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## Feature Article

FROM MACQUARIE  
MUMS TO MAMA  
GRIZZLIES: Women's  
Studies/Feminism at  
Macquarie University,  
1966–2010

Much of the original vision for Macquarie was to extend university access to students with non-standard backgrounds and, in the early years, mature age women were among the major beneficiaries. Whitlam's abolition of university fees in 1972 enhanced this trend and for the first decade mature age women formed almost half of the student body; the Macquarie University Mothers (or MUMS) was one of the first student organisations established in 1967.

(continued, page 3)



## Obituary:

**John Stuart  
Western AM,  
16 March, 1931 –  
6 January, 2011**

## Your TASA Executive 2011–12

Role	Name	Affiliation
<i><b>Elected Members</b></i>		
President	Debra King	Flinders University
Vice-President	Jo Lindsay	Monash University
Secretary	Eileen Clark	Clarks Clerks (Albury)
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General Member	Alan Petersen	Monash University
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HSR Editor	Eileen Willis	Flinders University
Nexus Editor	Nick Osbaldiston	University of Melbourne
<i><b>Administration</b></i>		
Executive Officer	Sally Daly	TASA Office, Swinburne University

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## Letter from the Editors



Welcome to *Nexus*, the newsletter for The Australian Sociological Association. As editors, we are pleased to provide the first issue for 2011 here. Like in years before, we firmly believe that *Nexus* can provide the link between sociologists across

academia and outside the institution that enables cross-collaborations, networking and general updates on the progress of our colleagues across Australia. As the discipline advances, we are more than aware of the decentralised processes that are at play within sociology. The fact is a growing number of us out there do not actually belong to sociology 'departments'. Rather, with the discipline being as multi-faceted as it is, many of us are located in places that deal with sociological issues, but are perhaps centered on health, crime, education or science. Keeping up to date with others and their ongoing development in projects, plans and events enables us to maintain a level of collegiality. Thus, we encourage you to use *Nexus* to your advantage.

### This Issue

In this issue we cover a lot of ground. Most importantly and with sadness we present the obituary of Professor John Western who recently passed away. His surviving sons Mark and Bruce reflect on their father's exceptional career, highlighted perhaps by the many successful doctoral students who studied under his tuition. Together with TASA we send our sympathies to John's wife and family. We also provide some reviews from the recent TASA conference. This includes submissions from postgraduate and outside academia scholarship winners, the Stephen Crook Memorial Prize winner, the inaugural Raewyn Connell Prize winner and the best paper winner from the *Journal of Sociology*.

With these we are also pleased to provide a range of news items, including an article on recent action that has taken place at Macquarie University and the University of New South Wales. This issue's feature article is a revised version of the talk by Professor Joan Kirkby from

Macquarie University, which she gave at the Conference Women's Breakfast. We trust you will enjoy it.

### Nexus in 2011

As editors we wish to acknowledge the work of the previous editors Brad West and Priscilla Dunk-West for their excellent contribution to the ongoing success of *Nexus*. This year we will emulate many of their established columns including the 'Books of Note' section. For 2011 however, we hope and aim to have much more involvement from our members. We have reconstructed the UniNews section and hope that individuals from across institutions will consider submitting to this in every issue. We have also included a section established specifically for postgraduates entitled 'The Postgraduate Corner'. Here we hope to liaise with Theresa Petray from James Cook University (current postgraduate representative) to provide items that will help doctoral, masters and honours students network with each other and perhaps most importantly, the wider academic community. We have also expanded on the 'teaching tidbits' section and include now a 'Teaching Sociology in Australia' section that will recognise the diverse approaches to sociology that are present, as well as the challenges. Alongside usual items such as feature articles, event reports and letters from the President, we hope that 2011 will be a success for the newsletter.

### Next Issue – Deadline April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011

As a final note, we announce that after calling for proposals from the TASA community for a thematic group to run a special issue of *Nexus* in 2011, the *Migration, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism* group have been successful. They will be providing feature articles, book reviews and other information for the second issue of 2011. Those interested in providing articles or book reviews or commentaries that fall under this thematic group's umbrella should contact Melissa Phillips at [m.phillips@postgrad.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.phillips@postgrad.unimelb.edu.au) for further information. For others, issue 2 will still be open to other submissions such as news, events, book reviews, etc. Please email either Nick ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) or Peta ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)) for further information. Best wishes for a successful start to 2011. Nick and Peta.

## Letter from the President



My involvement in TASA has been a significant feature of my academic life and I am delighted to be taking on the role of President. The TASA conference once again demonstrated the enormous breadth and depth of sociology in Australia – we continue to educate, train and attract world class

sociologists; we are spread across universities, industry, government, non-government organisations and social movements; and we bring our sociological imagination and perspectives to a wide range of intellectually interesting and topical issues. Yes, there are challenges. But as I begin my term as President I am confident that with the support of a great Executive and willing membership these will be addressed. I am looking forward to working with you all over the next two years to promote sociology in Australia.

2011 marks the beginning of a new TASA Executive. After 4 years of excellent leadership during which TASA embarked on a number of initiatives, Michael Gilding steps down as President. It has been a pleasure to work with him over the past couple of years and I am looking forward to his continued involvement on the Executive in the role of 'Immediate Past President'. Welcome to the new Executive members and warm thanks to departing Executive members Wendy Hillman, Angela Dwyer and Peta Freestone, for their contribution to TASA. Thanks also to Roberta Julian for her leadership and support over the past 6 years. I wish you all well in your new endeavours.

### Vale: John Western

As many of you will be aware Emeritus Professor John Western died on January 6 this year. John presided over TASA through its transition from the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand and has played a long and valuable role in the professional and intellectual direction of sociology in Australia.

Over the last 12 months we have been speaking with John about honouring his commitment to TASA and sociology through naming the first plenary at the annual conference after him. The inaugural John Western Plenary will take place in Newcastle in 2011. On behalf of TASA, the Executive extends its deepest sympathy to John's family and colleagues. A full obituary starts on page 5.

### TASA Conference

The 2010 TASA Conference at Macquarie University provided a wonderful opportunity to catch up with friends, renew acquaintances and be intellectually stimulated. One of the features of this conference was the way in which it show-cased sociology at Macquarie, including its engaging intellectual environment and multitude of networks with academics across disciplines, universities and regions. One of the liveliest demonstrations of this was at the women's breakfast where Joan Kirkby regaled everyone with her experience of studying and working at the university. An edited version of this presentation is the feature article for this edition of *Nexus* (see cover).

The conference dinner was an opportunity to relax and celebrate the achievements of our members. This year, TASA presented 4 awards, including two new ones:

**Peter Robinson** was awarded the inaugural Raewyn Connell Prize for the best first book by an author in Australian Sociology (*The Changing World of Gay Men*)

**Jack Barbalet** was awarded the Stephen Crook Memorial Prize for the best authored book in Australian Sociology (*Weber, Passion and Profits: 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' in Context*)

**Brad West** was awarded the TASA Prize for the Best Paper in the *Journal of Sociology* for his article titled: *Collective memory and crisis: the 2002 Bali bombing, national heroic archetypes and the counter-narrative of cosmopolitan nationalism*

**John Germov** was awarded the inaugural Outstanding Service to TASA Award for his exceptional contribution to the professionalization of TASA (including over 15 years on the Executive).

Congratulations to each of the winners and a heartfelt thank you to those TASA members who offered their services on selection committees.

The success of the conference was a credit to the organisers who were faced with the added pressure of hosting the conference while being stood down during an industrial dispute over the Enterprise Bargaining negotiating process (see page 6 for more information). Many thanks to Michael Fine, Selvaraj Velayutham, Norbert Ebert, Sheila Watkins and Heather Middleton for their untiring efforts in bringing the conference to fruition.

The next TASA conference will be held from 28 Nov to 1 Dec 2011 in Newcastle, on the theme 'Local Lives/Global Networks'. Steven Threadgold and Emma Kirby are convening the conference and we are looking forward to seeing the program unfold.

### **New Look for TASA**

After much discussion last year we have changed the TASA logo to something more online-friendly. Choosing a logo by committee was never going to be an easy task, but we are pleased with the result. We have maintained a connection with the older logo through the colours, but have moved toward a more visually appealing and contemporary look. The graphic designer indicated that the logo 'suggests interaction, inclusion and community – a forum for different points of view and ideas' – which seems to suit TASA rather well. The logo was launched at the conference and is featured in the newsletter.

