPOINTMENTS WITHIN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

Karen Soldatic has taken up a 12 month secondment to the Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University of Technology from 01 Feb 10 through to 31 Jan 11 to teach on the Master of Human Rights program.

NEXT EDITION: JULY 2010

We are keen to increase CDS members' contributions to the newsletter. Please contact Karen Soldatic on k.soldatic@curtin.edu.au with any book reviews, research profiles, call for papers and other relevant information that you may like to add prior to 1 July 2010.