We are delighted to have now launched our new website which will be more functional, user-friendly and cost-effective than the old TASAweb. This has been a huge undertaking, for which we are particularly grateful to Sally Daly (TASA's Executive Officer) and Angela Dwyer (the TASAweb Executive member) and their small committee.

Joining or renewing our membership to TASA is much easier now that the new website is fully functional. With fees now due, you will be able to take advantage of the secure, direct payment options which are available.

### **Public Lecture**

Expressions of Interest in hosting a TASA Public Lecture are now being sought. This year the public lecture does not have to coincide with the AGM (which is being held at the conference), providing greater flexibility in timing. Our preference is to have a Public Lecture in June/July or September to coincide with an Executive Meeting, but

Expressions of Interest outside of these dates will also be considered. See the E-List or the website for details.

### **Quality in Research and Teaching**

TASA is taking an active role in discussions about the 'quality' of research and teaching. We have recently undertaken a review of the ERA rankings of sociology journals. We are also working closely with the Teaching Sociology thematic group to develop Academic Standards for teaching and learning in sociology (see page 16 for more information). The first task is to form a Reference Group that will develop a working paper and drive the consultative process. This is one of TASA's major projects for the year and we will be keeping you up to date via the E-list, Nexus and the website.

Debra King – Flinders University.

## **Feature**

**FROM MACQUARIE MUMS TO MAMA GRIZZLIES: Women's Studies/Feminism at Macquarie University, 1966–2010**

(continued, from cover)

However, it wasn't all plain sailing. In the mid 1970s, a proposal to eliminate sexist language from university documents was decried as social engineering, an insult to women and tampering with the purity of the English language. It was defeated decisively. Around this time, I was at a dinner party where the conversation turned to the women's movement and feminism. A senior male academic explained that 'it was an idea of John Stuart Mill's that had been taken up by the ladies'. Looking at me he said, 'Oh, I guess I had better be careful'. I said something lame like 'It's ok. I'm off duty'.

There were end of year parties where aggrieved husbands expressed relief that their wives could now get back to housekeeping. When someone remarked that this wasn't very feminist, one man exploded: 'I'll tell you what feminism is, a shrivelled up old carrot at the bottom of my fridge'. Macquarie got something of a reputation for marital breakdown.

However, by the late 1970s feminism and women's studies were very much on the agenda and a number of staff resolved to run a trial year of seminars amongst ourselves.

In one seminar our first task was not to smile for a week and to write up our findings. I found this very difficult. I discovered that I was totally abject; I smiled at everyone, male, female, child, dog; I even smiled ingratiatingly at myself in the mirror of the women's toilet. After that I spoke out no matter how scared I was. I set Marilyn French's 'The Women's Room' on the American literature course and the men in the department demanded equal time. We told them they had had 2000 years.

Women at Macquarie (WAM), which represented all female employees of the university, was established in the 1970s and its influence developed to the point where for a time it was regularly involved in interviews for senior positions in the university. In 1976, the Women in History course was established. In 1978, the first Women and Labour conference was attended by 2000 women. In 1982, Vice Chancellor Edwin Webb commissioned the Women at Macquarie Report and quickly implemented the recommendations. In 1984, a full time Equal Opportunity Officer was appointed, and a standing committee on women was established by the Academic Senate. Margaret Jolly (Anthropology), Carolyn Allport (History) and Rosemary Pringle (Sociology) joined three elected students on a committee to establish women's studies as a coherent major. By 1986, some 265 students were enrolled in a group of courses selected from Sociology, Education, History, Philosophy and Politics. By the late 1980s, staff from six schools was teaching twice the number of core subjects (Mansfield and Hutchinson 1992). In 1987, the first woman Vice-Chancellor in Australia – Professor Di Yerbury – was appointed to Macquarie. In 1988, Judy Lattas was the first full time appointment in Women's Studies and is currently the Director of the Women's Studies Institute and convenor of the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies, Gender and Sexuality Program in Sociology.

However, there have been a number of challenges. Firstly, the demographic radically changed; there are now almost no mature age students. Study is more vocationally oriented and most students have to work during their university years. Secondly, there have been various theoretical turns which have challenged the activist impulse of women's studies. There was what Tanya Modleski (1991) has called the post-feminist age of 'Feminism Without Women'.

In her book of that name, she argues that feminism in the academy has been 'neutralized' and that there has been an 'effacement of feminist critical enterprises': 'It used to be a question of whether men could do "it" [feminist theory]... but that is no longer even a concern; rather gender studies has become the practice, and everyone can, and is doing it' (Kramer 1992: 158). Then there was a "metaphysical" attack on woman as an invalid category and feminism as a misguided project. In a 1997 talk 'Who Killed Feminist Criticism', Susan Gubar argued that 'a number of prominent advocates of racialized identity politics and of poststructuralist theories have framed their arguments in such a way as to divide feminists, casting suspicion upon a common undertaking': 'What does it mean that otherwise sagacious proponents of these two at times antagonistic camps – African American as well as post-colonial materialists, on the one hand, and Foucauldian as well as Derridean theorists, on the other – have produced discourses that in various ways hinder the tolerance and understanding needed for open dialogue?' (Gubar 1998: 2).

More playfully there is 'Gaga Feminism' as articulated by Judith Jack Halberstam, who suggests that 'Pop stars are where the inspiration for feminism is going to come from' and that 'in the brave new world of Gaga girliness we are watching something like the future of feminism' (cited in Faludi 2010: 42). Halberstam (2010) emphasises the necessity of keeping up with 'changing notions of gender, evolving models of institutional relevance and... an improvisational feminism that keeps up with the winds of political change'. And yet, as Susan Faludi has written recently: 'The primary hurdles feminism faces are the enduring ones': social policies for working mothers, the feminization of poverty, a 38 per cent wage disparity between men and women, male dominance of public leadership, sexual and domestic violence, and fundamental reproductive freedom (Faludi 2010: 30).

In 2010, Sarah Palin started calling herself a feminist, by which she means 'the righteous, Mama Bear anger that wells up when one of her children is attacked ... or her values are brought into question' (Miller 2010). Palin 'describes religious conservative women as "Mama Grizzlies" and urges them to "rise up" and claim the cause of feminism as their own', and to support 'only political candidates who uncompromisingly oppose abortion'. Palin is a member of a group called Feminists for Life whose slogan is "Refuse to Choose" (Rosen 2010: 3). Miller (2010) points out that even if Palin never again seeks elected office, her 'pro-woman rallying cry, articulated in the evangelical

vernacular, together with the potent pro-life example of her own family, puts her in a position to reshape and reinvigorate the religious right, one of the most powerful forces in American politics'.

Leaving feminist activism to the Mama Grizzlies is clearly not a good idea (for more on the anti-feminist right see Schreiber, 2008).

Associate Professor Joan Kirkby, Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology, Interdisciplinary Women's Studies, Gender and Sexuality (IWS) program, Macquarie University joan.kirkby@mq.edu.au

*(This is an edited version of the presentation delivered at the 2010 TASA Conference Women's Breakfast, Wednesday 8 December)*

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## Obituary:

### John Stuart Western AM, 16 March, 1931 – 6 January, 2011

John Western was born in Adelaide in 1931, grew up in Melbourne and attended Trinity Grammar and Melbourne University where he undertook undergraduate and Masters degrees in Social Studies, Psychology and Social Psychology. His Masters degree in Social Psychology exposed him to the emerging discipline of sociology, and on completing the degree he wrote to a small number of international scholars enquiring about opportunities for postgraduate study. He heard nothing for several months until one day a letter arrived from Columbia University in New York City. Robert Merton apologised for not replying earlier but explained that it had taken some time to sort out Fellowship funding. Western began his PhD in Sociology at Columbia in 1959, graduating in 1962. He worked more closely with the methodologist Paul Lazarfeld than with Merton, and returned to Australia to the Department of Psychology in ANU in the same year. In 1965 he moved to a Senior Lectureship in Government at the University of Queensland, intending to stay there for a few years. In 1970 he was appointed the first Professor of Sociology at UQ in the then Department of Anthropology and Sociology. He remained at UQ until his retirement in 1996, serving as Head of Department for thirteen of those years. He also served as a Commissioner for the Queensland Criminal Justice Commission for four years and established and directed UQ's Social and Economic Research Centre. He continued to hold a part-time appointment at UQ, while working effectively full-time in research, postgraduate supervision, and service contributions to the School and University until his death in January 2011. He was an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and the Swiss Academy of Development, and in 2009 was made a Member of the Order of Australia for contributions to education and to sociology.

Western made prolific contributions to basic and applied research, publishing over 50 books, monographs and commissioned reports, 70 book chapters and 120 journal articles. Among other areas, his research covered social stratification and inequality, political sociology, urban sociology, the sociology of crime and deviance, the sociology of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and social planning. He dealt with social structures of class, gender, race, ethnicity and social status, and with institutions of family and household, education, the mass media, the state, the professions and work.

John Western AM 5

He secured millions of dollars in research grants and contracts and built one of the largest and most successful sociology departments in the country. He pioneered and led large-scale quantitative team-based research projects, including longitudinal and sibling studies, which were vehicles not just for research, but for the training and professional development of postgraduate students and junior colleagues.

He was a prolific contributor to the discipline. He first became President of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand (SAANZ) in 1975 and when New Zealand Sociology split from the combined association, Western was prevailed upon to take up the inaugural TASA Presidency, serving from 1989 to 1991. He was joint editor of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* (the precursor to *JoS*) from 1982 to 1985 and again in 1989, and he was a member of the organising committees for every SAANZ and TASA conference involving the University of Queensland. He was also a member of the Local Organising Committee for the 2002 World Congress of Sociology, held in Brisbane.

Apart from his own research, Western was an institution builder and pioneer of Australian social science. He supervised approximately 75 PhD students, many of whom have gone on to senior positions in academia, government and industry in Australia and overseas. His supervision was built on experiential learning tied to joint research and publication, involvement in team-based projects, careful mentoring, and professional training in the theories and methods of sociology, and in the practicalities of publishing, raising external funding, and working with others, including non-sociologists and non-academics.

He promoted interdisciplinary and applied work long before they were fashionable. Western's collaborators included political scientists, geographers, planners, statisticians, anthropologists, epidemiologists, criminologists, engineers, environmental scientists, medical practitioners, and lawyers as well as sociologists. His early applied research examined economic behaviour for the Henderson Poverty Inquiry and the impact of the 1974 Brisbane Flood and Cyclone Tracy in Darwin. For the next thirty years he worked extensively with Queensland and Australian governments in a range of areas relating

to social policy, social and environmental impact and social measurement. In 1988 he co-organised the inaugural Social Research Conference in Brisbane, which led, a short time later, to the formation of the Australian Association for Social Research.

Finally, Western engaged extensively with Southeast Asia and the region. He conducted social impact and planning studies for the governments of Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. He established the Master of Community Nutrition and the Master of Social Planning and Development at UQ, targeted to international students, who were largely funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Development Assistance Bureau. To promote academic exchange and interaction, he formed, with international colleagues, the Asia Pacific Sociological Association and served as its Foundation President from 1996-1999.

He is survived by his wife Tasnee, his brother Timothy and family, his sons Mark and Bruce, their wives Janeen and Jo, and his five grand-daughters, Jessica, Kate, Lucy, Miriam and Grace. For all his achievements as a sociologist, they will remember him as a loving husband, brother, father, father-in-law and grandfather.

Mark Western, The University of Queensland

Bruce Western, Harvard University

## UNINews and Events – Sociology in Australia

### Fighting for Fair Work Conditions at UNSW and Macquarie University

Led by Professor Raewyn Connell (University of Sydney), the following statement was adopted unanimously by approximately 150 participants at 2010 TASA conference at Macquarie University, regarding the industrial situation at Macquarie University and the University of New South Wales (UNSW):

“That this meeting of sociologists express our support for colleagues who have been stood down in the current industrial dispute. We call on the University management to negotiate in good faith with the staff and

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their Union. We urge members in other Universities to contribute to support our colleagues, via the NTEU [National Tertiary Education Union] fighting fund”.

Professor Raewyn Connell was authorised by the meeting to convey this resolution to colleagues, management, and the NTEU.

This was prompted by a course of events occurring while the 2010 TASA conference (*Social Causes, Private Lives*) was underway at Macquarie University. However, for many sociologists, this was the first time they became aware of the drastic actions being undertaken by academics at Macquarie University and UNSW, prompted by prolonged difficulties in reaching a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. The negotiations, like those that have occurred at other universities around Australia, have focused on competitive pay rises, job security, reductions in casual and contract employment, and a restoration of employment conditions lost under the Howard Government's WorkChoices and Higher Education Workplace Relations Agreements (HEWRRs). Having spent more than two years in negotiations, the major sticking points have been job security and the reduction of fixed term contracts. The latter has been a particularly difficult issue, as there has been staunch resistance to rolling back HEWRRs and restoring previously held work conditions. At Macquarie, the pay offer has also been inadequate when compared with other Australian universities.

Approximately 150 affected members of the NTEU felt compelled to proceed to protected industrial action, which included withholding student results, bans on attending committee and working party meetings, and refusal to engage in performance development and review processes. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the NSW Upper House passed a motion by Dr John Kaye (Greens) that condemned Vice Chancellor Fred Hilmer of UNSW and Vice Chancellor Steven Schwartz of Macquarie, for their failure to negotiate, and called upon the university to reopen negotiations with staff and the NTEU, and to pay NTEU members who were imposing full or partial bans for the work they perform.

It was during the 2010 TASA conference that approximately 70 staff engaging in industrial action at Macquarie University, including fellow sociologists, were

stood down without pay.

While the withholding of student results was lifted at Macquarie prior to Christmas, there has been no progress. As of 17 January 2011, 36 NTEU members at the UNSW have also been stood down without pay, one of whom received a teaching award after being stood down.

Protests are continuing. On 5 January 2011, NTEU members held rallies at the Open Day of UNSW and Macquarie to bring their cases to public attention. On 27 January 2011, a bargaining meeting between NTEU and Macquarie was held in an attempt to seek settlement on key points. Further action is planned at both universities early in Semester 1 2011.

To provide your support for affected staff at Macquarie University and UNSW, please consult the following: <http://www.mqstaff.org/> and <http://www.unswstaff.org/>.

Peta S. Cook, School of Sociology and Social Work, University of Tasmania

### **Brad West from Bristol University wins Best Paper Award in *Journal of Sociology*.**

At the recent TASA conference in Sydney it was announced that Brad West (University of Bristol) had won the biennial Best Paper Award in the *Journal of Sociology* for his article "Collective memory and crisis: The 2002 Bali bombing, national heroic archetypes and the counter-narrative of cosmopolitan nationalism" (December 2008). Examining Australian newspaper reporting in the aftermath of the bombing, the study engages with a recent research theme in cultural sociology, rethinking traditional ritual conceptions of crisis to account for contingency and agency. However, it argues that the role of collective memory in this process has been under appreciated, which in part is due to it being conceived as the way we recall the past rather than in Geertzian terms as the past providing a cultural 'model for' acting in the present.

With Australian footballers among the casualties in the terrorist attack, the traditional heroic figure of the Australian sportsman was widely used as a symbolic frame through which journalists, politicians and social commentators rationalized national suffering.

Initially this resulted in the promotion of an insular Australian nationalism, inflaming public hostility towards Indonesia about the treatment of Australia's dead and injured.

A counter-narrative of the attack emerged with the media eyewitness focus moving to more general and alternative Australian tourists who remained in Bali in the week following the terrorist act, and who participated in joint commemorative activities with local Balinese. In this media discourse Australian victims became mythologically aligned with the Australian heroic figure of the First World War Anzac soldier which in recent years has been reimagined with reference to the cultural logics of contemporary global travel and post-Fordist consumption. Keying the bombing into this collective memory allowed for the emergence of a more cosmopolitan nationalism that legitimized a return to everyday activities and for the development of closer diplomatic ties with Indonesia.

Brad West – University of Bristol.

## Other News

### The Sociology of Youth Thematic Group

To capitalise on Professor Andy Furlong, editor of the major international journal in the sociology of youth, coming to Australia for last year's TASA Conference, the **Sociology of Youth Thematic Group** organised a workshop for PhD scholars in the field during his visit. The workshop was held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 at the University of Technology Sydney (city campus).

The workshop was supported by a Thematic Groups Support Scheme grant from TASA and in-kind support, in the form of a venue and IT support, from the Australian Centre for Child and Youth at the University of Technology Sydney. The TASA grant was used to pay for catering during the workshop (\$474).

Six PhD scholars were selected to come together in Sydney and collectively workshop challenges and questions arising from their projects with Professor Furlong, Dr Kitty te Riele (Thematic Group member and Deputy Director of the Australian Centre for Child and Youth) and myself. The day was a success, but smaller than anticipated. Unfortunately, due to a pre-holiday outbreak of the flu, two PhD participants and Professor Johanna Wyn from Melbourne University were late withdrawals. Four

PhD scholars (Fiona Brooks, Monash University; Kathryn Daley, RMIT; David Farrugia, Melbourne; and Keith Heggart, UWS) made it to Sydney to workshop their projects.

Each participant gave a presentation on their PhD project (about 30 minutes) and finished with two questions or challenges they were facing for group discussion (another half an hour). The day ended with Professor Furlong, Dr te Riele and myself answering questions and engaging in general discussion with the participants about strategies for completion and building on PhD research after completion.

The participants were asked for their feedback at the end of the workshop. There was agreement that the workshop was a great opportunity to come together with others undertaking PhDs in the same area, and with senior academics in the field, with explicit permission to talk about challenges they were facing and aspects of their work that they felt were not working. The challenge identified was the cost for students of coming to the workshop. They had to pay their own way to Sydney and cover their own accommodation. Holding the event the day after TASA helped with this, but only partly mitigated the personal cost. Two of the participants are currently composing short pieces on their experience of the workshop for the occasional newsletter of the thematic group.

My thanks on behalf of all the participants to TASA for supporting this event

Dan Woodman (Convenor – Sociology of Youth Thematic Group).

Professor Anthony Elliot (**Flinders University, Department of Sociology**) was appointed Visiting Professor in the Department of Sociology, University College Dublin, Ireland, where he is also Senior Visiting Fellow in the UCD Social Science Research Centre until 2013. During 2010, he was also Visiting Fellow at the Centre of Mobilities Research at Lancaster University, UK, where he was keynote speaker at a Lancaster conference on the super-rich and global elites. In 2010, Professor Elliott published with John Urry *MOBILE LIVES* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); with Charles Lemert, Daniel Chaffee and Eric Hsu, *GLOBALIZATION* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); and with the assistance of Dan Mendelson as editor,

THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO SOCIAL THEORY (London and New York: Routledge, 2010). During 2010, Professor Elliott was also Distinguished Lecturer at The Society for Sociological Theory in Japan.

Peter Beilharz, **La Trobe University**, has been appointed Visiting Professor at the Bauman Institute, University of Leeds. The Thesis Eleven Centre has signed an MOU with the Bauman Institute, which joins the Yale Centre for Cultural Sociology, The Copenhagen Socioaesthetics Unit, the University of Delhi English Program and the Ateneo University of Manila Humanities Programs as a key link and global collaborator of the **Thesis Eleven Centre**. A major event on print and visual cultures will celebrate this collaboration of centres in Melbourne, Bendigo and Manila in the second and third weeks of June. This event will include workshops, exhibitions, master classes and a little mayhem, public lectures and ventures outside the seminar room, into the city and regions.

Sociology at **Murdoch** is recovering from some staffing shocks. We recently farewelled Mick Campion into retirement (with a good celebration on the event of him being granted emeritus status) and wish him all the best. However, as is the case at other universities, senior staff who have retired or left have either not been replaced at all or have been replaced with positions shared with other cognate disciplines. Nonetheless we are fortunate that the discipline with which we share staff, Community Development, considers itself a part of sociology. As such, we head into 2011 able to offer a suite of 11 units, including two first-year units and units in sociological methods, sociology of health, sociology of power and governance, sociology of law, sociology of youth, and a range of other interesting options. Our teaching team for 2011 comprises Professor Gary Wickham (Chair of Sociology), Associate Professor Farida Fozdar, Dr David Palmer, and two members of staff who should be introduced to the *Nexus* readership, Dr Yvonne Haigh and Dr Jeremy Northcote.

Gary Wickham – Murdoch University

**The Department of Sociology, Flinders University** presents:

#### **Master Class with Professor Robert J. Holton**

Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and Adjunct Professor, Flinders University, Australia

Flinders University, Venue to be Advised

March 2011: Tuesday 22, Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24

2-5pm

#### **“GLOBAL FINANCE”**

Robert Holton is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Trinity College Dublin, and Adjunct Professor of Sociology at Flinders University, Australia. He is a leading author in the study of globalization, and has had a long record of research in the broad area of economic sociology. In recent years he acted as an economics editor on the *Encyclopaedia of Globalization*, edited by Roland Robertson and Jan-Aart Scholte and published by Routledge in 2007. His recent books include *Global Networks* (2007) and *Globalization and the Nation State* (2011).

The Flinders Sociology Department is seeking applications from postgraduates, early career researchers and professionals who wish to take part in a Master Class with Professor Robert J. Holton.

Theme: Recent developments in finance are raising complex social and ethical questions concerning the legitimate scope and limits of the global electronic economy. These questions include: Why has global finance become so crisis-prone and difficult to regulate – that is, to achieve development and social justice? Have the lessons of the recent global financial crisis been fully understood by policy-makers, or do we need to re-think the relationships between economy and society? What are the future prospects for global regulation of the worldwide economy after the demise of the Washington Consensus? In this Flinders Master Class, acclaimed sociologist Robert Holton considers afresh our 21<sup>st</sup> century world of global finance. The Master Class is designed to introduce students and professionals to global finance and its consequences, highlighting the connections between finance, economy and society.

#### **Details**

#### **Cost:**

For non-Flinders students enrolled cross institutionally standard charges will apply. Please contact Professor Anthony Elliott, Department of Sociology, Flinders University on 08-820-13538 for further details on these charges.

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**How to apply:** Applications are due by 11 March 2011. Applications must include a one-page summary CV. Successful applicants will be notified shortly after the application date. Applications to be sent to Professor Anthony Elliott, Department of Sociology, Flinders University, GPO Box 2100, Adelaide, SA, 5001 or email: [Anthony.Elliott@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Anthony.Elliott@flinders.edu.au)

Further questions may be directed to Professor Anthony Elliott at [Anthony.Elliott@flinders.edu.au](mailto:Anthony.Elliott@flinders.edu.au)

Associate Professor Vaughan Higgins has been appointed to the Sociology Discipline at Charles Sturt University. A/P Higgins is replacing A/P Ian Gray who has retired from his position, but has retained adjunct status and continues to be an important research contributor within the discipline.

If you would like to have your Department's news listed on here, please contact the editors Nick Osbaldiston ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) or Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)) before submission deadlines (next issue deadline – April 11, 2011).

## TASA Public Lecture 2011

### CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

TASA Executive is calling for expressions of interest for the hosting of Public Lectures for 2011. The expressions of interest must contain the following:

1. The name of the convener(s)
2. The name of the host institution(s)
3. The title of the lecture and the name of the presenter/s
4. A brief bio of the presenter/s and the justification for the selection of the Presenter/s
5. A brief media plan
6. Draft budget and identification of supplementary sources of funding (including top-up funding)

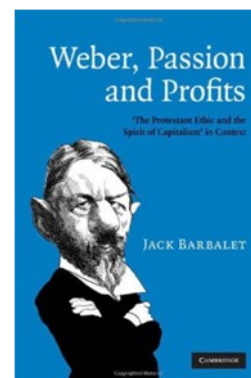
Expressions of interest are due in the TASA office ([admin@tasa.org.au](mailto:admin@tasa.org.au)) on or before Friday 15 April 2011.

For more information on TASA Public Lectures, including preliminary inquiries, please contact the incoming TASA Vice-president, Dr Jo Lindsay [jo.lindsay@monash.edu](mailto:jo.lindsay@monash.edu)

## Books of Note

In this issue of Nexus in the Books of Note section we have taken the opportunity to allow the Stephen Crook Memorial Prize Winner and the inaugural Raewyn Connell Prize Winner to showcase their works. We are grateful to both Jack Barbalet and Peter Robinson for allowing us to do so. We would like to add that in the future if you would like to have your book showcased here, please contact us ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) and we will attempt to accommodate you.

### Winner of the 2010 Stephen Crook Memorial Prize



Jack Barbalet (2008), *Weber, Passion and Profits; 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' in Context*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The literature on Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* is now enormous. It is difficult to imagine that there is anything new left to say about the book. But what if Weber's focus is not primarily a cultural exploration of the genesis of modern capitalism in early modern Europe, as he presents the work and practically all of his readers accept, but an argument about the needs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century German middle class to take hold of their political destiny, as the British and American middle classes had, under the sway of Puritan-inspired self control? This is where *Weber, Passion and Profits* begins. It is the first of three connected stories about the *Protestant Ethic* developed in it.

If Weber's historical imagination is less important for understanding his most famous work than his political concerns, should the account of the rise of modern capitalism in terms of an ascetic suppression of emotions and the elevation of rational calculation

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– argued in *Protestant Ethic* and almost universally accepted in sociology – be permitted to stand unchallenged? This is the second story in *Weber, Passion and Profits*, which amounts to a new account of the origins of Western capitalism.

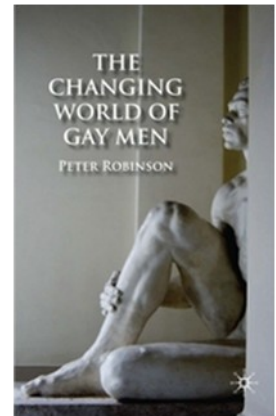
Against Weber's famous claim that the Protestant Reformation had the consequence of generating an emotional suppressive basis of calculation-for-advantage, emotional engagement was in fact absolutely essential for the success of early capitalism. The life blood of market economies is credit, but in early modern capitalism there was no institutional infrastructure of credit and credit-worthiness; borrowers and lenders alike had to rely on personal trust, reading the faces of those they did business with, and generally making emotional appraisals. It is not surprising, then, that during the 17<sup>th</sup> century a large number of 'passions books' were published that gave instruction on how to detect and understand other's emotions and manage one's own. The importance of these texts and their role in the development of capitalism is highlighted in *Weber, Passion and Profits*, which thereby makes an important contribution to our understanding of the transition to market capitalism.

The dominant presence of Weber's *Protestant Ethic* has tended to crowd out alternative sociological approaches to the origins of the spirit of capitalism, and this is a third story developed in *Weber, Passion and Profits*. The American firebrand, Thorstein Veblen was a contemporary of Weber who, in a number of publications that are now largely forgotten, developed an institutional theory of the origins of capitalism and its underlying ethos.

Even more remote from mainstream sociological awareness is the 18<sup>th</sup> century work by Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which contains an important argument concerning the social basis and operation of the ethos of modern capitalism. Each of these works has important things to say about the emotional dimension of the spirit of modern capitalism and its efficacy. In the discussion of Veblen and Smith in *Weber, Passion and Profits* is an important argument concerning the emotional as well as the institutional bases of modern capitalism, and the ways they are integrated.

Jack Barbalet – University of Western Sydney.

## Winner of the 2010 Raewyn Connell Prize



**Peter Robinson** (2008), *The Changing World of Gay Men*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

To collect primary data for *The Changing World of Gay Men*, I travelled the Hume, Newell, and Western highways and crossed Bass Strait between 2002 and 2005. I did so in order to interview a non-representative sample of 80 gay men from the capital cities of the southeast, and country towns and districts of New South Wales. The men I interviewed were aged between 20 and 79 and originally signed up to discuss what ageing meant to gay men. Because they revealed so much in their interviews about their life course and the struggle to assert themselves in a world dominated by heterosexual values, I changed my research project to an examination of the lives of three generations of gay men and the varying degree to which sexuality shaped their lives.

I divided my sample into three generations, the first of which I called the pre-liberation generation, the second the gay-liberation generation and the third the HIV generation. I based my generations on when the men turned 21 and the social conditions prevailing at the time. Nowadays, it might seem somewhat old fashioned that 21 could represent the age of sexual maturity but for men born between 1927 and 1950 this was often the case. In contrast to the sexual experimentation of today's teenagers, gay and straight, few if any of the men I interviewed who were born between the late 1920s and late 1940s recalled much sexual experience before the age of 21.

The pre-liberation generation comprised those men born between the late 1920s and mid-1940s, who reached their social maturity between World War Two and the mid 1960s.



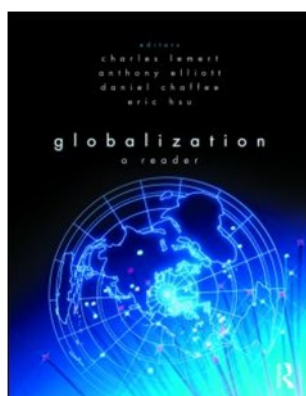
Many readers will be familiar with the gay-liberation generation, for these were the baby boomers. The third generation, I called the HIV-generation because many of them reached 21 when the dark decades of HIV-AIDS descended on gay men across the western world. This 'young' generation thus comprised men born in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of my more interesting findings was that of the 28 men I interviewed from the gay-liberation generation, a high number experienced considerable hardship in coming out when they did so in their early 20s. Most if not all understood the importance of the gay libbers' injunction to come out and its value as a political act. Very few of them came out easily, however, or without experiencing some psychic or physical harm. The other two generations came out with comparative ease—the pre-liberation men because their coming out was rarely a public act and the HIV generation because of what the gay-libbers had done to prepare the way.

*The Changing World of Gay Men* did not address gay marriage rights but the topic is the focus of a chapter in a second book I am writing for Palgrave Macmillan UK on what age and ageing mean to gay men. I again thank TASA for awarding *The Changing World of Gay Men* the Raewyn Connell prize for 2010. It is a great honour to receive a prize named after one of Australia's most eminent sociologists and one who taught me also in her work on masculinities to understand how and why homophobia operates and is one of the practices that keeps the gender order in place and serves the purposes of hegemonic males.

Peter Robinson.

## Other Books of Note



**Charles Lemert, Anthony Elliot, Daniel Chaffee, Eric Hsu** (2010) *Globalization: a reader*, New York: Routledge.

Expected to become a classic in the field and the classroom standard for teachers and their students, *Globalization: A Reader* offers the most comprehensive, engaging selection of classic and contemporary readings on globalization currently available. Here, for the first time in print, is the full historical story of globalization – drawn from original sources, explained by accessible introductions and biographical commentaries, and clearly organized as a comprehensive teaching text to guide students through the ins and outs of globalization. With astonishing social, political and historical depth, the book ranges from the Babylonian and Persian empires in Mesopotamia to the global electronic economy of the 21st century, from ancient Greece and imperial Rome to transformations in contemporary state power and global inequalities. From Kenichi Ohmae to Al Gore, from Osama bin Laden to Timothy Garton-Ash, from Amartya Sen to Abdou Maliq Simone: this is a dazzling collection of the most important academic and public statements on globalization. Throughout, the Editors expertly guide the reader through the complex terrain of globalization – its engaging histories, its transnational economies, its multiple cultures and cosmopolitan politics.

(Excerpt from publisher).



**Peter Gibilisco** (2010) *Politics, Disability and Social Inclusion*, VDM Verlag: Saarbrücken

Based on Gibilisco's PhD work, *Politics, Disability and Social Inclusion* provides a much needed analysis on the social world of the disabled. Critical of the neoliberal mantra and the apparently socially just 'Third Way',

the author articulates both theoretically and empirically the problems of focusing on the individual, preferring of course for a sociological exploration of the topic. Subsequently, Gibilisco contends that the root core of the problem for disabled people in Australia's contemporary society is structural, as well as cultural. A dynamic transformation of perception from the general public will not provide the much needed reform for him. Rather, a structural transformation in how institutions operate (often to the detriment of the disabled person) and behave with the disabled community is required. Thus, only through state intervention can real results be achieved. As one who is physically disabled, Gibilisco does remarkably well to embrace his personal experience in a manner that is not overwhelming. Rather, his reflections appear to resonate well with general societal matters. Furthermore, the book itself is a good example of social justice in theory and action. For those interested in matters of equality, *Politics, Disability and Social Inclusion* is a significant read.

(For a more in depth review see <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=11472&page=1>).

## Competition

Capturing Australian Sociology: *Nexus* is holding a competition for those with artistic flair to capture Australian sociology in a photograph. We are seeking an image, which must be your own and reproducible, that explores sociology in our country. Alongside this image we would like a brief explanation of what the image represents and how it relates to our discipline.

The winner of this will have their image printed in *Nexus* and placed on the website, and will also win a copy of Jack Barbalet's new book which recently was awarded the Stephen Crook Memorial Prize (see Books of Note section).

Entries are required by April 11<sup>th</sup> and should be sent to the editors Nick Osbaldiston ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) or Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)) and will be announced in the next issue of *Nexus*.

## Sociology Outside Academia

Sociology Outside Academia.

*At the recent TASA conference at Macquarie University, two sociologists who work outside of Academia presently were awarded scholarships – Dina Bowman and Stephen Kerry. Dina has provided us with a review of her paper and her thoughts on working in multidisciplinary teams. Those working outside of the tertiary sector are encouraged to contact the editors Nick Osbaldiston ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) or Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)) for updates on news, events, papers, or other noteworthy items for Nexus.*

Dina Bowman, Brotherhood of St Laurence and Honorary Fellow in the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne ([dbowman@nullbsl.org.au](mailto:dbowman@nullbsl.org.au))

Language, ideas and policy: Notes from the periphery

The 2010 TASA Sociologist Outside of Academe conference scholarship enabled me to attend the conference and present a paper that considers the question that faces many sociologists: If we seek to produce change, how can we effectively conduct innovative research and engage with policies without adopting the language and assumptions of the policy framework that we wish to critique?

In my paper, 'Language, ideas and policy: Notes from the periphery' (2010), I suggest that the identification of the processes by which some voices are heard, while others are excluded and marginalised, is a key part of understanding the nature of policy frames and of shifting or reshaping them. Matthew Cole (2008) points out that the trend towards evidence based policy, or what 'works', means that the parameters of social research have become narrowed to the confines of existing policy frameworks. The taken for granted assumptions within a field not only shape the nature of the questions that are asked, but also affect research processes. John Law argues that research methods such as surveys 'do not simply describe realities but also tend to enact them into being' (2009: 239, original emphasis). It is for this reason that comments and responses that 'don't fit' are important as they can shed light on what we don't know.

Sociology Outside Academia 13

As researchers we are affected by the 'unspoken and unspeakable rules for what can be legitimately said – or perceived – within the field' (Moi 1991: 1022), which is why critical thought and reflexivity are so important. As Loïc Wacquant (2004: 101) passionately argues, they provide researchers with 'a chance to think the world, rather than being thought by it, to take apart and understand its mechanisms, and thus to reappropriate it intellectually and materially'.

Working in multidisciplinary teams can enrich the research process, but as a sociologist working with economists and social policy analysts, I have found that the pressure to conform to dominant economic and policy analyses can be strong. Effective multidisciplinary research needs an acknowledgement and discussion of the various assumptions and a negotiation of the 'rules of the game'. In my paper, I reflect on the notes in the margins, letters, and other forms of communication from survey respondents to draw a parallel between the treatment of such 'peripheral' responses and my experience as a sociologist working in an applied social research and policy setting. I suggest that it is important to understand the processes of marginalisation and mainstreaming, because such understandings can enable us to better negotiate and challenge the rules of social research and policy 'games' whether in or outside academe.

*References are available on request from the author*

Please note that Stephen Kerry will be providing information on his work in a later issue.

## Conference Scholarship for Sociologists Outside Academe

The TASA Executive would like to encourage non-academic members who have conducted applied research or written sociological papers on their work to apply for a scholarship.

Applications close September 6th, 2011

For the full details, please go to <http://www.tasa.org.au/about-tasa/tasa-awards-prizes/tasa-conference-scholarship-for-sociologists-outside-academe/>

## TASA Thematic Group Support Scheme

The TASA Executive has allocated \$10,000 for the support of the thematic group activities in 2011. The Major Support Scheme allows for groups to apply for up to \$2,000 for activities that support their thematic area. Please have your application submitted by the 28 February, 2011. An additional \$1,000 has been set aside to provide assistance to groups for minor administrative costs, up to a maximum of \$100 per group.

Applications should be between 3–5 A4 pages. They should include:

1. Name of the thematic group
2. Name of convener(s)
3. Track record of the thematic group
4. Proposed activity
5. Evidence of member support and/or involvement
6. Expected outcomes
7. Budget and justification
8. Timeline

Note that it is NOT necessary to provide a literature review in support of the proposed topic

### Submissions

Applications should be submitted as an email attachment to [admin@tasa.org.au](mailto:admin@tasa.org.au). Proposals should be submitted by 28th February 2011 for consideration at the March Executive meeting. The executive retains the right to deal with applications at other times if the applicants can convince the Executive of the need for this.

For the full details, please go to <http://www.tasa.org.au/thematic-groups/>



## Postgraduate Corner

*This year in Nexus we would like to dedicate space for Postgraduates. In particular and in liaison with Theresa Petray (James Cook University) the new postgraduate representative on the TASA Executive, we would like this space to address concerns, issues, advice and provide news and updates for the postgraduate scene in Australia. We would encourage completed or near completed postgrads to take up Theresa's challenge to have their PhD title and abstract printed here to complement the final stages of their journey. Please contact the editors Nick Osbaldiston ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) or Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)) if you have anything to contribute. In this issue, we are pleased to provide the first letter from your new representative and encourage postgraduates to contact her with their ideas for the future in 2011. We are also pleased to provide details of those who won postgraduate scholarships for the 2010 TASA conference. As a result they are afforded some space here to outline their thoughts on their thesis and/or the past conference.*

### Letter from Postgraduate Representative



Postgraduate research has been described to me, variously, as a journey, a roller coaster, a labour of love (as in hard work), just plain labour (as in painful childbirth), a bad life choice, and

a fantastic lifestyle. If your experience has been anything like mine, you've probably agreed with all of these descriptions at one point or another. One of the ways to make the journey a bit more bearable is by surrounding yourself with others who are going through a similar process. Strong networks, communities, tribes even, of postgraduate students and early career academics understand your pain, even if they don't understand your research. They offer a chance to gripe – about how your supervisor won't email you back, or how you can't find anyone to participate in interviews, or how your draft won't write itself, or how big your bum is getting in the

last few months of writing up. They get it, because they've either been there themselves, or they are headed there soon. So my advice for getting through a postgrad degree as smoothly as possible is to find a network of people like this. Build up a community around yourself, either by tapping into what is already happening, or starting things.

It's also worth building a community further afield, especially if you are in an area without many sociologists around. That's where TASA comes in – the annual conference and the associated Postgraduate Day is a great place to meet other sociologists with whom you can share ideas, discuss theorists or brainstorm methodologies. And if you're lucky (and/or strategic), you can get some collaborations out of it, which help to increase your publications, your chances of funding, and your employability.

This all brings me to my introduction. I am Theresa, your friendly TASA Postgraduate Representative. My PhD research focused on Aboriginal activism in Townsville, particularly critiquing the supposedly antagonistic relationship between this social movement and the Australian state. I was a student at James Cook University, also in Townsville, where I was the *only* sociology postgrad. So, you can see why I think strong networks are important.

I will be your Postgrad Representative for the next two years, and I would love to hear your thoughts on what I should be doing. I can't promise that I will accomplish everything you suggest, but I will certainly have a go. What I would like to see happen, myself, is a strengthening of the sociology postgrad community. This will primarily happen via the internet, so that it doesn't exclude those postgrads (like me!) in very regional areas. We currently have a webpage, and a Facebook group – TASA Postgrads (please join!) – and I would be willing to set up some other options depending on what people are interested in. I also have plans to add some more social events to the TASA conference program, so that we can reiterate offline the community we're building online. Finally, I would like to begin acknowledging postgrads who have completed their degrees in this section of *Nexus*, partially to celebrate their achievements and partially to provide hope and inspiration to those who may

be stuck in the drudgery of the less-fun times. So please email me your name, your university & department, and the title of your thesis so we can print them in future editions of *Nexus*.

This brings me to the end of my space for this edition of *Nexus*, but please be in touch! Let me know what you think TASA should be doing for its postgraduate students. Let me know what it's like being a postgrad in your part of academia. Join the Facebook group, send me an email, you can even Facebook-friend me.

Theresa Petray – James Cook University.

## Postgraduate Scholarship Winners

**Announced at Macquarie University, TASA Conference 2010.**

**Justin Iu** – Australian National University

**Trevor Lovett** – University of South Australia

**Melissa Phillips** – University of Melbourne

**Jamilla Rosdahl** – University of Sunshine Coast

**Nicole Stirling** – University of Queensland

**Melissa Phillips, University of Melbourne**  
([m.phillips@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.phillips@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au))

I was honoured to have been awarded a 2010 TASA Postgraduate Conference Scholarship and my thanks go to the TASA Executive for their support. As a postgraduate co-convenor for the Migration, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism (MEM) thematic group, most of my time at the conference was spent at MEM sessions. However, the relevance of the work presented in many other thematic groups for migration, ethnicity and multicultural scholarship was observed by MEM members, and a recommendation coming from our thematic group AGM was to arrange a joint thematic group session or panel discussion at the 2011 Conference.

At the 2010 TASA conference, I observed an increase in the number of papers presented within the MEM thematic group that hopefully indicates the growing

importance of this area, especially given contemporary public debates on asylum, immigration and population growth. A key theme discussed was identity, particularly what is evoked in asking or being asked the question 'where are you from'? Two papers on this topic generated some heated debate that continued after the sessions. Another issue was the relevance of multiculturalism as a policy framework and theoretical concept that can be used to understand contemporary Australian society. My paper aimed to contribute to this debate. Titled 'Trying to get off the multicultural merry-go-round', it took its inspiration from the conference theme, 'Social causes, Private lives', and examined the role that celebrations play as an expression of multiculturalism. Considering in particular the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's 'Harmony Day' program as one example of 'celebratory multiculturalism', I asked that if Australia is to be recognised as a truly diverse nation to its core, then what purpose do such events serve? Drawing on research data and recent literature, I argued that the longer-lasting impacts of such events are to categorise ethnic groups and perpetuate representations of their experiences solely through stereotypical forms of food, dress and music. Reflecting the entrenched division in the multicultural domain between official policies and everyday practices, I asserted that this reinforces what Ghassan Hage contends is our inability to confront Australia's diverse 'we'; the multicultural Real. As a result, neither multiculturalism nor 'Harmony Day' and similar initiatives, reflect the realities of private, lived experiences of multicultural Australia. I would like to thank the session attendees who provided feedback on my paper that will allow it to be further developed for my thesis.

On the Tuesday evening of the conference, prior to the public debate, approximately fifteen MEM thematic group members took advantage of a small gap in proceedings to have dinner at a local restaurant. Many of us noted that we look forward to the chance to catch up with colleagues at TASA because it is the only opportunity to meet up face-to-face each year. Providing space in the conference program for similar social events could be a consideration for the next Conference Organising Committee.

Thank you to Vince Marotta and Farida Fozdar

(current and former co-convenors of the MEM thematic respectively), for volunteering to present a session on publishing for postgraduate students. It was well attended and helped to demystify what is becoming an increasingly important aspect of career development for postgraduate students.

**Editor's note:** *As mentioned in the letter from us, the second edition of NEXUS for 2011 will be a thematic edition focusing on Migration, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism. Enquiries should be forwarded to Melissa Phillips ([m.phillips@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:m.phillips@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au)) in the first instance, or the NEXUS editors, Nick Osbaldiston ([no.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no.unimelb.edu.au)) and Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)).*

**Jamilla Rosdahl – University of Sunshine Coast**  
([jrosdah2@usc.edu.au](mailto:jrosdah2@usc.edu.au))



### **Sculpting the Woman: Female Muscularity - A Genealogical Study of Femininity and its relationship to Female Muscularity**

#### *Thesis abstract:*

Poststructuralist feminist theorists in particular, have focused on how the female body is tied to complex networks of practices and institutions that sustain positions of dominance and subordination (Butler 1999; McNay 2000). Studies of female athletes in general and the body of muscular female bodybuilders in particular have generated a number of controversial discussions about the 'nature' of femininity, its complex relationship to muscularity and masculinity, and what it means to be a physically muscular and strong woman (Heywood 1998).

The physicality of the female bodybuilder conflicts and challenges the assumption that men are strong and powerful and that women are weak, passive and dependent. It questions the inherent naturalness of men as masculine and women as feminine. In asking the question, 'what is the relationship of femininity to the female muscular body?' my research investigates the subject of embodied femininity and why femininity as a gender 'identity' has been considered central and unproblematic to the formation of the natural 'woman' (Bordo 1993).

In Western culture the notion of traditional or 'normal' femininity emphasises a fit female body that is slender, neat, and sexually attractive and it does not encompass strength, muscle-building, and the development of physical power or bulk (Woodward 2002). There has, in other words, been a persistent refusal to accept femininity on 'other', more muscular female bodies (Boyle 2005). Within bodybuilding culture, masculinity remains implicitly associated with *male* muscularity and strength. Hence, the relationship between femininity and female muscularity has been the central problem of competitive female bodybuilding in particular (Boyle 2005). When women decide to participate within particular male dominated sporting cultures, such as bodybuilding, their participation brings to light how complex and fraught the project of becoming a woman who build and sculpt muscle is.

My project critically examines the experiences, negotiations, productions and processes which relate to 'becoming' and 'being' a woman who builds and sculpts muscle. This is done by opening them up to a poststructuralist feminist theoretical inquiry based on a framework that encompasses poststructuralist feminist ethnography and genealogical analysis. The project's importance rests on the attempt to interrogate the protected status of femininity as it has been rendered irrelevant to the history, theory and politics of female muscularity. This research extends previous feminist poststructuralist studies by aiming to situate the category of *femininity and its relationship to female muscularity* as central to the shifting epistemological conceptualisation of the female body. This engagement with femininity will advance the knowledge and theory of gender and its contributions toward a deeper understanding of the larger social and cultural context surrounding women's gendered bodies, and particular muscular women's bodies.

Despite years of deconstructive challenges to the masculine/feminine opposition, women continue to be marginalised and excluded from dominant institutions and power structures. My research sheds light on the workings, distortions and oppressions of power and knowledge that such logic frequently supports and produces. A rethink of the relationship between femininity and the modern muscular female body has much to offer in the deconstruction of Australian society.

*References are available on request from the author*

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### **The religious and ethnic identity and practice of migrant Iranian and Turkish Muslim women in Brisbane, Australia**

#### *Thesis abstract:*

My thesis examines the outworking of religious identity and practice among women from two Muslim majority countries, Iran and Turkey, who have migrated to Brisbane, Australia. The research is based on in-depth interviews with 37 Iranian and 25 Turkish migrant women and follow-up interviews with nine of these women, seven years later.

In the first round of interviews, women were asked about their religious and cultural attitudes: (a) before migration; (b) after migration; and (c) following significant political events such as 9/11, the Bali bombings and the Iraq war. After the first interviews it was found that many women had undergone changes in their religious and cultural identity and practice. Words such as 'sifting', 'negotiating' and 'remaking' described the process of meaning making which underlined the changes to their identities. From the initial interviews, it was revealed that many of the migrant Muslim women, now

living in a multicultural Western society, were re-evaluating their lives on a number of different levels. The women described in several diverse ways the process of 'sifting' that was taking place in their religious and cultural lives.

In order to investigate the concepts of 'sifting', 'negotiating' and 'remaking' more fully, nine follow-up interviews were conducted in May and June 2010. These interviews were conducted with five Iranian and four Turkish women who represented a spectrum of different religious and cultural identities from the initial interviews. 'Lived religion' is a key concept in understanding how the women's religious practice and identity has been shaped through their daily lives. McGuire (2008) explains that lived religion is centred less on religious ideology and more on religious practices which need to make sense in the daily life of the individual. These religious practices also need to be seen by the individual as being 'effective' and achieving a desired result. This can be clearly seen in the daily religious lives of many of the women interviewed.

Alongside the concept of 'lived religion', another element was evident in this process, which I label as 'lived culture'. I define this as the negotiation of cultural spaces and meaning making of culture. In the migratory experience, cultural spaces are negotiated in climate of enormous change both on the individual and social level. Many women in this study remade or altered their cultural space by adopting different cultural practices they observed in Australian society. It was also found that Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus was also important in analysing the changes in religious and cultural spaces. Habitus is based on the presupposition that people have an inbuilt experiential disposition in society which they can alter to fit their new circumstances and experiences, resulting in the person creating new concepts of society. Habitus is not only a cognitive, but also an embodied sense of place (Hillier and Rooksby 2005). It can be certainly seen from the women's attitudes and responses to religious and cultural perceptions and activities that they have developed new adaptive practices in Australia.

*References are available on request from the author*

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### **The Tyranny of Difference: An investigation into the construction and influences of working-class identities on the formal learning of white baby-boomer males**



### *Background for the research:*

My personal experience of educational policies and practices suggested that certain individuals and groups in society are intent on maintaining political, social and educational orthodoxy. On the periphery of the educational decision-making process are individuals, like me, who feel they have limited influence on shaping education policy and practice. As a learner, I was cynical about many aspects of education that I believed did not really represent the interests of marginalised groups. I was curious to find out if working-class students from my generation were disaffected by the cultural practices of the schools they attended.

Apart from an occasional involvement in radical political movements, working men's lives are often perceived as culturally uninteresting and limited in relation to what they provide as far as insights into the workings of society (Dunk 2003). This research hopefully challenges Dunk's observation that white, working-class men's culture is mundane and of little interest to the world of academia.

### *Thesis Abstract:*

The thesis that developed is a sociological, qualitative, narrative, retrospective investigation into white, working-class, baby-boomer males' perceptions of their own formal educational experiences. The study, while accepting the significance of the socio-economic/class correlation, also identified important non-material influences of class on the participants' formal learning. The investigation revealed how discursively marginalised social identities negotiated their relationship with formal learning environments. Social persistence or continuity was considered problematic, in relation to the learning outcomes of the participants in this study sample, because many effects normally associated with a stratified social structure were not obvious in the research data. The study showed that the participants' educational potential was affected more by the dynamics of personal interaction than broad socially constructed differences. It was found that the educational and social opportunities of the participants was more about the respect individual actors showed for each other both within and outside the context of schools, rather than being a consequence of one's social class.

The premise underlying this research is that the social structure and the processes affecting it are evolving, not static. The majority of the working-class participants recognised the educational and social advantages associated with adapting to the cultural practices of the schools they attended. There is little doubt the participants' educational decision making was influenced by self interest, including a concern for their own personal status and material security (Lopreato 1984). It was ultimately an individual's personal actions (agency) that facilitated his cultural accommodation, although each man's ability to contend with cultural and social difference was both acquired and a consequence of his hereditary disposition.

*References are available on request from the author*

## Conference Scholarships

**The TASA/AASR Postgraduate Conference Scholarship Fund** aims to support postgraduate participation at TASA annual conferences. The TASA Executive would like to encourage postgraduate members to apply and also asks academic supervisors to encourage their students to apply for the scholarship.

Certificates will be presented at the TASA conference at Newcastle in December. For the full details, please go to <http://www.tasa.org.au/about-tasa/tasa-awards-prizes/tasa-aasr-postgraduate-conference-scholarship/>.

**Applications close 6th September, 2011**

## Facebook

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## Teaching Sociology in Australia

*In 2010, the editorial team introduced a 'teaching tidbits' section for the Nexus newsletter which provided snapshot information and advice on teaching sociology. This year, we are aiming to continue this idea but incorporate a focus on teaching sociology in Australia across the different themed areas that we are called to teach. These include, for instance, health, media studies, cultural sociology, crime and deviance and of course, the introductory units that require significant amounts of time and effort to obtain resources in order to make the class attractive and informative for students. Thus, we aim this year to provide brief articles on teaching in specific sub-discipline areas which are going to be combined with small notes on textbooks available in these. In this first issue, we are pleased to provide a review of the report from the Teaching Sociology thematic group on the 2009 report on the state of the discipline in Australian tertiary teaching sectors. We are grateful for Helen Marshall from RMIT for providing us with this.*

In 2007, the executive of TASA decided to apply for a discipline grant from what was then the Carrick Institute and is now the Australian Learning and Teaching Council for a study of the extent and nature of sociology teaching in Australian universities the most pressing issues faced by teachers. Helen Marshall (RMIT), Peter Robinson (then RMIT), John Germov (Newcastle) and Eileen Clark (then La Trobe) put in an application and gained a grant for the project, which they carried out in 2008. The final report was launched at the 2009 TASA conference and is still available on the TASA website.

A mapping exercise, using course data sent by TASA members and a search of university websites, showed that sociology is found in most of Australia's universities, and that there is fit between the interests of sociologists as listed with TASA and areas taught, but that the discipline is not well advertised. Putting 'sociology' into the names of subjects would ensure that the discipline's presence is enhanced.

A review of literature suggested that our discipline is characterised by theoretical disputes, fragmented

subject matter, and some contention over its political commitments. Interviews with those teaching sociology showed these 'identity' issues pose significant challenges, but it was issues flowing from the state of higher education in Australia that made really made teaching difficult. The major issues identified were: cost-cutting, the invisibility of sociology in restructured universities, the problem of balancing research and teaching, workload issues, problems with class size, and the changing needs of students. Those who teach sociology as 'service' subjects to students in professional training raised some special issues, but the overall impression from the data is that while the nature of the discipline poses some challenges unique to sociology the current state of higher education in Australia, which affects all teachers, poses greater threats.

The picture is not one of unrelieved gloom. There seem to be opportunities for expansion, or improvement in teaching. Interdisciplinary contact offers opportunities, and there are ways (such as teaching research methods) to connect sociology with vocational agendas.

*Teaching Sociology In Australia* is the first step in what we hope will be ongoing engagement with some key questions about the future of careers for sociologists in Australian universities. The full report is on the TASA website via the teaching thematic group at <http://www.tasa.org.au/thematic-groups/teaching-sociology/>. Those with an interest in teaching should remember to join the Teaching group when they renew their memberships for 2011!

Helen Marshall  
RMIT

## The British Sociological Association Annual Conference 2011

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

**London School of Economics**

**60 Years of Sociology**

For the full details, please go to the BSA website: [www.britsoc.co.uk/events/Conference](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/events/Conference)

## TASA 2011 Conference

### Local Lives/Global Networks University of Newcastle

#### Co-Convenors of Conference:

Dr Steven Threadgold:

[Steven.Threadgold@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Steven.Threadgold@newcastle.edu.au)

Dr Emma Kirby:

[Emma.Kirby@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Emma.Kirby@newcastle.edu.au)

*Venue:* The conference will be held in the City Precinct in Newcastle, using adjacent University buildings and the Town Hall.

*Conference proper:* Tuesday 29th November to Thursday 1st December.

*Conference Dinner:* Wednesday 30th November.

More details will be available soon.

## TASA 2012 Conference

Expressions of interest are sought for hosting the 2012 TASA Conference. The annual conference is a key event for sociologists to present their research and network with peers, attracting approximately 250 participants each year. Hosting the conference is an ideal opportunity for a university or department to showcase their achievements and promote their strengths. Alternatively a collective of sociologists from universities in a particular city or region may wish to use the conference to highlight the benefits of sociology to a broader audience.

Please go to TASAweb for the full details: <http://www.tasa.org.au/tasa-conference/2012-tasa-conference/>

## The Jean Martin Award, 2011

The Jean Martin Award recognises excellence in scholarship in the field of Sociology and aims to assist with establishing the career of a recent PhD graduate.

This Award, which was given for the first time in 1980, is granted to the best PhD thesis in social science disciplines from an Australian tertiary institution submitted to the Award Committee. Theses may be on theoretical as well as empirical topics. Excellence in scholarship in the field of sociology, and the balanced treatment of sociological theory and research are the main criteria for deciding the Award. Work done in one of Jean Martin's major areas of interest and which assesses implications for social policy are other criteria the judges will also take into account. Jean Martin's research interests are defined as: migration, community and family studies, the concept of 'ethnicity', ethnic politics, social class, theories of culture and of social change.

Nominations for the 2011 Jean Martin Award close on April 1st, 2011.

For the full details, please go to <http://www.tasa.org.au/tasa-awards/jean-martin-award/>

## Nexus 2011

There will be four issues of *Nexus* this year; this issue, May, August and November. Copy deadline for the May issue is April 11th, 2011. All inquiries should be made directly to Nick Osbaldiston ([no@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:no@unimelb.edu.au)) and Peta Cook ([Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au](mailto:Peta.Cook@utas.edu.au)).

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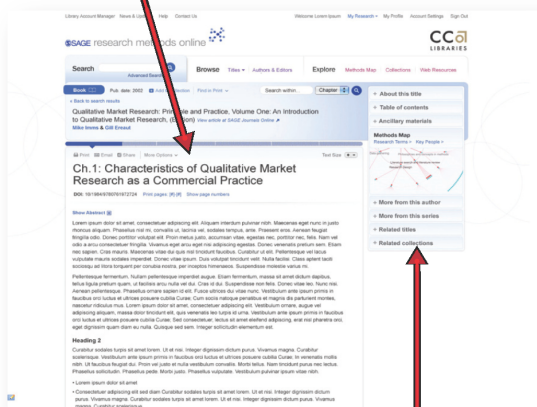
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